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Religious nationalism and global fundamentalism

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1. Introduction

Fundamentalism is a global phenomenon. That is to say, there is a global discourse about fundamentalism. Whenever we care to open the newspapers fundamentalism stares us in the face from different corners of the world. Sadat was murdered by fundamentalists, Rabin was murdered by a fundamentalist, a mosque in Ayodhya was destroyed by fundamentalists, the metro in Paris was bombed by fundamentalists. The media suggest an outright attack on modern society on a world scale by movements which are called 'fundamentalist', because religion is a significant aspect of their ideology. It is a label which has global use for journalists who, for example (from my own experience), ask someone who specializes in religion and politics in India to comment on the electoral success of a fundamentalist party in Turkey. When one knows about one fundamentalism one knows about them all is the assumption. It is important to acknowledge the globalization of a certain language by the western media, in which 'fundamentalism' covers a number of widely differing political struggles. Whatever disclaimers one might have one is inevitably sucked into using this language which is indeed made available for global use. This is even true for critical students of culture like Stuart Hall who uses the term 'fundamentalism' for all those "backward-looking movements" which are "either left out of 'modernity' or ambiguously and partially incorporated in one of its many forms" (Hall 1993, see also Saba Mahmood's (1995) critique).

This language is certainly not merely descriptive, but has an emotive, mobilizing, rethorical aspect which is crucial to the making of world politics. The Fall of the Berlin Wall has opened up a space for talking about a new World Order in which modern society, wherever it might be located on the map, has to defend itself against the forces of fundamentalist obscurantism. Samuel Huntington's writings on "the clash of civilizations" is a somewhat bizarre, but highly influential instance of that language and the open demand by Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the US House of Representatives, that money should be reserved for destabilizing the fundamentalist governement of Iran is another. The term 'fundamentalism' was first used in the United States in 1920 to designate a broad protestant movement in defense of biblical literalism. Especially after the Iranian revolution of 1979 it has gained wide currency among journalists and politicians to designate a wide variety of religious movements in the world. To say that this broad application of the word 'fundamentalism' is a journalistic invention does, however, not weaken or depoliticize it. It is a crucial term not only in the media coverage of world politics, but also in the creation of world politics itself. It has become impossible to simply throw it away and use other terms. A powerful language or discourse is not something one can choose to accept or reject; it can be critiqued and deconstructed, but that will not make it go away. I would suggest that the term 'fundamentalism' designates what is seen as a threat to both reason and liberty. It thus belongs to a discourse in which the modern, open society tries to define itself as a liberating and progressive force in world history (see Harding 1991). While liberals in the US may sometimes use the term 'fundamentalism' for the Christian Coalition, there can be little doubt that the evangelical Christians which constitute this coalition belong to the mainstream of American society and are an important element in the Republican party. Their 'pro-life' and 'anti-state' activism is seldom targeted in the strongly condemning language used by politicians and mass media to attack 'fundamentalism'. It is, for instance, striking that the initial response to the Oklahoma bombing was strongly anti-Muslim and that when it turned out that the perpetrators had been white American farmers there was a sense of being ill-informed about the kind of groups these people belonged to. Even Martin Riesebrodt's sociological analysis of Modern Fundamentalism in the US and Iran (see below) compares Protestant fundamentalism between 1910 and 1928 with Shi'ite fundamentalism between 1961 and 1979 and thus leaves the impression that fundamentalism in the US is a harmless thing of the past, while fundamentalism in Iran is a political thing of the present.

The greatest enemies of 'the open society', for whom the language of utter rejection and condemnation is used, are located not in the West, but in the Rest. If they are found in the West they are from the Rest. Mostly, they are 'fanatic Muslims' which threaten the status quo in the Middle East, where, since Western industrial societies have vital interests in the production of oil. Not all Muslim fundamentalists are enemies, though. Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Pakistan, but also the militant groups in Afghanistan fighting Soviet imperialism are often exempted from the strong, condemning tone used for Sudan and Iran as well as for the militant groups fighting the state in Egypt, Algeria and Palestine. A crucial characteristic of 'fundamentalism' is therefore that it is anti-western. Another is that it is against the secular state. These two characteristics are often conflated in the notion that these are movements which see the secular state as an alien, western phenomenon. The 'fanatic muslim' serves as a template to talk about other fundamentalists, such as the Sikh Khalistanis and Hindu nationalists in India.

It is certainly important to analyze the globalization of this discourse, but it cannot replace the critical interpretation of religio-political movements which we encounter in our studies. Since the term 'fundamentalism' is out there to describe these movements, what are social scientists doing with this term? As one might expect, they try to provide a clear definition which fits into some larger social theory. A recent attempt to do this has been that of Martin Riesebrodt, a Chicago-based sociologist who compares the emergence of modern fundamentalism in the United States and Iran. Riesebrodt (1993) argues that fundamentalism is a social phenomenon that occurs during rapid social change, is marked by a profound experience of crisis, and tries to overcome that crisis by a revitalization of religion and a search for authenticity. This revitalization is characterized by what he calls a 'mythical regress to the revealed and realized order'. Authenticity is realized in 'rational' fundamentalism by a literalist reading of sacred texts and in charismatic fundamentalism by the experience of a gift of grace. Further, he argues that fundamentalism implies a rejection of the world, but that that can take the form of either fleeing the world or mastering the world by forming a political party or religious movement, or secret society. Riesebrodt's central thesis is "that fundamentalism refers to an urban movement directed primarily against the dissolution of personalistic, patriarchal notions of order and social relations and their replacement by depersonalized principles" (p. 9). He asks for attention to the ideology of these movements as well as to the movement's carriers, defined as social units formed in a particular 'sociomoral milieu', that is by the coincidence of several structural dimensions. This, then, is a theory of social transformation and the response to that by social movements of a particular type.

Riesebrodt's definition and theoretical approach are subtle and fairly typical for the sociological approach to fundamentalism. They are very similar to the guiding ideas behind Chicago's huge, multivolume Fundamentalism project, under the directorship of Martin Marty and Scott Appleby. This project covers Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Confucian fundamentalism in a great variety of societies, ranging from the USA to China, and Italy to the Andes. The idea is that fundamentalism is a global phenomenon in so far as it is a response to global processes of social transformation. One could say that it provides sociological support to the journalistic, and world-political notion of fundamentalism. There is really something out there which is fundamentalism and it is everywhere. Although there is some hesitation to use the term 'modernization' these days, much of the theoretical framework is in fact not very different from 1960s modernization theory, focusing on processes like urbanization, industrialization, and secularization.

'Rapid social change' is obviously something extraordinarily vague which can be invoked whenever one needs it and it has been invoked for every social movement in every place and every epoch I am aware of. There is obviously something valid in the sociological analysis of these movements as resisting certain, fundamental changes in society and in the argument that these changes are in the final analysis part of the dynamic of world capitalism. But the question is: what kinds of resistance and what kinds of changes do we see in particular, historical situations? These situations cannot be subsumed in the universal teleology of world capitalism and 'the open society'. In this paper I want to discuss two religio-political movements in India which resist the secular state, as they encounter it in India, and want to effect crucial changes in state-society relations. These movements are not in any sense anti-modern nor anti-western. The Hindu movement I will be discussing is perhaps more urban than rural, but the Sikh movement is probably more rural than urban. Moreover, both movements do not resist globalization, but in fact embrace it. They are very popular among transnational migrants and, in general, have been often more in favor of opening up India for the global market that their opponent, the secularist Congress Party has been. They are against the secularism of the Congress Party, but mainly because it is in their view a 'pseudo-secularism' that priviliges certain religious communities for electoral purposes. I will begin my story in 1984.

2. Sikhs and Hindus

1984 was to be the year of the final collapse of the Soviet empire, as predicted by the famous dissident Andrej Amalrik. He was right about the collapse of the Soviet Union, but wrong about the year. Instead 1984 turned out to be a crucial year for another huge, imperial state: India. In June 1984 the Indian Army attacked the Golden Temple Complex, the central shrine of the Sikhs, in an operation with the codename Blue Star. This huge complex contained a great number of buildings, including the Harimandir (Golden Temple) and the Akal Takhat (the Eternal

Throne). The latter was occupied and heavily fortified by militant Sikhs who demanded the separation of a Sikh state, Khalistan, from what they described as Hindu India. The army encountered so much resistance in the Complex that it had to bring tanks into the operation which caused much greater damage to the religious buildings than the generals had expected. The operation lasted from June 4 till June 7. It destroyed the Sikh Library which contained a great number of sacred manuscripts and objects from the lives of the Gurus in the Sikh tradition. Obviously, the number game of counting the casualties on both sides has not been conclusive and leaves us with estimates ranging from a few hundred to a few thousand. On the Sikh side the number of dead militants was greatly outnumbered by the number of dead pilgrims who were caught in the firing during their visit.

The leader of the Khalistani Sikhs, Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, was killed in the encounter, but this did not mean the end, but rather the beginning of his importance, since martyrs are central to Sikh tradition. His ghost turned out to be much more effective than he had ever been alive. Operation Blue Star took its place among the founding massacres in Sikh historical memory: the pre-colonial massacre of Sikhs in the battle of Malerkotka by the Afghan war leader Ahmad Shah Abdali in 1762, the colonial massacre of peaceful demonstrators in Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar by the British general Dyer in 1919, and now in 1984 the post-colonial massacre of Sikhs in the Golden Temple. These memories repress a lot, but end up constructing a narrative of Sikh suffering, inflicted upon them by outside states. It conveyed the message that India was not anymore a state Sikhs belonged to which was exactly what the militant Khalistanis had in mind. The clearest and perhaps most threatening sign of this was the mutiny of Sikh soldiers in various regiments across the country, the significance of which becomes clear when one realizes the crucial role of Sikhs in the Indian Army from the late 19th century.

Operation Blue Star turned out to be Mrs Gandhi's last battle, as the title of a book by Mark Tully and Satish Jacob (1991) has it. On 31 October of 1984 India's Prime Minister was assasinated by two Sikhs who were her bodyguards. The assassination was followed by a widespread pogrom against Sikhs and their property, especially in major North Indian cities with sizeable Sikh minority populations, such as Delhi and Kanpur. These pogroms were organized and led by political leaders of Mrs Gandhi's Congress Party and meant to "teach the arrogant Sikhs a lesson they would not forget", as people said at the time. They were allowed, and sometimes assisted, by the agencies of the state, such as the police and military. Trains and buses were stopped and Sikhs taken out and killed and in the Punjab the reverse happened with the militants killing Hindu passengers. In the elections of 1995 Mrs Gandhi's son, Rajiv, a former airline pilot, gained a landslide victory in what was called a "sympathy vote" . The anti-Sikh pogrom and the following electoral success of the political party that had orchestrated it left a great number of Sikhs who had never even sympathized with the idea of a separate Sikh state in fundamental disillusion with the Indian state. Whatever happened afterwards Khalistani militancy had gained a permanent place in the Indian polity.

1984 was not only a crucial year for Sikh nationalism, but also for Hindu nationalism. In 1984 I happened to be in India, but, fortunately, far from the happenings in Punjab. I was finishing my fieldwork in Ayodhya, a Hindu pilgrimage centre in Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous state. My research concerned the organization of ritual specialists, Hindu monks and priests, who are the hosts of hundreds of thousand pilgrims each year (van der Veer 1988). These pilgrims come to Ayodhya for the dual purpose of worshipping the God Rama and venerating their ancestors. Ayodhya is almost entirely a Hindu sacred place with hundreds of small and large temples, in which the selling and consumption of meat and alcohol is forbidden by local law. There are only small pockets of Muslims living in the city, though a larger community lives in nearby Faizabad. However, Ayodhya had been a much more important city for Muslims in an earlier period when it was a seat of administration in the Mughal empire and together with Faizabad the center of the regional realm of the Nawabs of Oudh in the early 18th century before the Nawabs moved hundred miles away to Lucknow which continues to be the state capital.

The most prominent sign of the earlier Muslim presence is a large mosque in the center of Ayodhya. According to an inscription on the mosque it had been built by a general Mir Baqi in the year 1528. The mosque is locally known as Babar's mosque, because Mir Baqi was thought to be a general of the first Mughal emperor. This mosque has been a bone of contention between Hindus and Muslims for more than a century. It was closed for the public with a police guard in front of it. It had been closed by government order after December 1949, when unknown Hindus had put an image of Rama in the mosque and, subsequently, had spread the rumor that the Lord had appeared in the mosque. When I did my fieldwork, it was commonly believed in Ayodhya that the mosque had been built on a destroyed temple of Rama and, actually, was situated on the birthplace of this god. Pilgrims did go to the mosque and worshipped on a platform in front of it which had been raised by the colonial authorities in 1856. Nevertheless, despite the firmness of local belief that the actual birthplace of God Rama was occupied by a mosque and the fact that there was an image of Rama inside the mosque there was no concerted effort to replace the mosque by a temple.

This changed in September 1984 when the Vishva Hindu Parishad (World Hindu Council), a religious movement, led by Hindu monks, and closely affiliated to a political party, the Bharatiya Janata Party (Indian People's Party) started a demonstrative procession of trucks with the following name: 'Sacrifice to Liberate Rama's Birthplace'. The procession began in Sitamarhi, the birthplace of Rama's wife Sita. The demonstration was thereby given the religious flavor of a pilgrimage tour, an impression which was enhanced by the fact that some of the trucks carried religious images and, of course, a great number of monks. The procession stayed for a day in Ayodhya, but its appeal was limited in comparison to the many other attractions for Hindu pilgrims the city had to offer. It went on to the state capital, Lucknow, where it did attract large crowds and was supposed to end in a huge rally in Delhi which fell flat due to the assassination of mrs. Gandhi. The anti-Sikh pogrom drew attention away from Hindu-Muslim tensions focusing on Babar's moque in Ayodhya. But not for long. A surprise decision of a district judge in Faizabad led to the opening of the mosque for the Hindu public in 1986. This decision could not have taken place without the connivance of the central governement. The opening of the mosque enabled Hindus to worship the 1949 images in the main prayer hall of the mosque. This simple move therefore made the mosque into a Hindu temple. Despite a huge rally of Muslims, opposing this desacration of their mosque, which took place in Delhi in 1987, the decision was not changed. It did not only open the mosque literally, but also metaphorically for further political action. The Vishva Hindu Parishad and its political ally, the Bharatiya Janata Party, continued to make the removal of the mosque the main plank of their political campaign.

In 1988 these two organizations organized a number of demonstrative processions throughout the country (and even among migrant communities abroad), in which bricks were consecrated for their use in building the temple meant to replace the mosque. These bricks were then brought to Ayodhya in processions which often caused riots en route, since they cleverly passed through Muslim areas. The greatest massacre in connection to these Rama Shila Pujas occurred in Bhagalpur, Bihar, in which hundreds of Muslims got killed. In the elections of 1989 the

Congress party of Mr Gandhi lost its majority in Parliament and the oppositional Janata Party of Mr V.P. Singh replaced it with parliamentary support of the BJP. Despite its factual support of the new government the VHP/BJP continued its agitation for the replacement of the mosque by a temple. In 1990 they organized a large procession, led by Mr Advani, the leader of the BJP, which started in Somnath in West India and was meant to end in Ayodhya with the ultimate goal of destroying the temple. This procession was stopped in Bihar and Mr Advani and a number of his lieutenants were arrested. This led to the withdrawal of parliamentary support for V.P. Singh's government by the BJP. The 1991 elections brought the Congress again to power in the wake of the assassination of its leader, Rajiv Gandhi, who was killed by Sri Lankan Tamil separatists in South India. The BJP which had gained enormously in the years of Ayodhya agitation and had now become the major opposition party and the governing party in a number of states, including Uttar Pradesh in which Ayodhya is located, continued with its campaign for the destruction of the Ayodhya mosque.

On 6 December 1992 the VHP and the BJP organized another rally in Ayodhya. The publicly announced aim of the rally was to destroy a 16th century mosque in Ayodhya which had allegedly been built on the birthplace of Rama, one of the major gods in the Hindu pantheon. Despite this public annoucement the rally was allowed by the authorities and under the eyes of the gathered Press and without much hindrance by the huge paramilitary police force present in Ayodhya activists started to demolish the old structure till, after a day of hard work, only rubble remained; and a question: Why didn't the police intervene?

A high ranking police officer told the Press that the police could easily have intervened and prevented the demolition. However, they had not received orders to do so. Naturally, they did not not get any orders from the state officials of Uttar Pradesh, since Uttar Pradesh was at that time governed by the BJP, the political party which was behind the demolition. The paramilitary forces, however, were under the direct command of what in India is called "the Centre", that is the Union government in Delhi. Why did the Centre not act? Well, the story goes that India's Prime Minister, Narasimha Rao (Rajiv Gandhi's successor), was just taking a nap and, since he is a very old man, nobody wanted to disturb him. When he woke up, the demolition had already proceeded too far. I do not relate this story to show up a certain indeciseveness on the part of the Indian Government, since on the next day the Union government did act very decisively by dismissing the state governments of four states in which the opposition part

BJP ruled. It put the leadership of the two movements in jail for a few days and banned a few radical movements, both on the Hindu side and on the Muslim side. Narasimha Rao's nap had been a strategic one which allowed the Union government to re-establish the supremacy of the Congress Party which had been seriously challenged by the BJP. Nevertheless, all these political actions did not prevent that civil war broke out in many parts of the country, in which thousands (mostly Muslims) were killed nor did it anything to prevent that the relations between Hindus and Muslims reached their lowest point since Partition. Very significantly, many Muslims had by now totally lost their confidence in the state and its institutions, since politicians seemed not to be willing to protect the rights and lives of the Muslim minority.

1984 thus sets the stage for the introduction of two series of events which can be connected in a narrative which involves the destruction of sacred centers of religious minorities either by the state or with the connivance of the state. This narrative raises related questions about the secularity of the state and the religiosity of the two movements involved. I will address these questions in the following sections.

3. The Secularity of the Indian Nation-State

The nation-state encountered by Sikh and Hindu activists is the successor of the colonial state. We have to start therefore by asking what kind of 'secularity' we find in the colonial state in British India of the 19th and 20th centuries. Religious neutrality was seen as essential first for trading purposes and later for British rule in India. Despite their official policy of religious neutrality, however, the British interfered with every aspect of Indian religion and society. Considering the nature of the colonial project there was actually no choice and the tropes of 'withdrawal', 'secularity' and 'neutrality' only tried to hide that discursively. Let us, for instance, look at the state project of identifying and classifying 'communities' in Indian society which is immediately relevant to the religious nationalist movements we introduced in the beginning of this paper. The Khalistani movement of today cannot be understood without looking at the colonial recruitment of Sikhs in the Indian army. After the Mutiny of 1857 the British disbanded the Bengal army and shifted their recruiting to the Punjab.

In their recruiting policy they acted upon a notion of 'martial races' and the Sikhs were not only counted among these races, but the superior example of it. The British were still impressed by the military resistance they had encountered from the Sikhs during their earlier advance into the Punjab. They introduced in the proces the idea that there was a clear boundary between 'pure' Sikhs and 'not quite' Sikhs and stipulated that only 'pure' Sikhs should be recruited. Pure Sikhs were those who belonged to the Khalsa and wore the five signs of being a Sikh, including the unshorn hair (and thus the turban), the dagger, and the steel bangle. Clearly, this boundary did already exist in the pre-colonial period, but it was now reinforced by the 'secular' state in the crucial process of providing labor opportunities. Baptism in the Sikh Khalsa meant eligibility for entry into the army. There can be little doubt that the colonial reinforcement of Khalsa identity provided a basis for later mobilization to defend the 'purity' of Sikh faith in the Singh Sabha movement and for the postcolonial development of Sikh mass politics round the symbols of 'purity' (Fox 1985).

Even more important than 'identifying' who were Sikhs and who were not was the imperial notion that India was divided in two large 'nations, one Hindu and the other Muslim. Again, Hindu nationalism, as we know it today, is largely a product of that notion and the projects connected to it. Most importantly, the British set out already in the 18th century to codify Hindu law and Muslim law. The main issue here is that the 'secular' principle of equality before the law is replaced by a principle of differential legal treatment of religious communities. This codification of communal difference had significant postcolonial consequences. In 1986 a major political crisis broke out in India about the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Bill (Pathak and Sunder Rajan 1989). The new legislation was the answer of the Congress government to agitation by Muslim leaders who protested against a decision of the Supreme Court in the so-called Shah Banu case. This case arose out of an application made by a Muslim woman, Shah Banu, for maintenance under section 125 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. The woman had been separated from her husband and demanded a monthly allowance. The Code of Criminal Procedure of 1872 was intended to prevent vagrancy, a problem for public order. It circumvented the legal fiction that Muslim civil law should be in accordance with the shari'at. Precisely this circumvention was challenged in the litigation in the Shah Banu case, in which in the end the woman herself, under pressure from Muslim leaders, withdrew her demand, saying that she did not know that it was against the shari'at.

The new legislation departs from the assumption that Muslim personal law derives straight from immemorial religious law, as codified in the shari'at, conveniently forgetting that this immemorial law, as codified in civil law, is in fact a colonial construction. The government action was immediately condemned by the BJP as an attempt to appease the Muslim minority, as it indeed was. We had now the curious situation that Hindu nationalists asked for the 'secular' application of a uniform civil code for all Indian citizens, while the secular Congress Party wanted to protect the minorities from this uniformity. This irony can possibly be explained by the historical fact that the Hindu personal code, derived from the dharmashastras, has never gained the foundational value for the Hindu community that the shari'at has gained for the Muslim community. This, in turn, has to do with the nature of textual authority in Hinduism as well as with the construction of community in the Hindu case. In the Muslim case the law has become the public symbol of the integrity of the Muslim community and is thus directly linked to the political treatment of a 'minority', either in terms of protection or in terms of appeasement. This has ossified Muslim personal law in India to an extent unknown in Muslim states like Pakistan and Bangladesh. It provided Muslim leaders with an issue to fight for, but it also gave BJP politicians an issue which they could use to show the 'backwardness' of the Muslim community, especially in its treatment of women, and to show the willingness of the Congress Party to pamper the Muslim minority in order to get their votes. It is striking to what extent the political terrain for this has been laid out already in the colonial period.

The colonial construction of the Hindu community did not go along the lines of homogenization, as in the Muslim case, but along those of differentiation. The Hindu 'majority' was seen as endlessly fragmented and diverse. In their documentation of these differences in censuses and district gazetteers the colonial authorities created long lists of castes, ethnic groups which were hierarchically linked. These hierarchical listings led to widespread agitation and the formation of caste associations on an All-India basis whose main purpose was to enhance the status of their caste. In South India much was made of the racial distinction between Aryans (Brahmins) and Dravidians (Non-Brahmis) which led to the formation of Dravidian parties which continue to dominate politics in Tamil Nadu till today. In the rest of India caste consciousness was also raised by the colonial project of enumerating the different castes. This has resulted in a constant dialectic of caste politics against the politics of Hindu unity (sangathan) till the present day.

The greatest threat to 'Hindu unity' was the possible formation of a separate, huge community of 'untouchables'. Outside of the caste hierachies were large groups which were 'untouchable outcastes', that is groups with culturally despised occupations, such as sweepers, and scavengers, as well as 'tribes', groups mainly living outside of peasant economies in hill regions and jungles. In the twentieth century the British gave these groups special, preferential treatment to redress their immense social disadvantages. This was immediately seen as by Hindu politicians as a policy to weaken 'Hindu unity'. Especially the British decision in 1932 to create separate electorates for Untouchables was strongly resisted by the leader of the Congress, Mohandas K. Gandhi, who undertook a fast unto death to have it revoked. The legal historian Marc Galanter (1984: 31) argues that "it is evident that Congress opposition, if not Gandhi's personally, was inspired by fear that the great Hindu base of Congress support would be weakened". The result of Gandhi's fast was that Ambedkar, the Untouchable leader, left the idea of separate electorates for a system of reserved seats which is still in force today. The importance of untouchable participation in Hindu nationalism has to be seen in light of Hindu-Muslim conflict and competition. Their votes were and continue to be crucial to Hindu majoritarianism.

Again, colonial (secular) interventions set the stage for postcolonial politics. The ante was raised by extending the principle of preferential treatment and distributive justice from the so-called scheduled tribes and castes to a new category, the Other Backward Castes (OBCs). This came to occupy a large part of the political arena, since, for example, in the South Indian state of Tamil Nadu OBCs were all castes except Brahmins. It led to caste warfare, especially in Gujarat, but also elsewhere. And in 1989 the decision of the V.P. Singh government to implement the recommendations of the so-called Mandal commission, implying massive reservations for castes in the public sector and universities, etcetera), led again to the pitching of caste against Hindu unity. This was well expressed in the slogan: Mandal or Mandir (temple), meaning that one was either for this policy of reservation or one was a Hindu nationalist striving for the building of the Rama temple in Ayodhya.

4. The Religiosity of Nationalist movements

There is a common fallacy that religion and politics are two different fields of social activity. This leads observers sometimes to speak of the 'politicization' of religion, and to say that this is against the 'original intent' of the founder of religion, or God himself. Undoubtedly, there are movements which try to steer away from the official political arena and call themselves 'a-political', but even in these cases I am inclined to see this withdrawal as political. Much clearer, however, is the political nature of the Khalistani movement and the Hindu nationalist movement. Both movements attempt to reshape state-society relations within the global form of the nation-state. In these cases the common question is not whether these movements are political, but whether, or to what extent, they are religious. I think that is largely spurious to come up with old or new definitions of religion, culture, or politics. It is more useful to look at the imagination of history, territory, and identity which characterize these movements, and to recognize the extent to which this imagination is rooted in religious institutions, sacred scriptures and formulated by religious leaders. I will try to do that for both Sikh and Hindu nationnalism in what follows.

In a long and ultimately elusive search for origins the current Khalistani movement might be traced to the founding of the Sikh brotherhood (khalsa) in the early eighteenth century. A direct link can be shown, however, with the Singh Sabha movement in the colonial period. The first Singh Sabha was established in 1873 and preached the purification of the Sikh brotherhood from "Hindu" practices. One of the key issues was thus the assertion of boundaries between Hindus and Sikhs, clearly in reaction to reformist activities on the part of the Arya Samaj. A major victory for the Singh Sabha movement occurred in 1905, when Hindu images were removed from the Golden temple in Amritsar. In the early decades of the twentieth century the Singh Sabha movement increasingly turned its attention to the management of Sikh temples (gurdwaras). These temples were the property of priestly families whose moral and ritual behavior did not conform to the purist standards of certain reformists who originated in the Singh Sabha movement but came to call themselves Akalis. Akal is the term in Sikhism for the Ultimate, Timeless Reality. The most important campaign of the Akalis was a struggle for the control over the temples. In 1925 the agitation succeeded in placing the temples under the authority of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, a representative body of the Sikh brotherhood. Since then the control of this committee has become the most coveted price in Sikh politics.

The slogan of the Singh Sabha was that Sikhs were not Hindus. The boundary between members of the brotherhood and those followers of Sikh traditions who were not members of the brotherhood was now transformed in a boundary between 'real' Sikhs (members of the brotherhood with beards, turbans and the rest of the markers) and Hindus. Religious groups, such as the Nanakpanthis and the Nirankaris and Namdharis, who followed the Sikh teachings but did not accept the brotherhood, were asked to declare that they were not Sikhs, but Hindus which they, obviously, refused to do. The guiding fear behind all this seems to have been (and continues to be) that the Sikhs would loose their sense of a separate identity and simply become one of the many sectarian movements in Hinduism. One of the main grounds for this abiding fear is the practice of many Punjabi families to initiate only one son into the brotherhood, while the rest of the family is clean-shaven and follows Sikh and Hindu teachings as they see fit. The boundary between Hindus and Sikhs is thus constantly negotiated in the day to day practices of a large portion of Punjabis who are only potentially 'real' Sikhs.

It is striking that the Khalistani movement began, in fact, not as a separatist movement, but as a protest movement of a 'purist' faction of the Sikh brotherhood against privileges given to the Nirankaris. According to the tradition of the Sikh brotherhood there have been ten Sikh gurus and after te last one Sikhs have to rely on the sacred sayings of these gurus (gurbani), collected in the sacred book of Sikhism, the Guru Granth Sahib, and in dispute to trust the opinion (gurmatta) of the brotherhood. The Nirankaris, however, continue to have a living guru. This is considered to be a blasphemy by the brotherhood. On the day of the big festival of Vaisakhi, April 13, 1978, the Nirankaris staged a large procession in Amritsar and were confronted by a group of radical members of the brotherhood. A number of people got killed on both sides. The government arrested some Nirankaris, but they were later found to have acted in self-defence. This verdict is often quoted by Khalistanis as a sign that true justice could not be expected from a Hindu government. In April 1980 this led to the assassination of Gurbachan Singh, the Nirankari guru. The immediate origin of the Khalistani movement lies therefore in a conflict about religious orthodoxy, framed in the narrative of 'true' or 'false' Sikhs, and in the failure of the state to protect 'pure' Sikhism, or worse, in the alleged conspiracy of the state to use the Nirankaris against the brotherhood.

An important role in the attack on the Nirankaris was played by the Damdami Taksal, a religious institution under the leadership of Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale (1946-1984). Bhindranwale felt strongly that the Sikh religion was under mounting pressure. After the assassination of the Nirankari Guru he was suspected to be involved in the murder in 1981 of Lala Jagat Narain, the editor of the largest Hindu newspaper of the Punjab, the

Punjabi Kesari. Bhindranwale was arrested and his arrest led to the hijacking of an Indian Airlines plane to Lahore by Khalistanis who demanded the release of Bhindranwale. His arrest had made him a rising star in the growing separatist movement in the Punjab. After his release he quickly became its leader. He and his followers entrenched themselves in the Golden Temple and lauched terrorist attacks from there on Hindus and on state institutions. This ultimately led to the events of 1984.

The narrative of Khalistani aspirations is framed in terms of history, territory, and identity. The history of the Sikhs as popularly seen and told by themselves is one of constant struggle against 'foreign' state power. Early on it is a struggle against the Mughals, later against the British, and finally it is a struggle against the Brahmans of the Congress party which dominates the Indian state. In these struggles the Sikhs are portrayed as the courageous minority who fight against overwhelming state power. The stories dwell on massacres and martyrdom, but also ultimate superiority and victory. The events in the Punjab in the 1980s could have been scripted along these lines. The Khalistani challenge to the central state elicited a growing involvement of the central state in the affairs of the Punjab. It led to a police state in which the prisons were filled with young Sikhs, innocent or not, who were subjected to torture and numerous atrocities which set the stage for a civil war (see Mahmood 1996). Finally, the attack on the Golden Temple and the killing of Bhindranwale made the latter into a textbook martyr for the Sikh cause and 'demonstrated' that he had been right all along about the bad intentions of the Indian state.

A major feature of nationalism is the politics of space. Bordered territory symbolizes the fixity, stability, and sovereignty of the nation-state, so that borders have become the contested sites for international warfare, refugees, and immigration policies. Those who see themselves as a nation often seek a spatial, territorial expression of their nationhood. The Indian Muslim league spoke of a 'homeland' for Muslims when it demanded Pakistan in the 1940's. This expression was adopted by Sikh leaders when the Punjab region was cut in two by the Partition of 1947, but it did not play a significant role in the negotiations which led to independent India. In the 1960s Master Tara Singh, the leader of the Akali Dal, began a movement demanding a separate state within the India Union, with a Sikh electoral majority. Not religion, but language (Punjabi) was the basis of this demand, since language had been generally adopted as the marker for deciding state boundaries within the Union. This movement was successful in 1966 when the Punjab was divided in the largely Hindi-speaking (and Hindu) state of Haryana abd the largely Punjabi-speaking (and Sikh) state of Punjab. As we have seen, however, a separate state within the Indian nation-state proved to be not quite enough for some in the 1980s.

While these territorial strivings are typical for all nationalisms, some of them at least are grafted upon pre-nationalist senses of sacred space. According to Harjot Oberoi (1987) Sikhs were not bound to the territory of the Punjab, but to the lineage of gurus and then to the scriptural Guru, that is the Words of the Guru in the Guru Granth. In his view the territorial demand is entirely a modern, nationalist demand which has nothing to do with religion. This transterritorial aspect of Sikhism made it so easy to travel beyond the Punjab and to build temples wherever one would have a large enough community. It is at the same time true that this religious transcendence of local belonging makes it possible to tie religious identity either to nationalism or to transnationalism. Both possibilities are fulfilled in the Sikh case which has both produced a Punjabi territorial nationalism and a transnational diaspora. Where both nationalism and transnational diaspora are tied to the Punjab, however, is in the central place for Sikhism, the Golden Temple in Amritsar. There is no place which expresses so strongly the existence of a global Sikh community as the Golden Temple. That is why the attack on the Golden Temple by the Indian state 'proved' that the Sikhs need a territorial nation-state to protect their sacred centre. Besides that, Verne Dusenbury (1995) has recently argued that diasporic Sikhs also are interested in the Khalistan demand because of the fact that their identity and status in the countries of immigration are indexically related to their 'country of origin'. In that sense even diasporic Sikhs who would not even dream to go back to live in a newly estblished Khalistan might dream of having come from a recognizable, separate nation-state.

Identity politics is, obviously, the main element in the Khalistani movement. As I argued earlier, the guiding fear among Sikhs of the Brotherhood is that they may 'backslide' into Hinduism. This fear is clearly expressed in the exhortation to young people to show the visible markers of being a Sikh, as in this speech by Bhindranwale: "If you do not want beards then you should ask the women to become men and you become women. Or else ask nature that it should stop this growth on your faces. There will be no need for me to preach, no need to break my head on it" (quoted in Das 1995: 127). This passage also shows the extent to which religious identity is tied up with gender identity, as Veena Das rightly observes in her comments on Bhindranwale's speech. The message is that to be a real man one has to be a visible member of the Brotherhood. That allows one also to wear the dagger and protect the honor of the Sikh community (and especially women) against attacks from outside. This emphasis on masculinity is crucial to Sikh militancy, but it does not produce a kind of 'radical patriarchalism' which Riesebrodt (1993) sees as a defining characteristic of fundamentalism. It is an idom of protecting masculine honor without policing the public behavior of women. The idea that Sikhs need their own state to be able to maintain the social and symbolic boundaries which distinguish them from Hindus is not only found among extremists like Bhindranwale. In the 1960s, the period of the agitation for a separate Sikh Punjab within the Indian Union the acclaimed Sikh writer, historian, and long-time member of the Congress Party, Khushwant Singh wrote in the conclusion of his two-volume history of the Sikhs: "the only chance of survival of the Sikhs as a separate community is to create a state in which they form a compact group, where the teaching of Gurmukhi and the Sikh religion is compulsory and where there is an atmosphere of respect for the traditions of their Khalsa forefathers" (Singh 1966, vol 2: 205). Khushwant Singh writes about a separate state within the Indian Union and he is everything but a Khalistani, but still one sees in this quotation the common ground shared by extremists and moderates.

Globalization has affected the Khalistani movement in a number of ways. The Sikhs are almost the paradigmatic migrants. A third of them lives outside of the Punjab, and over a million lives outside India. Migration has been strongly stimulated by recruitment in the colonial army which opened a window to the subcontinent, to the British empire, and to the world at large. Racial discrimination encounterd in Canada and the United States in the early decades of the twentieth century led Sikh migrants to engage in nationalist activities centered on India. The Sikh diaspora continues to be a prime example of the influence of a worldwide, transnational community on religious nationalism in India. The Khalistan movement of today, for example, receives more support among migrant circles in England and Canada than among Sikhs in the Punjab. Cynthia Mahmood (1996) reports that Khalistani refugees in the US bring their children up with the idea that they all will return to the Punjab to fight for an independent Khalistan. This evidence at least contradicts Ben Anderson's thesis about 'long-distance nationalism without responsibility' (Wertheim lecture 1992). It has also led me to wonder about the refugee experience of the 4.3 million people who fled to the Indian Punjab after Partition. To what extent will the experience of having to leave everything behind in an other man's nation-state have affected Khalistani sentiments in the 1980s? Finally, the conflict in the Punjab is seen by some observers as caused by or related to the effects of the Green Revolution (perhaps one of the most striking global innovations in food production) which were stronger in the Punjab than in any other part of India. In 1984 Punjabi farmers (mostly Sikhs) produced more than half the grain on the Indian market. Agriculture had become thoroughly mechanized and led to growing social tensions in the countryside. Punjab remains an industrially-backward state even today and much employment is only to be found in the agrarian sector. Marginal and small agriculturalist, primarily Siks, have been pushed out of the countryside and have flowed to the small provincial towns. Migrant labor, primarily Hindus, has been brought into the state in harvesting seasons (Wallace 1990). These upheavals which are direct consequences of penetration by global capitalism have doubtless contributed to the success of Khalistani militancy in the Punjab countryside.

The Vishva Hindu Parishad was founded in Bombay on an auspicious day, the birthday of Lord Krishna, 29 August 1964. One hundred and fifty religious leaders were invited to Sandeepany Sadhanalaya, the center of a Hindu missionary movement headed by Swam Chinmayananda. The host had been instrumental in organizing the conference and became its president. Shivram Shankar Apte, a worker of the militant Hindu Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, was elected as its general secretary. The aim of the new movement was to strengthen Hindu society and spread Hindu values, not only in India itself but also abroad. I have argued at length elsewhere that the VHP is primarily trying to formulate a Modern Hinduism as a unifying, common religion of the Indian nation (van der Veer 1994). Till 1980 its project had only limited success, but this changed drastically in the 1980s.

The VHP received a considerable boost when an untouchable subcaste in Meenakshipuram in South India converted en masse to Islam. Conversion and 'petro-dollars are the master-tropes to demonstrate that the Hindu nation is under threat from world Islam. In historical terms Islamic aggression is seen by the VHP as the cause of the fact that many Hindus left their religion and converted to Islam. In its view the unity and integrity of the ancient Hindu nation has been most fundamentally threatened by conversion by the sword. Indian Muslims are therefore constantly exhorted to 'realize' their fundamental Hindu nature. While these conversions were in the past, the Meenakshipuram case 'proved' that the Middle East used its oil wealth to continue the conversion project. It is an instance of the globalization of the the discourse on Islamic fundamentalism and its expansion over the world. This discourse may originate in Western media, but feeds into anti-Islamic sentiments also outside the West. Although the Meenakshipuram conversions were insignificant in terms of overall numbers this case has become the most publicized issue in the VHP's 'defense of Hinduism'. Its propaganda about the 'Islamic threat' led to the organization of a highly successful nation-wide 'sacrifice for unity' in 1983 which in turn became the basis for the events in 1984, described above.

Hindu nationalism, as found in the VHP, also expresses itself in terms of history, territory, and identity. Like their Khalistani counterparts Hindu nationalists describe Hindu history as a story of oppression by Muslim rulers, followed by British Christain rulers, and now by Indian pseudo-secularists. Their story is less one of militant rebellion against 'foreign' rule or martyrdom, although this is not entirely absent from it, but more one emphasizing Hindu 'tolerance' and 'spiritual superiority' in their relations with their oppressors. At the same time, however, the VHP argues that Hindus have been taken advantage of because of their tolerance and should now stand up to claim what is their right, namely the Hinduization of the Indian nation-state. The Congress party which has ruled India for most of the period after independence is condemned by them as a pseudo-secularist party. Its Nehruvian program of reducing the salience of religious beliefs and practices in politics as well as the state's projected neutrality towards religious difference -a stance inherited from the colonial state- are both seen to be contradicted by 'pampering the minorities', and specifically by using the Muslim community as a vote bank and by dividing the Hindu majority by setting the Untouchables up against the rest. Independence -as VHP ideologues keep reminding their audience- has not brought freedom for the Hindu majority. The state should express the Hindu values of purity and incorruptibility as found in the divine realm of the God-king Rama. History books should be rewritten to convey the proud heritage of Hindu civilization and the wrongs inflicted upon it by 'foreigners'.

The territory of the Indian nation-state is in the VHP's conception also Hindu sacred space. This notion of nationwide Hindu sacred space is based on the existence of Hindu centers all over the country connected to eachother by intersecting pilgrimage routes. These routes have been utilized for the VHP's processual agitations and most elaborately in the 'Sacrifice for Unity' in November and December 1983 when three large processions and at least forty-seven smaller processions traversed the country. Processions of temple chariots are an important feature in Hindu temple festivals. The VHP made use of brand-new truck, named 'temple-chariots' which carried huge waterpots with Ganges water an d smaller pots with local sacred water. In this way all rivers and sacred waters of India were symbolically connected to the Ganges as the unifying symbol of Hindu India.

The 'sacrifice for unity' laid the groundwork for the ritual processions aimed at the destruction of the mosque in Ayodhya. The VHP's plan to destroy this mosque as the first of a series of similar mosques, allegedly placed on Hindu sacred spots, is in a way a reinscription of the national geographic in Hindu terms. Tellingly, mr Advani's campaign of 1990 which ended in his arrest in Bihar and the downfall of V.P. Singh's government started in Somnath, perhaps the best known of Hindu temples destroyed by Muslim conquerers. After independence a new Hindu temple was built there by Hindu activist, led by major Congress politicians. Mr Advani's message was clear: what had been done in Somnath by Congress should have been followed up in other places and the BJP/VHP combine was going to do just that.

The identity politics of the VHP movement are complex in nature. On the face of it Hindus do not have to worry as the Sikhs do that they will fade away. They are a comfortable majority, but, to use Stanley Tambiah's phrase, they do have a minority complex. This is shown in the success of the VHP propaganda about the Meenakshipuram conversions which blew this incident to unbelievable proportions. The pre-Independence political rivalry and mutual antagonism between India's two major communities, Hindus and Muslims, is given a new lease of political life by the VHP. While conflicts between the two communities were after the creation of Pakistan confined to particular cities and localities, the VHP succeeded to make it again into a nationwide phenomenon. The other side of Hindu identity politics relates to the long-standing fear that the untouchable communities which make up a crucial percentage of India's population may devide that they are not part of the Hindu nation. Policies which focus on these disadvanted communities are portrayed by the VHP and its political ally, the BJP, as aimed to divide the Hindus against themselves. They are a 'threat to unity'. This is why for Hindu nationalists the debate about affirmative action is closely related to their cause of unifying the nation under a Hindu banner.

The Vishva Hindu Parishad translates its own name into English as Word Hindu Council. Processes of globalization are clearly salient to it. From the start the moveemnt has been intended to unify the Hindu diaspora in the project of Hindu nationalism. The founding session was attended by representatives from Trinidad and Kenya.

The Rama Shila Puja (consecrating the building-blocks of the temple in Ayodhya) brought stones from the US, Canada, the Caribbean, and South Africa, which are prominently exposed on the building site. Whenever I speak about Hindu nationalism on American campuses students belonging to the VHP approach and interrogate me. The Hinduja family -one of the great Hindu entrepreneurial families- supports not only Hindu nationalism in India financially, but has also given huge donations to the universities of Cambridge and Columbia to start up centers for the study of Hindu traditions. In my view this has a much longer history in the global discourse of Hindu spirituality, initiated by Swami Vivekananda in the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1894 and later in Boston. Also, as in the Sikh case the plight of Hindu migrants abroad has been important for Hindu nationalism at home in the early decades of this century (Kelly 1991).

It is extremely difficult to interpret the effects of developments in the world system on the rise of Hindu nationalism, since it is supported by a cross section of the population from very different positions of class, region and ethnic background. What is striking about the eighties is the growth of a consumerism which was made possible by a gradual opening of the previously rather closed Indian market. There is a growth in domestic tourism, a media boom which enables new forms of advertising and marketing, new possibilities of leisure (Appadurai and Breckenridge 1995). It is tempting to connect these changes with the success of movements which use the modern media to stress religious authenticity, but the evidence is contradictory and unclear.

Conclusion

1984 was an important year for religious nationalism in India. It saw Operation Blue Star fulfilling the hopes of Khalistanis by creating a very real divide between Hindus and Sikhs in the country. It saw the beginning of the agitation which led to the destruction of the Babar mosque in Ayodhya in 1992 and to a new phase of intercommunal enmity between Hindus and Muslims in India. Both of these conflicts have an international dimension because of the inimical relations between India and Pakistan. India accuses Pakistan of assisting Sikh terrorists in their actions in the Punjab which borders to Pakistan. Pakistan follows closely what happens with their fellow Muslims in neighboring India. This situation is obviously worsened by the tense standoff in Kashmir where

Muslim militants want a separate state.

Why 1984, or better, why the 1980s? There are a few general features in the development of Indian politics which can be pointed out to have contributed to the happenings of 1984 and their aftermath. Many political scientists (Kohli 1988, Frankel and Rao 1990) have argued that the seventies showed the decline of the 'Congress system' which had governed India since Independence. Mrs Indira Gandhi had to fight off her rivals for the succession of her father Jawaharlal Nehru who had made India to a largely one party system. She definitely succeeded in doing so as her landslide victory of 1971 shows, but only at the cost of a further centralization of power in the center at Delhi and by weakening rivals by playing them off in their homebase against their opponents. This strategy led increasingly to a decline of the ability of the Congress Party to govern India. The precariousness of Mrs Gandhi's rule became evident when she decided to dispense with democracy, when her seat in Parliament was challenged in court. The Emergency of 1975-1977 politicized the police and the powerful civil service and led to a general erosion of the credibility and legitimacy of Congress and the state itself. Many policians, including leaders of the BJP, were arrested and put in jail. There can be little doubt that the distrust Hindu nationalists feel towards Congress 'secularist' and 'progressive' posturings was much strengthened in this period. Mrs Gandhi was soundly defeated after her decision to return to democracy in 1977, but the coalition which succeeded Congress for three years under the name Janata Dal was too internally divided to be an alternative to the Congress System which had at least a long history of containing and balancing of various factional strife. In 1980, then, Mrs Gandhi again won the elections and came back to power, but now more than ever her government had a feeling of embattlement, of presiding over a system which was falling apart.

In the case of the Punjab there can be little doubt that the political strategies employed by Mrs Gandhi's Congress party were a major element in creating Khalistani separatism of the 1980s (Brass 1988, Wallace 1990). Since Independence Congress and Akali Dal have been the main contenders for power in the Punjab. While Congres has been the dominant party over much of this period, the 1977 and 1980 elections were won by the Akalis. It is widely said in India that Bhindranwale came to be used by Congress in this context to weaken support for the Akali Dal. Evidence for this comes from the fact that Bhindranwale's men stood candidate against Akalis in the elections for the committee which manages all Sikh shrines in the Punjab and is the main resource in Sikh politics. To many analysts this explains also why Bhindranwale was soon released after his arrest in connection with the murder of Lala Jagat Narain in 1981. Interestingly, the Punjab provides also an excellent example of the way Mrs Gandhi divided her own party at the regional level in order to prevent challenges to her central power. She made the leader of one faction of the Punjab Congres Party, Giani Zail Singh, first home minister in the Union Government and later President, while she put his opponent, Darbara Singh, at the head of the Punjab government. These manoeuvres explain at least partly the inability of the state to deal decisively with the growing separatist militancy in the Punjab till the moment that the army was brought into the Golden Temple, a self-defeating action by all accounts.

Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous state with more than 100 million inhabitants, shows a similar picture of divisive politics and a growing willingness of all political parties, including Congress, to see religious nationalism, in this case the Hindu one, as a possible unifying force. The main contenders for ruling Uttar Pradesh were Congress, Janata, and BJP. It is important to see that, as in the Punjab, the Congress had lost its dominance in Uttar Pradesh in the 1970s. Uttar Pradesh in this period is a good example of the mobilization of the middle peasantry, called Backward Castes. For example, the short-lived Janata government which ruled Uttar Pradesh after the Emergency implemented reservation policies which favored these Backward Castes. The BJP, however, saw this kind of policy as dividing the unity of the Hindu nation. As we have seen earlier the politics of caste reservations and of Hindu nationalism played themselves out in the politics of the 1980s and Uttar Pradesh was a crucial arena for that. Congress could not stay out of this, even if it had wanted, and, as in the case of the Punjab, ultimately favored religious nationalism. The crucial decision in 1986 to open the mosque in Ayodhya for the Hindu public could not have been taken without direct consent of the Congress leadership. This was clearly done to gain political advantage by acting according to Hindu populist sentiments, although this backfired in the end by giving the BJP more wind in the sails.

The politicization of the main institutions of the state, such as the police and the civil service, is one element of what Atul Kohli (1990) has called 'India's growing crisis of governability'. The gradual decline of the Congress system, containing various regional and social conflicts, another. A major element in this is the success rather than the failure of mass politics in that a growing number of groups have become involved in the political system. Their mobilization has taken shape in two types of mass movement: the backward caste movements and the religious nationalist movements. Unfortunately, this enhanced participation has also led to a growth in political militancy and violence. The change in the political arena is undoubtedly among the most important elements in explaining the growth of religious nationalism among both Sikhs and Hindus in the 1980s.

Another element in the explanation of the events of the 1980s is the departure from the Nehruvian policy of economic self-reliance and political non-alliance. Nehru's daugther Indira Gandhi and especially his grandson Rajiv Gandhi became in the 1980s much more in favor of economic liberalization, privatization of the public sector, and the opening up of the Indian markets for foreign goods and investments. It has been argued by the Indian political scientist Rajni Kothari (1991), among others, that the collective anxieties created by the rapid globalization of production and consumption in the 1980s were among the social forces behind the emergence of religious nationalist movements. This is very much in line with the 'rapid social change' thesis of Riesebrodt which I critized in my introduction. To me it is not so much the upheaval caused by rapid, social change which matters, but, quite specifically, a fascination with foreign products, films, and entertainment which came readily available when India opened up for global elevision and advertising. These media images created a strong sense among especially young, middle class men that they were entitled to participate in this world of consumption, but unable to do so. The movements I have discussed explain this 'injustice' in terms of the unjust nature of the 'pseudo-secularist' state which gives privileges to the religious Other. The success of religious nationalism in this regard is that they do not only give an explanation for the feeling of 'lack', but also for that of 'loss', namely the loss of cultural authenticity in a world of globalized images. An interesting aspect of this feeling of 'loss' is that is particularly acute among transnational migrants whose movement is intrinsically tied up with processes of globalization. Both the Sikh diaspora and the Hindu diaspora play a significant part in the religious nationalisms 'at home'. It is striking in India how often the desire for a 'green card' to be able to settle permanently in the USA is combined with a strong feeling of the religious superiority of one's own nation. Rather than a clear-cut, 'fundamentalist' refusal of modernity and postmodernity we have here the typical ambivalences and ambiguities of responses to globalization.

The phenomenon of religious nationalism itself, however, is not explained by either the rise of mass politics or the effects of globalization. It is also not explained by oblique references to the global rise of fundamentalism. As I have argued in the introduction, the Western discourse on fundamentalism is important not so much in explaining mass movements, but in framing them in a global language of modernization which opposes 'religion' to 'secularity' as 'backwardness' to 'forwardness'. As we have seen, the language of modernization prevents us from understanding the complicated histories of movements which are produced in 'post-colonial modernity'. For that we need a long-term perspective which analyzes the colonial past of both the 'secularity' of the nation-state and the 'religiosity' of religio-political movements.

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