It has become increasingly important to study the social force of both religion and nationalism in many contemporaneous worlds all over the world in an analytical framework that has remained conceptualized in an unilingual fashion. Until now, social theory as well as Western common sense have been often content to assume an ideological a priori distinction between the nationalistic and the religious imagination.

**Nation and Religion**

A Comparative Study of Colonizers and Colonized

As the argument goes, nationalism belongs to the realm of legitimate modern politics, and is assumed to be ‘secular’, since it is thought to develop within a process of ‘secularization’ and ‘modernization’. Religion, in this view, assumes political significance only in the ‘underdeveloped parts’ – much as it did in the past of ‘the West’. When religion manifests itself politically in the contemporary world, it is thus conceived as a target of a ‘process’ or a ‘movement’.

The dichotomy between religion and nationalism is an ideological element in the Western discourse of modernity. The research programme is therefore designed as a comparative one. It examines religion and nationalism in three sets of societies: India and Great Britain, Ghana and Tanzania, and Great Britain and Indonesia and Holland. It focuses on the modern period, between 1850 and the present, which is the period of both high colonialism and high nationalism as well as their aftermath. The project is based on the idea that a combination of metropolitan and colonial perspectives should lead to a deeper understanding of distinct kinds of secularization in modern insights than have previously been possible among scholars who tend to work along the divide of colonizing and colonized nations.

It also suggests that comparative work on these issues on both sides of the divide might show that what seemed entirely separate, in fact, related. The project aims at reinstating the discussion of the place of religion in modern societies which theories of secularization have largely ignored.

1) The ‘secular’ nature of British society in comparison with the ‘religious’ nature of Indian, African, and Indonesian societies.

2) The impact of the mission is definitely not confined to the ‘success’ or ‘failure’ of missionizing process.

3) Missionization and ‘Conversion’.

In the historical and anthropological study of the missionary project, there has been an almost exclusive interest in the effects of missionization and ‘conversion’ to the extent that it is important to look at the other end of the missionizing process.

The project examines the following sets of questions:

1. How does religious belief and practice change in the modern world?
2. Does religion play a part in the social order of organizations within society?
3. Do missionizing processes lead to a particular politics of ‘community’ and the contemporary ‘minority’?

2) The Discourse of ‘Community’ and ‘Nation’

The ‘minority’ as well as that of the ‘Muslim minority’ in India, Asia and Indonesia have, at least partly, as a reaction to Christian missionary activity. While much work has been done on the nineteenth-century history, too little is known about the development of these movements in the twentieth century, and it is one of the aims of the programme to write this history. The religious revival in India and Indonesia occurred in a period of great religious activity in Britain and Holland. These social religious movements in both the colonized areas and in the metropoles have never been studied in a comparative framework.

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