

TRANSNATIONAL RELIGION

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1. Introduction

Religion as a category and nationalism as an ideology emerge together in discourses of modernity in the 19th century. Theories that emphasize the universality of religion and the particular historicity of the nation underestimate the extent to which the nation form is universalized in modern history and determines the location of religion.¹ Societies assume the nation form in the historical transformation that we refer to as ‘modernity’ and it is this form that determines what is understood as the religious or the secular. This assertion is not a re-phrasing of the secularisation thesis since there is not much evidence for the disappearance of religion or its marginalization in public life in most societies. Rather, it emphasizes the importance of the nation-state for the location and nature of religion. Again, theories, such as those of Durkheim and his followers, that argue that religion is replaced by nationalism neglect the continuing importance of nationalized religion in modern identity. In Western Europe, at least, denominational differences are not completely obliterated in the process of national unification, but they are often hierarchically ‘encompassed’ (to use Louis Dumont’s term) as forms of national identity. This encompassment is in many plural societies expressed in well-worn slogans, such as ‘unity in diversity’. In the modern nation-state religious difference does not immediately have to lead to questions of loyalty to the nation, although, as we shall see, this continues to be a delicate issue in relation to immigrant minorities.

Nation and trans-nation belong together in a more intimate way than is often realized.² Processes of globalization have been intrinsic to processes of state-formation both in colonizing and colonized societies. This is not taken sufficiently into account in theories of globalization that posit the dissolution of the nation-state today as a consequence of the development of transnational governance and the global economy. In fact, from the 19th century nations have been formed as a consequence of transformations in the world-system. The fundamental changes that we see over the past few decades, undeniably, do have important consequences for the political and economic capacities of nation-states, but they do certainly not imply the dissolving

¹ Talal Asad, Genealogies of Religion. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1993. Peter van der Veer, Imperial Encounters: Religion and Modernity in India and Britain. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001.

² Peter van der Veer (ed), Nation and Migration. The Politics of the South Asian Diaspora. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995.

of this societal form. One of the most important transformations we can point at is that of what is called 'the death of distance'. As a matter of fact, distance kills us even more since we travel and communicate more, but the idea is that communications in the broad sense (including telecommunications and transport) have brought everyone closer to everyone. Migrant communities today are thus different from those at the end of the 19th century, say, because they are closer to home by way of telephone, internet, television and airplane. Instead of forming migrant communities that try to keep in touch with home they are diasporic networks with a multiplicity of nodes. Moreover, there is a globalized production of the notion of 'home' and thus the cultural distance with the traditions of the home country cannot be conceptualised in the same ways as before.

The very general and sketchy observations that I have made here are meant to be introductory to the issues I want to address in this paper. The first issue is that of the relation between nation-states, nationalism and migrant religious communities. The second is that of the so-called religious conservatism of migrant communities. The final is that of alternative cosmopolitanisms. These issues are related in the perspective presented here, but can be disentangled for analytical purposes.

2. Nation and Migration

An important issue often raised in relation to migrant religious communities is that of the political loyalty to the nation-state of immigration. This is in some ways an old issue with regard to religious minorities. The European wars of religion of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were fought around the question of political loyalty: Can one be loyal to the state when one is not following the religion of the state? As Hobbes and other political thinkers realized, it was the nature of the state that was at issue here. One outcome of the political revolutions in America and France of the late eighteenth century was that political loyalty could rest on citizenship instead of membership in the state church. This development led ultimately to the 'secular' idea, for example in nineteenth-century Britain, of the enfranchisement of the Roman Catholics and of dissenting minorities.

It is interesting to note that the debate in Europe about religious minorities, and especially Muslims, again is about political loyalty. Where in the nineteenth century Roman Catholics in Protestant countries like Britain or Holland often accused of being loyal to ‘the pope in Rome’, Muslims today are either accused of being loyal to Mecca (and receive money from the Saudis) or to their nation-states of origin. In the Netherlands a recent report of the Internal Security Agency (BVD) argues that mosques which are supported from ‘outside’ are forces which work against the integration of Muslims in Dutch society. In debates about religious points of view Muslims are regularly asked to show their allegiance to Dutch norms and values, and to the laws of the land. The general idea behind this concern is something expressed by the political philosopher Charles Taylor, namely that “secularism in some form is necessary for the democratic life of religiously diverse societies”.³ From John Stuart Mill on liberal thinkers have felt that religion is likely to be a threat to freedom and democracy.

Besides this general, secularist unease with the role of public religion in the nation-state there is the problem of dual citizenship and the role of religion in transnational linkages. Turks and Moroccans in the Netherlands are often still citizens in their nation-states of origin. For both Turkey and Morocco the loyalty of their transnational communities continues to be of crucial economic and political importance. These states make concerted efforts to control the appointment of religious officials, such as imams, in the migrant communities, because it is religion that ties these migrants to the nation. Moreover, these states have a vested interest in the education of such officials.⁴ One could speak of transnational state policies not only in economic and political matters, but also in religious ones. Migrant communities, therefore, have to negotiate the religious policies of both the nation of immigration and the nation of origin.

Questions of multiple citizenship and religion have therefore gained priority on the European political agenda. Hyphenated identities, which have become of great importance in identity politics in the US, are now also increasingly important in Europe and Asia. To illustrate this development and to demonstrate that transnational religious movements are crucial in it I want to examine the case of India.

India has seen the emergence of a special kind of hyphenated identity: the non-resident Indian (NRI). The Foreign Exchange Regulations Act of 1973 includes in this category: 1.

³ Charles Taylor, ‘Modes of Secularism’, in Rajeev Bhargava (ed), Secularism and its critics. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998.

⁴ See Rubah Salih, ‘Confronting Modernities; Muslim Women in Italy’, ISIM-Newsletter, March 2001.

citizens of India living abroad for the purpose of carrying on a business or career, but declaring their intention to stay in India for an indefinite period. 2. Persons of Indian origin holding a passport of another country. One is of Indian origin if one has held an Indian passport, or if either of the parents or grandparents was Indian. The wife of a person of Indian origin is held to be of Indian origin too. Neither citizenship nor residence is thus the criteria for deciding on this category, but 'origin' is and in that sense it has much in common with the German genealogical definition of belonging to the German nation and having the right to return to Germany. The main reason for the Indian state to create this category is to raise foreign exchange, since NRIs are allowed to deposit money in Indian banks with competitive, guaranteed rates of interest. In 1998 the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) proposed further changes, such as the introduction of a PIO card (Person of Indian origin) with a number of benefits attached to it. It is ironic that a party that derives so much of its political gains from a campaign which stigmatises the indigenous Muslim community as 'foreign' is so interested in Indians who actually live in foreign lands. The nuclear explosions of 1998 also enhanced enthusiasm under the NRIs in the USA. The announcement of international sanctions against India led to successful fundraising by the Indian government under NRIs. Transnational investment, global politics and the cultural capital of 'belonging' go hand in hand here.⁵

Manuel Castells argues that while the legitimizing identities of the state are declining in the information age, resistance identities and project identities (aiming at total societal transformation) are on the rise. These identities are produced by social movements which react against three fundamental threats:

globalization, which dissolves the autonomy of institutions, organizations and communication systems where people live. Reaction against networking and flexibility, which blur the boundaries of membership and involvement, individualize social relationships of production, and induce the structural instability of work, space, and time. And reaction against the crisis of the patriarchal family. At the roots of the transformation of mechanisms of security building, socialization, sexuality, and therefore of personality systems. When the world becomes too large to be controlled, social actors aim at shrinking it back to their size and reach.⁶

⁵ See the interesting argument by Arvind Rajagopal, 'Transnational Networks and Hindu Nationalism', Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars, 29, 3, 1997, 49-50.

⁶ Manuel Castells, The Power of Identity. Oxford: Basil Blackwell 1997, p.66.

Castells' observations are useful, but, at the same time, things look somewhat different when one examines Indian social movements with a global reach. I want to look at two of them, one Hindu, the other Muslim, but both originating in India.

The Vishva Hindu Parishad, founded in 1964 by leaders of the militant Hindu nationalist organization Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and the Hindu guru Swami Chinmayanand, is a Hindu revivalist movement which simultaneously tries to reach out globally to all Hindus in the world and mobilize Hindus in India for anti-Muslim politics.⁷ The most important action of the VHP has been in the period 1984 to 1992 to mobilize Hindus for the destruction of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya, a mosque allegedly built on a Hindu site. Not only has this action reached its target of destroying the 16th century mosque it also has made the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), a political party allied to both VHP and RSS, the largest party in India.

What interests us here are the contradictory faces of the VHP. On the one hand, the VHP is clearly a movement that promotes Hindu nationalism with an anti-secular and anti-Muslim slant and as such it is a movement that continues much of the religious nationalist rhetoric and methods of such movements since the late 19th century. It resists westernization and globalization in so far as they are 'foreign' threats to the basic Hindu values of the Indian nation. Muslims as a community signify the 'foreign' as 'the enemy within'. Ideologically, they are portrayed as 'converts', having their allegiance outside of India. They do not belong to India, but to Pakistan or to Arabia and have thus to be either religiously purified by re-conversion to Hinduism or ethnically cleansed by forced emigration.

On the other hand, the VHP is a movement that is very active globally and one of the prime agents of the globalization of Hinduism. In the USA it has been active since 1974, following sizable immigration from India. The anti-Muslim politics which is central to its activities in India, does not make much sense in the USA. Anti-globalization rhetoric which emphasize restrictions on foreign capital flowing into Indian companies are conspicuously absent from the VHP propaganda in the USA and rightly so, since its supporters there are strongly in favour of the liberalization and globalization of the economy.⁸ As NRIs they have also direct

⁷ For a general overview, see Peter van der Veer, Religious Nationalism. Hindus and Muslims in India. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.

⁸ Rajagopal, 1997, 57.

personal advantage in the free flow of capital. The focus of the VHP in the USA is, as with many religious movements globally, on the family. The great fear of Indian migrants to the USA is perhaps not so much the threat to the patriarchal nature of the Hindu family, since many of these migrants are well-educated professionals, both men and women. Rather, it is the struggle to reproduce Hindu culture in a foreign environment in order to socialize their children in the hybridity of Indian-Americans. The fear is often that the children will lose all touch with the culture of the parents and thus, in some sense, be lost to them. Both Internet-chatgroups and youth camps are organised by the VHP to keep Hinduism alive among young Indians in the USA. As Arvind Rajagopal rightly observes, the VHP needs different tactics, different objectives in different places in order to be able to recruit members. In India it is a nationalist movement, but in the US it is a global religious movement. Arjun Appadurai's work on globalization has reminded us consistently how important it is to keep these disjunctures and differences in global flows in view.⁹

The VHP has benefited from the great success of the serialization of the religious epic Ramayana between 1987 and 1988 on Doordarshan, Indian national television. It not only became the most popular program ever seen on Indian television but also turned out to be a social and political event of great significance. The estimated daily viewership was 40 to 60 million, while some 80 to 100 million people watched the most popular episodes. Newspaper reports say that Indian life ground to a standstill at the time of the broadcast. Hindus all over the country watched with a religious attitude, having in fact a darshan, a vision of the sacred on doordarshan, television. Put on twenty-six video cassettes it became available for worldwide sale. The VHP not only benefited from this, but used itself also actively media, such as video-cassettes, for purposes of propaganda. The Hindu nationalist movement uses a combination of media strategies to promote their views both in India and abroad among the NRIs.¹⁰

Another movement, originating in India, but now globally spread, also requires our attention. This is the Tablighi Jama'at, a Muslim revivalist movement which was founded in Delhi in the 1920s, but has spread widely in areas of Indo-Pakistani migration. They are now the

⁹ See Arjun Appadurai, Modernity at Large. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1997.

¹⁰ See Arvind Rajagopal, Politics after Television. Hindu Nationalism and the Reshaping of the Public in India. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001.

largest transnational Islamic movement, in scale and scope only comparable to Christian Pentecostalism. Marc Gaborieau describes its modus operandi succinctly:

the invitation (tabligh) to Islam is not the affair of religious specialists, but the responsibility of all Muslims who must devote their time and money to it; one should not wait for people to come to hear the preaching, but ether preachers should travel to reach the people; preaching is done by self-financing itinerant groups; the mingling of all social classes is obligatory within these groups; the primary objective is to deepen the faith of those who are already Muslims, proselytism toward non-Muslims being marginal; and the promotion of the unity of Muslims being a primary objective, theological as well as political controversies are prohibited inside the movement.¹¹

The tablighis, then, resemble some of the Christian evangelical movements which summon their fellow-believers to wake-up and be faithful.

The tablighis are professedly a-political and this is a very deliberate stance. In that sense they do not resist any particular state or political formation. Instead they have a project in the way Alain Tourraine and Manuel Castells define this, an objective of total transformation of society not by the state but by social actors without political mediation. It makes no sense to call this a-political, but it is, obviously, crucial for the tablighis to state that they are not interested in the state nor in politics. It enables them to work in a great variety of states, both Islamic and non-Islamic, without coming into open conflict with them. The aim of total transformation, however, does conflict in an indirect way with policies of assimilation and multiculturalism, since they promote religious enclaves of correct beliefs and behaviour.

It is fascinating to see that this truly global movement which can only be understood in terms of globalization is very much opposed to modern media of communication, like television, cassettes and videos, internet, such as are used almost by any other global movement of the sort. This resistance to globalization and ICTs is quite exceptional among transnational Islamic movements. In fact, according to Eickelman and Anderson, a transnational Muslim public sphere is being opened up by the use of ICTs by transnational Muslim movements.¹² The tablighis do not conform to this trend. The method of communication is oral and the expansion of the movement works through face-to-face encounters and the movement of groups who preach.

¹¹ Marc Gaborieau, "Transnational Islamic Movements: Tablighi Jama'at in Politics?", ISIM Newsletter, 3/99, 21.

¹² Dale Eickelman and Jon Anderson (eds) New Media and the Muslim World. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999.

Despite the first impression of an extremely loosely organised network of groups, there is in fact a clear hierarchy of command, centring on Delhi, but the apex of it is hardly penetrable for outsiders.

Both these movements, the VHP and the Tablighi Jama'at, are global and local at the same time. The VHP, however, continues to emphasize the intermediate, national level, while this level has an ideologically reduced significance for tablighis who stress the transnational unity of Muslims ('umma). They have interesting and contradictory stances towards globalization, but it is clear that their transnational politics have impact on the projects of a number of states to create civil societies.

3. Religious Conservatism in Migrant Communities

It is often argued and sometimes demonstrated that migrant communities tend to become conservative in religious and social matters. They would do so to retain an identity under the pressures of assimilation. Moreover, since they are often challenged in a multicultural environment to explain their beliefs and practices they tend to become more aware of them. This kind of conscious conservatism or reactionary traditionalism has been observed in a number of migrant groups, such as the Dutch Reformed Church migrants in Michigan (USA), Canada and Australia. In debates about Muslim groups in Western Europe it is often remarked that they tend to be more religiously conservative than those who have stayed in the countries of origin. I think that there is a great deal of truth in the observation that migrant groups have to become more aware of their religion and culture due to their constant interpellation by 'established' communities and that an ideological apologetics, a conscious defence of one's practices may follow from this. However, this might not be interpreted as the 'freezing' of an otherwise fluid tradition. In fact, 'traditionalism' requires immense ideological work that transforms previous discursive practices substantially. Work on arguments about Islam in high school discussions in Western Europe describe in detail how Muslim students acquire skills to defend their religion and culture, appropriate to the discursive styles characteristic for the discursive styles in the nation-states of immigration.¹³ More broadly, migrant groups are often required to translate their discursive traditions into the dominant language of the nation of immigration in order to educate

¹³ Project by Baumann, Vertovec, and Schiffauer

the generations born in these new societies. This act of translation is crucial in the transformation of religious tradition. When Hindus and Muslims in the Netherlands begin to speak about their religious specialists and their religious services by using Protestant Christian vocabulary they are already in a process of transformation, in which pandits and imams provide guidance in spiritual matters and become not-yet secularised social workers.

In a recent contribution, Olivier Roy distinguishes several responses to the migrant situation by Muslims.¹⁴ The first is the so-called 'salafist' that stresses the return to an original and authentic Islam, but in doing so goes against the ethnicization of Islam. Mosques in Europe tend to be 'Moroccan', Turkish', Algerian, 'Bangladeshi' or otherwise ethnically specific, but this tendency of ethnic division has been rejected as fitna in Islamic thought and the salafists or new fundamentalists make use of this to preach a global Islam transcending ethnic and national divisions. The second is a process of individualization in which individual belief instead of social conformism is the basis of Islamic behaviour. To be a 'true' Muslim is more a personal choice and a matter of internal conversion than the result of social pressure. It is here that we can understand the success of such movements as the Tablighi Jama'at since they produce a kind of 'born-again' Muslims. Thirdly, there is the expansion of web-sites where self-appointed experts on Islamic thought and behaviour teach their version. This creates a new sphere of Muslim communication and debate in which the traditional interpreters of the tradition, the 'ulama, play a diminished role. In this debate, however, it is not 'liberal Islam' of the Muhammad Arkoun type that is prevalent. Rather it is the more literalist or even fundamentalist arguments that are dominant. Again, these developments do not show conservatism, but quite significant transformations that bring 'born-again' Muslims, so to say, in direct conflict with their own fellow-Muslims who try to continue some of their ethnic-religious practices in a new environment.

Crucial is the shaping of the public sphere and the deployment of Islamic arguments in it. An interesting illustration of what may happen in the liberal public sphere is a recent incident in the Netherlands. An important news programme on Dutch television had an item on violence against homosexuals by Moroccan youth gangs. A Moroccan imam in Rotterdam was asked in that program what he thought of homosexuality. He stated clearly on television that homosexuality was regarded as a terrible aberration in Islam and that it was a disease that would

¹⁴ Olivier Roy, 'Muslims in Europe: From Ethnic Identity to Religious Recasting', ISIM Newsletter, June 2000.

ultimately threaten Dutch society. He indicated in the interview that violence against homosexuals was forbidden and that homosexuals should be regarded with pity and treated, but this part of the interview was not broadcast. Within a few days the media could not stop reporting on the illiberal and unenlightened nature of Islam and members of parliament started arguing that this imam should be brought to justice and possibly extradited. The Prime Minister made a strong statement that Muslim immigrants should conform to the norms and values of Dutch society. In the media a demand for state intervention in education of imams was voiced from different sides, forgetting the separation of state and church for a moment. The rapid transition from a concern about violence to a concern about religion was striking in the Dutch debate. It is in this context that imams are appointed as spokesmen for their religious community by the Dutch media and public opinion and in which the understanding of Islam in both Muslim and non-Muslim public spheres has to be articulated.

Imams who state publicly that Islam is against homosexual practice are portrayed as conservative in the liberal public sphere. Moreover, since Morocco is a country which has been known in the partly Orientalist imagination as a heaven of homosexual and pedosexual practice for at least a century there is a further notion that what is accepted in Morocco is suddenly not anymore acceptable in the Netherlands because of the growing conservatism of migrant Muslims.¹⁵ This precisely shows the difference in the understanding of 'the public' in Morocco and the Netherlands. In Holland identity movements, such as the Gay movement, have after the 1960s made great progress in gaining public recognition of sexual identity. A recent culmination of that is the civil marriage for gays. In Morocco there may be substantial gay activity, but no public recognition nor debate about it. Gays should be 'in the closet' in Moroccan society (as in fact in most societies) but in Holland this is not possible anymore; positions have to be publicly stated and immediately connected to religion. Everything becomes a subject of public debate and the invitation to that debate is given under special conditions and can hardly be refused. In the Netherlands the leaders of Muslim communities were summoned by the Minister of Urban Policy to explain their views on homosexuality in a meeting at his department. The nature of the liberal public sphere is such that religious points of view can be primed and framed by the media as

¹⁵ This is similar to the Dutch understanding of the Turkish habit of wearing headscarves. The Dutch point of view is that this is forbidden in Turkish schools and that the demand to wear headscarves in the Netherlands is a sign of growing conservatism. There is a serious neglect of the political context of Turkey in which a radical secularist government tries to get rid of public Islam but seems to be losing that battle.

more conservative than in the countries of origin and deeply offensive to liberal sensibilities and that religious leaders can be made into ethnic spokesmen.

4. Alternative Cosmopolitanisms

Transnational religious movements are hardly ever seen as instances of cosmopolitanism. Secularity is a characteristic of the nineteenth-century trope of cosmopolitanism and it continues to be so in current discussions. Religious allegiances are understood (from J.S. Mill to Ernest Gellner) as condemning the believer to parochialism, absolutism and a lack of tolerance. Given the importance attributed to the notion of cosmopolitanism in current discussions of transnationalism and globalization I want to complicate this perspective.¹⁶ As I have argued elsewhere, cosmopolitanism as a concept and an ethical ideal is not a view from nowhere.¹⁷ It has a clear genealogy in the European Enlightenment and in its development into a liberal, progressive ideal in the nineteenth century it connects nationalism with imperialism.¹⁸ In my view, it was in Europe always complemented by a Christian cosmopolitanism of both the Catholic and the Protestant kind. Missionary movements in nineteenth-century Britain, for example, created a public awareness of the fact that there was a larger world beyond Britain and that British Christians had an imperial duty towards the rest of the world. Liberal Cosmopolitanism and Evangelical Cosmopolitanism developed side by side in the colonial era. Their commonality was well expressed in the phrase “the white man’s burden” which is still behind global charitable and developmental activism. If openness and a willingness to engage are characteristic of cosmopolitanism one has to recognize a number of different projects of engagement with the world.¹⁹

In the contemporary phase of globalization non-western kinds of cosmopolitan engagements with very different genealogies have come up. There are new perceptions ‘home and the world’ at play in a number of migrations. The postcolonial cities of today show a massive

¹⁶ See for instance, Pheng Cheah and Bruce Robbins (eds) *Cosmopolitics*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998.

¹⁷ Peter van der Veer, “Colonial Cosmopolitanism”, Paper for Conference on “Conceiving Cosmopolitanism”, University of Warwick, April 2000

¹⁸ Peter van der Veer and Hartmut Lehmann (eds), *Nation and Religion. Perspectives on Europe and Asia*. Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1999.

¹⁹ See on these issues: George Thomas, ‘Social Movements in Rationalistic Contexts: Religions in World Culture’ and ‘Religion in Global Civil Society’, two unpublished papers drafted in 2001.

deprovincialization of the world or, one may say, a new cosmopolitanism. Clifford Geertz expresses this with his usual rhetorical flourish:

As the entanglements of everybody with everybody else have grown in recent times to the point where everyone is tripping over everyone's feet and everyone is everyone's face, its disruptive power, its capacity to induce doubts in those who think they have things figured out, taped, under control, rapidly increases. We live in a bazaar, not a cathedral; a whirl, not a diagram, and this makes it difficult for anyone anymore to be wholly at ease with his or her own ideas, no matter how official, no matter how cherished, no matter how plated with certainty.²⁰

There are a variety of responses to this situation. One of them is indeed non-interference or even indifference. Ulf Hannerz argues correctly that this attitude is not cosmopolitanism, since it is the attitude of sticking to one's own, of the hedgehog rather than of the fox. Genuine cosmopolitanism in his view is a willingness to engage with the Other. The question, however, is what are the conditions and terms of engagement in today's global cities. In an essay on the cultural role of world cities Hannerz uses a quotation from V.S. Naipaul as his motto:

Cities like London were to change. They were to cease being more or less national cities; they were to become cities of the world, modern-day Romes, establishing the pattern of what great cities should be, in the eyes of islanders like myself and people even more remote in language and culture. They were to be cities visited for learning and elegant goods and manners and freedom by all the barbarian peoples of the globe, people of forest and desert, Arabs, Africans, Malays.²¹

This is in fact a nineteenth-century view in which the cultural engagement is perceived as an attempt to uplift the "great unwashed", now constituted by groups of very different cultural backgrounds. Naipaul is, of course, one of the great believers in a universal civilization, rooted in the Enlightenment, and not at all sympathetic to the persistence of backward cultures, predominantly of what he perceives as an anti-rational religious kind. He is a representative of liberal cosmopolitanism. But is this the only possibility of engagement in the global city?

²⁰ Clifford Geertz,.....

²¹ Ulf Hannerz, Transnational Connections. London: Routledge, 1996, p. 127.

We see in global cities predominantly a cultural engagement within the context of a politics of immigration.²² These cities are a product of the increased mobility of capital and labour and they are the sites of new notions of membership, solidarity, and violence. Particularly interesting are the new social movements that mobilize outsiders to gain access to housing, property, sanitation, health services, education, child care, employment, and protection. The established respond to these claims by developing more and more elaborate security measures, creating walled enclaves in the city. Ghettos, ethnic neighborhoods, enclaves are the conditions of engagement in the global city. Gender and communal identities are newly constructed in the encounter with the Other which is often anonymous and indifferent, but sometimes violent when spatial markings of identity are violated. Nothing is fixed and settled in the urban space...outsiders today are the established of tomorrow and the demands of the globalized network society prevent a reflexive life-planning for most people except a tiny elite.²³

Much of the cultural engagement in the global cities in the world is reactive to the enormous dislocations of modern flexible capital and labour. People do try to build enclaves of communal identity and stake their claims to ownership of the city violently. Their engagement with the Other is not necessarily pleasant. Nevertheless, I believe that it is in these urban arenas that new sources of the self, in religious, gender, and political terms, develop. If we are looking for a postmodern cosmopolitanism it is the global city we have to examine. I, for one, do not want to be restricted by Baudrillard's description of postmodern culture as immediate and bland, transparent and fast-moving...a blip on the screen, impelled by commercialism, without depth, without place. In fact, locality is produced by global forces and the global city is a very real domain in which cosmopolitanism as a pattern of inclusion and exclusion in the public sphere emerges. Especially, transnational movements which help migrants to cope with the conditions of migration and labour flexibility, such as the Tablighi Jama'at in Islam and the Visva Hindu Parishad in Hinduism, do not simply build religious enclaves, safe havens of the self, but are creatively developing new religious understandings of their predicament, entailing an encounter with the multiplicity of Others on their own terms. It is impossible to simply call these movements closed, confined and confining,

²² See James Holton and Arjun Appadurai 'Cities and Citizenship', Public Culture, 19, 1996. Also, about Bombay, Thomas Blom Hansen, The Saffron Wave, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1999.

²³ See Manuel Castells, The Power of Identity, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1997.

provincial as against cosmopolitan. They carry cosmopolitan projects, but emerge from very different histories than that of the European Enlightenment.

Global cities are located everywhere, from Hong Kong to Rio de Janeiro, from Bombay to Los Angeles; they are not anymore the metropolises of colonial empires. The global imageries which are at play in them are just as multi-centred. I met a Pakistani taxi-driver in New York who was saving money to study Islamic science in Teheran and I am regularly travelling in aeroplanes with Hindu grandmothers who are located both in India and the US and connect their grandchildren with a religion that is constantly negotiated in New York and San Francisco. The 19th century bourgeois project of cosmopolitanism is not anymore possible in the global cities of today, since the differences are too substantial, the diasporic communications too frequent. As Pnina Werbner has recently argued about working-class Pakistani cosmopolitans, labour migration forges global pathways, routes along which Islamic and familial transnational worlds are constituted.²⁴ One does not know what the post-modern, postcolonial cosmopolitanism will look like, but it will be a beast of a different kind, whether we like it or not.

²⁴ Pnina Werbner, 'Global Pathways. Working class cosmopolitans and the creation of transnational ethnic worlds', *Social Anthropology* (1999), 7, 1, 17-35.