Managing Religious Diversity in a Global Context
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Debate Continued

Editorial

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T he management of religious diversity figures high on the current agenda of political and academic debates. There is indeed a growing awareness, among politicians and academics alike, that given the relevance of religion in the articulation of cultural identities the democratic management of multicultural societies has to consider the specific problems of religious diversity. Thus, for example, the Australian Multicultural Foundation (AMF), in association with the European Multicultural Foundation (EMF) and UNESCO, with the support of Multicultural Affairs Queensland and the Australian Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, organised a Conference on *Religion and Cultural Diversity* in London on 31 October 1999, where the focus was on the political implications of religious diversity as induced by migration processes, especially in Australia and the United Kingdom.[1] While migration is certainly a major source of religious diversification and ensuing political controversy, there are other developments of equal political relevance such as the rise of fundamentalist movements, the re-emergence of religious nationalism, and the instrumentalisation of religious identities in interethnic conflict. Seen in a larger context, all of these phenomena are related to an increased economic, political, and cultural interconnectedness at a global level.[2] The current issue of the *International Journal on Multicultural Societies*, published by UNESCO, therefore continues the discussions of the two preceding issues by emphasising the global context of managing religious diversity.

Political and academic debates on the so-called resurgence of religion and its interplay with globalisation often suffer, however, from simplistic assumptions about the nature and consequences of modernity. Some argue that globalisation processes highlight fundamental differences between Western modernity and other, non-Western civilisations; in this perspective, most prominently formulated by Samuel P. Huntington in his well-known thesis of a coming "clash of

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[1] A report of the conference can be found at the website of the Australian Multicultural Foundation.

[2] The interplay of globalisation and the resurgence of religion was addressed in more depth at this year's conference of the Association Française des Sciences Sociales des Religions (AFSR) in Paris, 7–8 February 2000; see Bastian, J.-P., F. Champion, and K. Rousselet, eds. 2000. *La globalisation religieuse*. Paris: L'Harmattan.

civilisations"[3], religious diversity is interpreted, both on a global and a national level, as a mirror of intercivilisational conflict. Others, such as Francis Fukuyama in his thesis of an "end of history", promote an opposing view arguing that globalisation processes imply a homogenisation of civilisations in accordance with Western modernity[4]; hence, compared with the impact of the diffusion of global capitalist consumer culture, religious diversity is judged as a marginal phenomenon without any serious political implications. Whereas in both perspectives modernity is regarded as being characterised by secularisation and hence by a delegation of religion to the private sphere, an analysis of the democratic governance in religiously diverse societies has to take into account the public dimension of religion in modern societies. This theoretical point of departure, already underlying the two previous issues of the *International Journal on Multicultural Societies*, is further developed in the current issue.

In his contribution on The Resurgence of Religious Movements in Processes of Globalisation – Beyond End of History or Clash of Civilisations, S. N. Eisenstadt takes an explicit theoretical stance against both Huntington's and Fukuyama's theses. Drawing on recent social science research, he situates the rise of fundamentalist and communal religious movements within the larger context of globalisation and the structural transformation of the modern nation-state. In this perspective, the so-called resurgence of religion and the ensuing potential for global political conflict are related to a multiplication of interpretations of modern culture and their social institutionalisation.

The contributions by Greg Smith and Inger Furseth analyse various aspects of religious diversity on the ground, especially those induced by large-scale migration processes to urban centres in the Northern Hemisphere. In his contribution on *Global Systems and Religious Diversity in the Inner City – Migrants in the East End of London* that draws on extensive fieldwork in the East End of London (England), Greg Smith scrutinises the characteristics of transnational religious communities emerging from the interplay between ethnic diversification, the transformation of existing religious organisations, and their integration in global networks of interaction. Discussing the contributions to this Journal by James A. Beckford, Grace Davie, and Ole Riis, he emphasises the challenge of local patterns of inclusion and exclusion for public policy-making.

Inger Furseth, in her contribution on Religious Diversity in Prisons and in the Military – the Rights of Muslim Immigrants in Norwegian State Institutions, focuses on challenges for public policy-making at the national level. Drawing on recent studies by James A. Beckford and Sophie Gilliat on religious diversity in prison, she focuses on the situation of Muslim immigrant minorities in two major Norwegian state institutions, the prisons and the military. She finds that although the legal system of Norway guarantees freedom of religion, there are structural

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[3] See Huntington, S. P. 1996. *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

[4] See Fukuyama, F. 1992. *The End of History and the Last Man*. New York: Free Press.

barriers to the full recognition of Muslims in Norwegian society indicated by their treatment in these institutions. She argues that existing policies of equal opportunity would have to be reformulated in order to take into account the religious identities of immigrants. The more theoretical point raised by both Smith's and Furseth's empirical case studies is that, contrary to the secularist assumptions of Western political theory, there is an enduring place for religion within the public sphere of modern democratic polities.

The public management of religious diversity will be further investigated in an up-coming issue on the Russian Federation, with which this first thematic thread will be concluded. The discussion will then move to other fields, including legal developments in the protection of linguistic minorities, multiculturalism and migration in the Asia-Pacific region, and interethnic relations in Africa. As usual, readers are invited to contribute to the debate by submitting articles with a view to publication in the Journal.

The Resurgence of Religious Movements in Processes of Globalisation –
Beyond End of History or Clash of Civilisations

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The contemporary resurgence of religion is often regarded as confirming the well-known theses of a coming "clash of civilisations". This article offers an alternative perspective by putting fundamentalist and communal-religious movements into the context of large-scale social transformations, especially the restructuration of the classical model of the nation-state and the increased global interconnectedness allowing for new interpretations of the cultural programme of modernity as it has developed in Western Europe. These fundamentalist and communal-religious movements, drawing simultaneously on the religious dimension of Axial civilisations and on the Jacobin dimensions of modernity, are indeed very modern, even if they do not accept the premises of the Enlightenment, but they challenge the West's claimed monopoly on modernity. New potential for conflict at a global level therefore arises from the multiplication of different, yet presumably universalistic, interpretations of modernity rather than from the confrontation of different civilisations.

A far-reaching resurgence of religious movements has recently taken place in the contemporary world. The most visible manifestations of this resurgence are, firstly, the development and thriving of fundamentalist movements, demonstrated in particular by Muslim fundamentalism in Turkey and some Arab countries, by Muslim diasporas in Europe and in the United States, by various Jewish groups, and by evangelical movements in the United States and Latin America; and, secondly, the emergence of national-communal movements in South and South-East Asia, India, and Sri Lanka. This resurgence of religious movements has entailed a reconstruction of the religious dimension far beyond what has been envisaged in the classical cultural and political programme of modernity and of the classical model of the modern nation-state.

Such reconstruction calls into question some arguments of post-Cold-War intellectual debates – especially those that proclaim, from definite yet often opposing vantage points – the possibility that the modern project, i.e. the classical

programme of modernity as it has developed for the last two centuries, is exhausted. In one version of such arguments, most prominently promulgated by Francis Fukuyama (1992), the thesis is defended that we are witnessing the "end of history", meaning that the ideological premises of modernity with all their inherent tensions and contradictions have become almost irrelevant, paradoxically allowing the rise of multiple postmodern visions. From this perspective the resurgence of religious movements is, on the whole, seen as a temporary "aberration".[1] Another version claims that the exhaustion of the modern programme is indicated by a coming "clash of civilisations", to use the terminology of Samuel P. Huntington's highly influential contribution (Huntington 1993, 1996). In his view, Western civilisation – the apparent epitome of modernity – is supposed to be confronted in often hostile terms by other civilisations, especially by the Muslim and to some extent by the so-called Confucian civilisations. Huntington considers that the current resurgence of religious movements confirms the interpretation that within these civilisations traditional, fundamentalist, anti-modern and anti-Western values are predominant.

However, a closer look at the resurgence of religious movements suggests that both these interpretations, while pointing to important developments, fail to capture some of their most salient features. Of special importance in this context is the fact that, alongside these religious movements, many ethnic and separatist movements or groups, which have often become closely connected with the former, have developed on the contemporary scene. Concomitantly, new types of social settings or sectors have emerged, important illustrations thereof being new diasporas and minorities. The best known among such new diasporas are the Muslim immigrant minorities – especially in Europe and to some extent in the United States. Parallel developments, yet with significant differences, are to be found among the Chinese and possibly the Korean diasporas in East Asia, in the United States, and in Europe, as well as among Jewish communities, especially in Europe. Further illustrations of these new types of minority are the Russian diasporas in some of the former Soviet Republics, especially in the Baltic States and in parts of Central Asia, where the former ruling class became a minority with strong orientations to the old mother-land and to some of the ideals of the defeated Soviet regime. Finally, one may think of Jewish communities which, coming to Israel from former Soviet Republics, also seem to develop a strong attachment to aspects of both the Soviet regime and Russian culture.

Moreover, and paradoxically enough, the religious movements referred to above even share some very important characteristics with those movements which developed a decade or two earlier, especially with the so-called "new" social movements, ranging from the students' movements of the late 1960s and early 1970s, through the feminist to the contemporary ecological movements, all of which have promulgated secular, postmodern themes that at first glance seem

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[1] It may be worthwhile noting a certain irony in the fact that the view that promulgates an overall homogenising of the contemporary world, seemingly very close to earlier theories of modernisation and convergence of industrial societies, also proclaims the end of modernity, i.e. of the classical programme thereof.

contrary to those of the fundamentalist and religious-communal movements but do in fact share some important characteristics with them.[2] This paper explores the characteristics of these religious movements in some detail, in order to provide an alternative interpretation of current social transformations, one that goes beyond the theses of both the "end of history" and of a coming "clash of civilisations".

1. Resurgence of Fundamentalist and Communal-Religious Movements and the Transformation of the Classical Nation-State

The common denominator of many of the new movements is that they do not see themselves as bound by the strong homogenising cultural premises of the classical model of the nation-state – especially by the places allotted to them in the public spheres of such states. They all entail the resurrection, or rather reconstruction, as it were, of hitherto "subdued" identities – ethnic, local, regional, and transnational – and their movement into the centres of their respective societies, often also into the international arena.

It is not that they do not want to be "domiciled" in their respective countries; indeed part of their struggle is to become integrated, but on rather new terms compared with classical models of assimilation. They aim to be recognised in the public spheres, in the constitution of civil society, and in relation to the state as culturally distinct groups promulgating their collective identities, and not to be confined to the private sphere. They do indeed make claims – as illustrated among others in the recent debate about *laïcité* in France – for the reconstruction of new public spaces as well as of the symbols of collective identity promulgated in respective states (see Gauchet 1998). But, at the same time, while the identities proclaimed in these movements and settings are often very local and particularistic, they also tend to be strongly transnational or trans-state, often connected with broader civilisational frameworks rooted in the great religions – Islam, Buddhism, and different branches of Christianity – but reconstructed in modern ways. All these movements, including the resurgent religious movements, constitute part of a wider picture attesting to a far-reaching transformation of the characteristics of the hitherto major political actor in the internal and international arenas alike – the classical nation-state.

The central new development regarding the place of religion is thus that religious identity, which was in the classical model of the nation-state delegated or confined to private or secondary spheres, has become transposed into the public political and cultural arenas, thereby becoming a central, autonomous component in the constitution of collective identities. Such transposition does not however entail a simple return of some traditional forms of religion but rather a far-reaching reconstitution of the religious component.

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[2] On "new" social movements see Aronowitz 1992; Banks 1981; Jelin 1990; Karst 1993; Pizzorno 1994; West and Blumberg 1990.

The movements and sectors mentioned above have also become active on the international scene. Many of the separatist, local or regional settings, as well as ecological movements, for example, have developed direct connections with transnational frameworks and organisations such as the European Union or the United Nations. But it is above all the various religious, especially fundamentalist, movements – Muslim, Protestant, Jewish – that have become very active on the international scene through very intensive networks of communication.

2. Modernity and the Resurgence of Fundamentalist and Communal-Religious Movements

There can be no doubt that all these developments denote far-reaching changes or shifts from the model (or models) of the modern nation-state, in that they attest to the reconstruction of its major structural characteristics and to the weakening of its ideological hegemony. But do they also signal the "end of history", the end of the modern programme – epitomised in the development of different "postmodernities" – and above all in the retreat, as it were, from modernity to the fundamentalist and communal-religious movements that have been portrayed – and in many ways have also presented themselves – as diametrically opposed to the cultural programme of modernity?

A closer examination of these movements, especially of the fundamentalist and to some extent also of the communal-religious ones, presents a much more complex picture. It indicates their distinctly modern Jacobin characteristics and their promulgation of distinct visions of modernity formulated in the terms of the discourse of modernity, and their attempts to appropriate modernity on their own terms (see, for example, Göle 1996). While extreme fundamentalist movements promulgate ostensibly anti-modern, or rather anti-Enlightenment, themes, yet they paradoxically share many Jacobin revolutionary components – sometimes in a sort of mirror-image way – with the communist movements, the carriers of the most extreme alternative model to the pluralistic Western model of modernity. With these they particularly share the attempts to establish a new social order, rooted in the revolutionary universalistic ideological tenets, in principle transcending any primordial, national or ethnic units and new socio-political collectivities. Both the communist and the fundamentalist movements – mostly, but not only in the Islamic world – have been international or transnational in orientation, activated by very intensive networks, which have facilitated the diffusion of the social and cultural visions they promulgated, most notably their universalistic messages, and at the same time have continually confronted them with other competing visions (Eickelman and Anderson 1999).

Whereas the communal-religious movements, such as those which developed in Indian and in some South and South-East Asian societies, do not exhibit such extreme Jacobin characteristics, they are in ideological and in some institutional dimensions similar to the fascist movements of the early twentieth century; like the latter they emphasise the primacy of primordial constructions of collective identity,

very often defined in Romantic terms. Unlike the fascist movements they do, however, promulgate very strongly the religious component in the construction of their national identity (see Juergensmeyer 1994). In all these ways these movements and their programmes constitute part and parcel of the modern political agenda.

3. Reinterpretations of Modernity – the Larger Context

Such attempts to appropriate and interpret modernity in autonomous terms have not been confined to the fundamentalist or communal-national movements. They constitute part of a set of much wider developments that have been taking place throughout the world, in Muslim, Indian and Buddhist societies, seeming to continue, yet in a markedly transformed way, the confrontations between different earlier reformist and traditional religious movements that developed throughout non-Western societies. In these movements the basic tensions inherent in the modern programme, especially those between the pluralistic and totalistic tendencies, between utopian or more open and pragmatic attitudes, between multifaceted as against closed identities, are played out more in terms of traditions grounded in their respective Axial religions than in those of the European Enlightenment – although they are greatly influenced by the latter and especially by the participatory traditions of the Great Revolutions, most notably by their Jacobin orientations or components.[3]

Some very significant parallels can also be identified between these various religious movements, including the fundamentalist movements with their apparently extreme opposites: the different postmodern ones with which they often engage in confrontation over hegemony among different sectors of society. Concomitantly, all these movements share the concern, which constituted a basic theme of the discourse of modernity from its beginnings in Europe, about the relations between their identities and the universalistic themes promulgated by the respective hegemonic programmes of modernity, and today above all the concern about the relation between such "authentic" identities and the presumed American cultural and political ideological hegemony. At the same time in most of these movements – the religious and postmodern ones – this fear of erosion of local cultures and of the impact of globalisation and its centres is also connected with an ambivalence towards these centres, giving rise to a continual oscillation between cosmopolitanism and various "particularistic" tendencies. Within all these different movements there develop different combinations of different cultural themes and patterns, and they continually compete about which presents the proper "answer" to the predicament of cultural globalisation (see Friedman 1994; Hannerz 1992; Marcus 1993; Smolicz 1998).[4]

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[3] On Axial Age civilisations see Eisenstadt 1978, 1980, 1982, 1986, 1992.

[4] See also the discussion entitled "The Road to 2050. A Survey of the New Geopolitics", *The Economist*, 31 July 1999.

The continuing salience of the tensions between pluralist and universalist programmes, between multifaceted and closed identities, and the continuing ambivalence towards new major centres of cultural hegemony, attest to the fact that, while going beyond the model of the nation-state, these new movements have not gone beyond the basic *problématique* of modernity, which in fact constitutes a central component in their discourses. They all are deeply reflexive, aware that no answer to the tensions inherent in modernity is final – even if each in its own way seeks to provide final, incontestable answers to modernity's irreducible dilemmas. Yet they all have reconstituted the problem of modernity in these new historical contexts, in new ways.

Thus all these developments and trends constitute aspects of the continual reinterpretation and reconstruction of the cultural programme of modernity; of the construction of multiple modernities and of multiple interpretations of modernity, of attempts by various groups and movements to reappropriate modernity and redefine the discourse of modernity in their own new terms.

The new interpretations of modernity that have developed on the contemporary scene, however, especially but not only in conjunction with the new religious movements, contain some very important new components of crucial importance for the interpretation of the relation between modernity and the West. These movements – significantly including many of the postmodern ones that developed in the West – attempt to completely dissociate Westernisation from modernity. They deny the monopoly or hegemony of Western modernity, and the acceptance of the Western modern cultural programme as the epitome of modernity. This highly confrontational attitude to the West, or rather to what is conceived as "Western", is in these movements closely related to their attempts to appropriate modernity and the global system on their own non-Western, often anti-Western, modern assumptions.

4. Specificities of the New Fundamentalist and Communal-Religious Movements

While the contemporary fundamentalist and communal-religious-national movements are indeed modern, comparable in many ways to communist or fascist movements, this does not of course mean that they do not reveal some distinct characteristics distinguishing them from those earlier movements and indeed constituting a new development on the international scene. The crucial difference between the contemporary movements and the communist and fascist ones lies in their perceptions of the confrontation between the basic premises of the cultural and political programme of modernity as it crystallised in the West and the non-Western European civilisation – with very far-reaching implications for the domestic and international political arenas.

As against the apparent acceptance of the premises of this programme, or at least a highly ambivalent attitude to them combined with the continuing reinterpretation

thereof that was characteristic of the earlier movements – such as the various socialist, communist and national movements and regimes which developed throughout the world – the contemporary fundamentalist and most communal-religious movements seem to promulgate a negation of at least some premises, as well as a markedly confrontational attitude to the West.

In contrast to communist and socialist movements, including the Muslim or African socialist movements in the 1950s and 1960s, the contemporary funda-mentalist and religious-communal movements promulgate a radically negative attitude to some of the central Enlightenment – and even Romantic – components of the cultural and political programme of modernity, especially the emphasis on the autonomy and sovereignty of reason and of the individual. Thus the funda-mentalist movements promulgate a totalistic ideological denial of "Enlightenment" premises, and have a basically confrontational attitude not only to Western hegemony but to the West as such, to what has been defined by them as Western civilisation usually conceived in totalistic and essentialist ways. While minimising in principle, if not in practice, the particularistic components characteristic of the communal-national movements, they ground their denial of, and opposition to, the premises of the Enlightenment in the universalistic premises of their respective religions or civilisations, as newly interpreted by them (see Khosrokhavar 1996; Jalal 1995).

The communal-national movements build on the earlier "nativistic", "Slavophile"-like ones but reinterpret them in politically radical, modernist ways. Significantly enough, in all these movements socialist or communist themes or symbols are no longer strongly emphasised; themes of social justice are usually promulgated in terms of their own traditions, which are often portrayed as inherently superior to the materialistic, socialist "Western" ones. In this context, it is very interesting to note that the activists, especially in various Muslim Arab countries, who were drawn to different socialist themes and movements became very involved in the fundamentalist and also in some of the communal movements of the 1980s and 1990s (see Eisenstadt and Azmon 1975; Kuran 1993, 1997*a*, 1997*b*).

Within these movements, the confrontation with the West does not take the form of searching to become incorporated into the new hegemonic civilisation, but rather of attempting to appropriate the new international global scene and modernity, as it were, for themselves, for their traditions or "civilisations" as they have been continually promulgated and reconstructed under the impact of their continuing encounter with the West.

5. Impact of Civilisational Traditions on the Formation of Modernities

The preceding analysis does not imply that the historical and cultural traditions of these societies are of no importance in the unfolding of their modern dynamics. Such importance is manifest, for example, in the fact that among modern and contemporary societies, fundamentalist movements develop and abound above all

within those societies that crystallised in the framework of monotheistic – Muslim, Jewish and some Christian – civilisations, in which even in their modern post-revolutionary permutations, the political arena has been perceived as the major arena of the implementation of the transcendental utopian vision – even if such vision was couched in modern secular terms.

On the other hand, the ideological reconstruction of the political centre in a Jacobin mode has been much weaker in civilisations with "other-worldly" orientations – especially in India and to a somewhat smaller extent in Buddhist countries – in which the political order was not perceived as an arena of the implementation of the transcendental vision, even though given the basic premises of modernity very strong modern political orientations or dimensions have also tended to develop within them (see Eisenstadt 1999). Concomitantly, some of the distinct ways in which modern democracies developed in India or Japan – as distinct from the European or American patterns, which also vary greatly among themselves – have indeed been greatly influenced by the respective cultural traditions and historical experiences of these societies. The same is also true of the ways in which communist regimes in Russia, China, North Korea or South Asia have been influenced by the historical experiences and traditions of their respective societies (see Eisenstadt and Azmon 1975).

This, however, was of course also the case with the first, European, modernity – which was deeply rooted in specific European civilisational premises and historical experience (see Eisenstadt 1987). But, as was indeed the case in Europe, all these "historical" or "civilisational" influences did not simply perpetuate the old "traditional" pattern of political institutions or dynamics. In all of them, both the broad, "inclusivist" universalisms of the great civilisational traditions and their primordial, "exclusivist" tendencies are reconstructed in typically modern ways, and continually articulate, in different ways specific to different historical settings, the antinomies and contradictions of modernity.

6. Conclusion: Multiple Modernities beyond "End of History" and "Clash of Civilisations" – New Potentials for Conflict

All these developments do indeed attest to the continuing development of multiple modernities, or of multiple interpretations of modernity – and above all to the de-Westernisation of modernity, depriving, as it were, the West of its monopoly of modernity. In this broad context the European or Western modernity or modernities are seen not as *the* only real modernity but at best as one of multiple modernities – even if the West has of course played a special role not only in the origins of modernity but also in the continual expansion and reinterpretation of modernities.

While the common starting point of many of these developments was indeed the cultural programme of modernity as it developed in the West, more recent develop-ments have given rise to a multiplicity of cultural and social formations which go far beyond the very homogenising and hegemonising aspects of this original

version. All these developments attest to the growing diversification of the visions and understandings of modernity, of the basic cultural agendas of different sectors of modern societies – far beyond the homogenic and hegemonic vision of modernity that was prevalent in the 1950s, especially in social-science discourse. The fundamentalist and the new communal-national movements constitute one such new development, in the unfolding of the potentialities and antinomies of modernity. All these movements may develop in contradictory directions – in a more open pluralistic way as well as in the opposite, confrontational, direction, manifest in growing inter-religious or inter-ethnic conflicts.

At the same time these movements entail a shift of the major arenas of confrontation and of crystallisation of multiple modernities, from that of the nation-state in particular, to new arenas in which these different movements and different societies continually interact with and cut across each other. They all aim for a worldwide reach and diffusion, through numerous returns, through the various media of communication (Eickelman and Anderson 1999). They are very politicised, formulating their programmes in highly political and ideological terms, continually reconstructing their collective identities with reference to the new global context. The debate in which they engage and confront each other may indeed be formulated in "civilisational" terms, but these very terms – indeed the very term "civilisation" as constructed in such a discourse – are already couched in modernity's new language, in totalistic, essentialistic, and absolutising terms, and they may entail a continual transformation of these identities and of the cultural programmes of modernity. Indeed the very pluralisation of life-spaces in the global framework endows them with highly ideological absolutising orientations, and at the same time brings them into the central political arena.

Such developments may also give rise to highly confrontational stances – especially towards the West – but these stances are promulgated in continually changing modern idioms. When such clashes or confrontations become combined with political, military, or economic struggles and conflicts they may become very violent. Indeed the combination of religious and "modern" components and orientations is characteristic of many of the fundamentalist and communal-religious movements, that bring out, on the contemporary scene, the dark side or potential of both modernity and religion. They attest to the fact that the continuing expansion of modernity throughout the world has not been very benign or peaceful – by no means has it constituted the continual progress of reason. Rather these processes have been continually interwoven with wars, violence, genocides, repression and dislocation of large sections of the population – indeed sometimes of entire societies.

Although from the optimistic point of view such wars, genocides, and repressions have often been portrayed as being against the basic grain of the programme of modernity, often as "survivals" of premodern attitudes, it has been increasingly recognised that in fact they were very closely interwoven with modernity – both with its ideological premises and its expansion and with the specific patterns of the

institutionalisation of modern societies and regimes. Wars and genocide, which were not, of course, new in the history of mankind, became radically transformed and intensified, unceasingly generating tendencies to specifically modern barbarism. The most important manifestation of such a transformation was the ideologisation of violence, terror, and war – which would first become most vivid in the French Revolution. Such ideologisation became a central component in the constitution of nation-states, which became the most important agents – and arenas – of the constitution of citizenship and symbols of collective identity, with the crystallisation of the modern European state-system, with European expansion, colonialism, and imperialism, and with the intensification of technologies of communication and of war. The Holocaust, which took place in the very centre of modernity, became a symbol of its negative, destructive potential, of the barbarism lurking within its very core.

But while such destructive potential is indeed inherent in modernity, and its most extreme manifestations developed within the centre of modernity, and in close relation to some components of the cultural programme of modernity, yet it also has very strong roots in the major religions. The cultural programme of some of the great religions, especially the monotheistic ones – with their claims to be the bearers of absolute truth and their strong universalistic-missionary tendencies – contained very strong aggressive and destructive potential. This was particularly notable in some of the proto-fundamentalist sects, some of which were the harbingers of the cultural programme of modernity, and above all of its Jacobin components, which can come to the fore and fuse with the religious elements in many contemporary movements.

All of the processes analysed above that have been taking place in the contemporary scene, among them the resurgence of the religious component in the construction of national and international collective identities, thus entail neither the "end of history" in the sense of the end of ideological confrontational clashes between different cultural programmes of modernity (Fukuyama) nor a "clash of civilisations" which seems to deny the basic premises of modernity (Huntington). The importance of various civilisational "traditions" and historical experiences in shaping the specific contours of different modern societies does not mean that these processes give rise to a number of closed civilisations, continuations of their respective historical pasts and patterns. Rather, these different experiences constitute reference points in the continuous flows and interactions between multiple modernities cutting across any single society or civilisation.

While such diversity has certainly undermined the old hegemonies, at the same time it has been closely connected – perhaps paradoxically – with the development of new, multiple, common reference points and networks – with a globalisation of cultural networks and channels of communication far beyond those that existed before. Moreover, the political dynamics in all these societies are closely interwoven with geopolitical realities, which are also influenced by the historical experiences of these societies yet are largely shaped by modern developments and

confrontations which make it impossible to construct such "closed" entities. Needless to say, these processes do not even constitute a – basically impossible – "return" to the *problématique* of premodern Axial civilisations.

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Global Systems and Religious Diversity in the Inner City – Migrants in the East End of London

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Contemporary global economic, political and communications systems have led to unprecedented levels of migration from the South to metropolitan urban neighbourhoods in Europe, North America and Australasia. As a result, settlement patterns at the local level, though constrained by urban ecology, the local economic system and politically controlled systems of housing allocation, are often diverse mixtures of ethnic, linguistic and cultural groups. Existing religious institutions in such localities have needed to adapt to this new social reality, while new institutions have emerged to cater for unmet need, or exclusion from existing institutions. Religion has thus taken on a new public significance. Global communications systems ensure that urban religion is in a state of constant flux and that relationships or events thousands of miles away may have more influence than social or organisational structure at the local level in shaping the dynamics of religious groups. These issues are illustrated by reference to research on religious diversity in the East End of London (England) and through case studies of organisations included in this research.

T he late twentieth century has seen an unprecedentedly rapid growth in global connections, in systems of trade, information exchange and personal travel opportunities. Migration of large numbers of people from many parts of the South and East has made large impacts on the demographics of western and northern nation-states, particularly in their metropolitan urban areas. In many places this has produced a rich mix of ethnic, cultural and religious diversity, although the specific ingredients and interaction of diverse elements vary considerably according to local conditions.[1] In part the local differences derive from the accidental patterns established by specific migrations so that two cities in the same state, such as Bradford and London, may have quite different demographics. Other differences, particularly between nations, will derive from political systems and social and

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[1] See, for example, Bourma (1996) on Australia, Warner (1998) on the USA. See also information provided by the Harvard Pluralism Project on Boston, Massachusetts.

cultural norms, including relationships between religions and the state that were established before contemporary large-scale migrations began. The value of detailed locality case studies such as that presented here, is that they may, if set alongside others from different regions and continents, allow social scientists and policy-makers to establish general regularities in the experiences of multicultural and multi-faith localities and in the experiences of transnational communities under current conditions of globalisation. This paper may therefore be seen as a challenge to others to document the story of their own cities, and to engage in debate as to what is universal or particular in our experience and understanding of religious and cultural diversity.

The experience of most migrant groups around the world has certainly not been one of easy and welcoming assimilation; rather it has been one where mechanisms of racism and social exclusion have interacted with discourses and policies favouring multiculturalism and resulted in persisting and redefined forms of group identity. These identities often cross over national boundaries and, as Peter Beyer (1998*a*), has argued are reinforced and reimagined by continued global feedback, through contacts made possible by developments in electronic communications and jet travel.

As local differences have not been totally obliterated by globalisation and human beings have still not perfected the art of being bodily in two places at the same time, the term "glocalisation" as coined from the Japanese by Robertson (1995) to describe the effects of the interaction of global and local, is a useful, if inelegant, one. In much of this paper, therefore, terms such as "global/local matrix", or "local impacts of globalisation" rather than "glocalisation" are used. The aim is to discuss the interaction of global and local and its impact on the formation and life of religious institutions with reference to one inner-city area of the United Kingdom, the London Borough of Newham, which is populated by a majority of minorities and is perhaps unparalleled in terms of ethnic and cultural diversity. In this context, and in all probability in many other global metropolises, religion, which has long been a significant part of local life (Marchant 1986), has re-emerged as a phenomenon of public significance, as faith communities play a significant role in civil society and as religious identity groups engage in political competition and collaboration with each other and the local and national state for resources, representation and recognition.

The paper draws on an ongoing programme of community-based research and community-development action in East London. One major output of this research has been a comprehensive directory, now in its third edition, mapping nearly three hundred religious organisations from almost all the major world faith traditions.[2]

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2 For details of this project, see information provided under
   http://www.astoncharities.org.uk/research/religion.

1. Between the Global and the Local: A Systems Approach

Globalisation may best be seen as a set of parallel processes that have taken place over several centuries but with increasing speed in the last half-century, by which relationships have been able to transcend some of the limitations of geographical proximity and national boundaries. In line with Robertson (1992) who critiques the economic determinism of Wallerstein's (1991) world systems approach, these processes can be located in a number of conceptually distinct, but in reality related, systems, such as those of economics, politics, communications, culture and religion. Major changes in these systems have had an immense impact on societies and communities across the world. The impact of globalisation has perhaps been felt most strongly in geographical locations near to the core of these systems, such as the major metropolitan cities of the Western world, although ironically the very notion of globalisation tends to erode some of the geographical distinctions between core and periphery.

While the major systems described above are increasingly global, they interact with, and are often constrained by, another set of systems operating at more local levels. These systems include the local economy, political and communications systems, but in addition one can enumerate many others. Within particular cities, distinctive urban ecology systems are at work, constrained by systems of housing allocation and planning regulation. National legal systems of citizenship and welfare rights, and local systems of education, health and welfare provision are also significant and may betray systematic patterns of social exclusion or discrimination against particular groups. Many of these systems are the product of historical events and the development of local cultural norms and values. This is particularly the case for local religious systems, where centuries of political history have shaped the resolution or non-resolution of confessional conflicts in diverse ways.

The study of globalisation and religion is in its early days and is largely based on the theoretical contribution of Peter Beyer (1994), although Castells (1997) has also contributed many useful insights. More recently Beyer (1998*a*, 1998*b*) has developed Robertson's (1995) theme in describing the effects of an interaction of global and local factors on religious life. Beyer's (1998*b*) article is particularly significant in its discussion of the processes of religious identity and institution formation in contemporary contexts of migration, where global communication channels ensure that migrant communities can remain in touch with religious, cultural and political developments "back home". Localised inputs and impacts of globalisation processes have also been taken up in a case study by Lyon (1998) of the "Toronto Blessing" movement, and by Freston (1998) on Pentecostalism. Latterly Spickard (1999) and Riis (1999), in contributions to this journal, have written about the politics of religious pluralism in the current global world order, where the idea of human rights is claimed as an ultimate universal value. The following considerations on religion in the global/local matrix aim to contribute to this discussion.

2. Impact of Global and Local Economic Systems on East London

In the case of East London, the different global systems have shaped current religious life in a variety of ways which may have parallels in other cities. The global economic system has been at work in this locality for several centuries. The river and the docks, which were the gateway to the British Empire, are located here and since the sixteenth century local people have been involved with trade and seafaring. They soon became familiar with cargoes and people from every corner of the known world. Since about 1960, changes in patterns of global trade, the integration of the UK into a European economy, together with changes in shipping technology, have led to containerised sea traffic which is concentrated in Rotterdam, Tilbury and Felixstowe. This has resulted in the closure of the up-river London Docks and a collapse in the traditional local manufacturing and warehousing economy, with the loss of thousands of manual jobs.

However the London region remains well situated in terms of the global economy, especially in the banking and financial, information technology, media and cultural industries and as a destination for international tourists. London and the surrounding region remain the powerhouse of the UK economy and can attract capital and labour from all over the world. Thus in the 1980s and 1990s we have seen massive investment of global capital, encouraged by policies of deregulation of the financial markets and of planning controls, by the privatisation of nationalised industries and the curbing of the power of trade unions and local government. In the vacant land of East London Docklands we have seen new industry and commercial properties emerging, Rupert Murdoch's News International, Canary Wharf (built by Canadian property developers), international hotels, London City Airport and now the Millennium Dome. Along with all this comes luxury housing, some of it rented to global business people at £1,000 per week.

The global economic pull of London has also attracted migrants and settlers who have been willing to move in order to sell their labour or their wares. This is nothing new, other than in the scale of the numbers involved. Indeed some of the earliest settlements of African, Indian and Chinese people were located in East London Docklands from the eighteenth century onwards. By late Victorian times there were large settlements of East European Jews, for which the area was famous. Canning Town knew race riots in the 1920s, supported a thriving "Mission to Coloured Seamen", and produced Black babies, some of whom still live locally today as great-grandparents (Widdowson 1986). However it was with the end of Empire in the 1950s and 1960s that large numbers of Commonwealth immigrants came to the UK and for the most part settled in deprived urban areas, struggling against poverty and discrimination in the housing and labour markets, Successive waves from the Caribbean, India and Pakistan, East Africa (Asians), Bangladesh, Viet Nam, and most of the countries of Black Africa have landed in the UK and found their way to Newham. Somalis, Zairians, Kurds and Colombians are among the most recent groups. For many refugee and migrant communities there is a historical continuity with the early seafaring settlers. Sylheti and Somali seamen,

for example, were early settlers in Tower Hamlets and formed a vital link for chain migration.

Of course the global economic system also produces push factors in the countries of origin, which are for the most part in the less-developed world. Decisions taken by bankers, commodity brokers and politicians in London can have huge effects on village economies in Africa or Asia, for example through loans for prestige projects or weapons purchase, which in later years become a crippling burden of debt on an entire population. Simple awareness of the wealth differential between North and South and the myth that the streets of London are paved with gold has attracted millions to seek their fortune, or simple survival, in our city.

The local economic system in East London is one that has failed to produce wealth for its population, as a high proportion of profits made by the industry and commerce of the area has tended to be sucked out of the inner city to shareholders, or high-salaried employees who reside in the West End, the suburbs, the countryside or even in offshore tax havens. In Victorian times the earliest land-use zoning regulations decreed that East London, being downwind from the City, was to be the privileged location of smelly and noxious manufacturing industry. Poor-quality housing constructed for the manual labourers of the factories and docks ensured that East London became a low-cost, but socially undesirable, residential area. Along with poverty came bad health and poor standards in education. Despite improvements in housing and the extensive activity of the public sector in this respect, in the period of the post-war Welfare State the relative poverty of the subregion has barely changed. East London's place in the system of urban ecology ensures that it remains for the most part a low-cost, low-status area, and as such it remains a magnet for the settlement of the poor, the unskilled, the young and the geographically mobile.

Consequently, in a locality where an economy which has always been fragile is undergoing major restructuring, large numbers of residents who lack the skills to engage in growing, hi-tech sectors of the economy face unemployment, or low-paid insecure employment in unskilled jobs. Refugee and migrant populations include many people whose qualifications and skills are higher than the average for the indigenous working-class population, for in the case of refugees it is often only the elites who have the resources to escape as far as the major cities of the West. However they often find themselves in precisely the same position in the local ecology and economy, as on arrival they are usually dependent on the grudging provision of the residual Welfare State for housing and income, they may be ineligible for permission to work or study, and they may find themselves excluded by racist structures and behaviour from the more desirable jobs for which they are qualified (Modood et al. 1997).

3. Impact of Global and Local Political Systems

The global political system also plays a major role in migration processes. The most obvious mechanisms are strategic global politics currently dominated by the United States and its allies, and the system of nation-states enshrined in the United Nations Charter. Again there are both push and pull factors for migration in this system. The pull factors include the image of the Western democracies as the home not only of affluence but of political freedom. The push factors come, firstly, when nation-states failing to live up to the Western understanding of human rights are propped up rather than challenged by the dominant nations of North America and Europe. Secondly, and more significantly, the world military system and the associated arms trade supply weapons and a degree of legitimacy to their use in bloody wars, many of them within the boundaries of nation-states across the world. It is wars such as those in Somalia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone, the former Yugoslavia or the Kurdish lands that produce waves of refugees to cities such as London. Sometimes refugees from both sides of a conflict arrive and continue to clash. One local vicar tells the story of how a special service to mark the culture of Sierra Leone was boycotted by all except two families from the country. Only later did he realise that the event had been suggested and organised by someone from a minority ethnic group who had allegedly been responsible for numerous atrocities in the recent civil war!

The local political system in democratic societies tends to reflect the interests of the majority of longer-established citizens, who fear the competition for resources represented by newcomers and outsiders, and the pace of demographic and cultural change that immigration may introduce. Racist ideologies may be used to legitimise discrimination, exclusion and even violence. East London has a long folk tradition of the struggle between racist and fascist elements and the more liberal attitudes of the politically dominant left. This is evidenced in the riots of the 1920s, the conflict with Oswald Mosley's blackshirts that culminated in the 1936 Battle of Cable Street, the 1968 march of the dockers in support of Enoch Powell, in recent levels of support for right-wing parties that have been higher than in any other British constituencies, and in current high levels of racial harassment and violence. Even so-called liberal governments find it politically impossible to offer an "open-door" welcome and full citizens' rights to migrants and refugees, the more so when linked by policy agreements across the European Union. There would appear to be little popular electoral support for fully implementing the commitments of the various UN Conventions on refugees. Local authorities also face electoral pressures (including the voices of earlier waves of immigrant settlers) not to welcome too many refugees. The result is that refugees come to East London as the only place they can afford to live, and which has a tradition as a reception area for minorities, but find that they receive only a grudging welcome at best, and racist hostility and violence at worst.

The global and local systems described above contribute to a demographic profile of Newham in which, according to the 1991 census,

- Newham was rated as the most deprived local authority area in England according to the government's Index of Local Conditions;

- Newham's population included 42% of residents from non-White ethnic minorities (a figure estimated to have risen to over 50% by 1996);

- Male unemployment rates were 22% (compared with a national average of 10.9%) and which were as high as 35% for Pakistanis, 41% for Bangladeshis and 43% for Black Africans.

The diversity of ethnic and linguistic groups is unparalleled, with over a hundred languages recorded in Newham schools. The major languages in which the local authority offers translations are Urdu, Bengali, Punjabi, Gujarati, Hindi, Tamil, Malayalam, Chinese, Somali, Arabic and French (mainly for francophone Africans), while large Philippine communities, speakers of diverse African languages and recently arrived Latin American groups are not yet catered for. There are no official religious affiliation statistics in the UK, although legislation currently before Parliament proposes the introduction of a question on religion in the 2001 census. At the local level, the only figures available come from a census of school pupils by Newham Education Authority.[3]

4. Impact of Global and Local Communications Systems on Religion in East London

The global communications system speeds up the processes of global interaction. Jet travel (despite London's main airport being in the west) allows refugees to arrive in East London in hours rather than weeks. Four days after the first wave of violence in Kosovo, the first Albanian refugees arrived at the office of the local night shelter for homeless people. It is also relatively easy to keep in contact with "folks back home", for the import/export business, or for maintaining kinship links. Many ethnic-minority people return to their homeland for "holidays" every two or three years, providing the political situation makes it safe to do so, and many in the generation of Caribbean immigrants who settled in the UK in the 1950s are now retiring to the lands of their birth. There is a proliferation of international telephone shops offering advantageous call rates by routing communications via North America to every country in the world.

While the parts of the communications system described above are interactive and allow for two-way traffic, it remains the case that the one-way broadcasting of the mass media retains a pervasive influence over information and culture. Although minority voices may not be totally absent, the hegemonic media images, definitions and selection of newsworthy items come out of a Western (largely American)

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[3] For more information on religious affiliations and organisations in Newham see the analysis of the Newham directory at http://www.astoncharities.org.uk/research/religion/relstats.htm.

culture which is predominantly capitalist in ethos. This culture is largely secular, but secular within the historical context of Western Christendom. Religion is generally regarded as purely a private interest and is rarely covered unless there are issues that raise public controversy or conflict. For the most part in England a mild-mannered, out-of-touch and broad-Church Anglicanism is portrayed as the norm, with mild deviations such as Roman Catholicism, the Free Church denominations or the Salvation Army tolerated as acceptable alternatives. Enthusiastic evangelical or Pentecostal Christianity is often presented as at best exotic or at worst as on a par with extreme sects or cults. Often such forms of Christianity are equated with "born-again fundamentalism" which is stereotyped as other-worldly, American-influenced, reactionary, right-wing and socially or politically dangerous. While some elements of this description may correspond to the truth for some such groups, rare are the attempts to evaluate variant tendencies within a broad movement.

Non-Christian faiths generally receive even more unfavourable treatment in the media, with the exception perhaps of some Hindu- and Buddhist-rooted move-ments offering alternative "spiritualities" to private consumers of faith. Islam in particular receives a bad press, justifying the introduction of the term "Islamophobia" (Runnymede Trust 1997). Images and descriptions of the Islamic world as monolithic, fundamentalist and supporting terrorism are commonplace. They fail to do justice, however, to the diversity within Islam or its significance as a living faith and tolerant social system for many believers (Lewis 1996).[4]

5. Overall Pattern of Religion in East London

One of the results of the ethno-linguistic and religious diversity of the population is that East London is an evidently and increasingly religious community (Smith 1996, 1998). The latest statistics from our research cover nearly three hundred religious organisations of every conceivable faith and denomination, many of which are recently established and growing significantly in attendance.[5] This is in notable contrast to recent national trends in the UK as reported by Brierley (2000). In several respects the new paradigm model discussed by Warner (1993) fits the vitality of the local case, although the metaphor of a free religious market and rational choice of religious affiliation by individual consumers is not an accurate portrayal of what may better be described as a mixed economy of religion (Smith 1998). Plurality on the supply side of religious products does however mean that almost everyone who wants to can find a comfortable home in a faith community or congregation. Furthermore, the claims of the secularisation thesis about the inevitable demise of organised religion and that urban life in modernity is inimical to faith, fail to fit the facts.

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[4] One recent development in response to growing awareness of, and political concern about, religious discrimination is the commissioning by the UK Home Office of a research project on religious discrimination from the University of Derby.

[5] See the statistical information provided by Aston Charities Research Unit.

An important element of global migration and local settlement in recent decades has been the formation of new religious institutions. Of the 171 religious groups in Newham for which we have information, 94 have been founded since 1971. The proportions are particularly high for Pentecostal, Hindu, Muslim and Sikh groups. There have also been numerous congregations, particularly in Black Majority Pentecostalism, who have formed, flourished briefly and then disappeared from the local scene. Mobility is the keynote – few such congregations own their own buildings, so halls rented from mainline Churches or community centres and schools, the church minibus and increasingly the mobile phone, are characteristic of this mode of religious being.

For the most part these new faith communities have operated as refuges from the troubles of wider society rather than as bases for engagement with it. There are some signs that this may be changing at the turn of the century as faith communities become more visible as players in civil society and in local politics. Secondly, a number of faith communities are recognising the opportunities for undertaking social welfare, urban regeneration and community-development work in partnership with the local state, the secular voluntary sector and the private business sector. For example, one local African Pentecostal Church is developing its building as a day nursery and employment-training and health-education centre.

6. Impact of Global and Local Systems of Religion in East London

There is in the contemporary world a phenomenon which writers such as Robertson, Beyer, and Spickard describe in terms of the global system of religions. One aspect of this is a widespread recognition via the United Nations of the sanctity of human rights, and the principle of freedom of belief and tolerance of diverse religious practices. These notions are far from problematic, and are applied differentially in different cultures and political systems. Indeed it is possible to see them primarily as constructs of Western modernity. Secondly, the global system of religion tends to construct faith communities along a model that ultimately derives from the experience of Christendom, in terms of congregations, denominations and Churches, with an important place in each for theology and clergy as leaders. As in the USA (Warner 1998) new religious organisations in areas such as Newham are under pressure to conform to such congregational structural norms.

Two recent articles published in this journal (Beckford (1999*b*) and Davie (1999)), have considered the management of religious diversity in the UK. Both have looked in some detail at the role of the established Church of England as a dominant player in relations between faith communities and the state. Beckford analyses the role of officially appointed and paid Anglican chaplains in an institutional setting – that of prisons, where they play a gatekeeper role in providing (or denying) religious rights to a growing number of non-Anglican and non-Christian prisoners. Davie addresses the question of the possible representation of faith communities in a reformed House of Lords, where Church of England Bishops have represented the presumed monolithic spiritual interests of the nation

for many centuries. In local situations of extreme religious diversity, as we see in this account of East London, the relationship between faith communities and statutory agencies is not so focused through the power of the established Church. The century-long tradition of secular socialism in local politics has tended to marginalise the mainstream Churches from the centres of power, and more recently sensitivities about racism and equal opportunities, and the perceived threat of emerging communal politics, has made many local councillors cautious in their approach to all forms of religion.

However mainstream Christianity and the established Church have by no means been totally excluded from local political and civic life, especially since the publication of the *Faith in the City* report (ACUPA 1985). Bishops operating at both local and national levels have spoken publicly about urban issues and presented themselves as advocates for local communities and for socially excluded people, including those from other faith communities. Although this brokerage role inevitably tends to prevent communities from speaking on their own behalf, Church leaders have been painfully aware of this contradiction, and have sought to "give voice" wherever possible to marginalised people through a political and financial commitment to community-development projects and grass-roots campaigns, for example, through the Church Urban Fund and Church Action on Poverty. The established Church has also sought to take the lead in developing inter-faith work through the appointment of diocesan advisers and specific local projects, and most recently at the national level by seconding one of its clergy to act as secretary to the government's Inner Cities Religious Council.

Two other local features of the interaction between politics and religion may offer a corrective to the assumptions about Anglican dominance that are easily read into the Beckford and Davie accounts of religion and the state in the UK. The first is the ecumenical networking that is an important feature of Church involvement in community life in Newham. A small number of Christian leaders, most of whom have lived and worked in the area for a quarter of a century or more, and who include the local Anglican Bishop and Area Dean, a well-known Baptist minister and two leading Methodists regularly interact, and for the most part operate as friends and allies. They have helped to establish a semi-formal structure known as the Borough Deans' Group in which all the major denominations and some of the new Pentecostal and charismatic Churches are represented and which has regular access to leading officers of the Inner Cities Religious Council. Through wider informal networking they can also mobilise a broad constituency of Christian Churches and agencies, as for example in a recent meeting where representatives of twelve groups, including all the local Churches from Roman Catholics to African Pentecostals, met to discuss a pre-emptive contribution to the Council's bid for regeneration funding for a particular neighbourhood.

Secondly, the role in local politics of lay people from the various faith communities is significant. The Christian Socialist Movement, which has some overlap with the Church leaders' network, now boasts seven members elected as Newham

councillors, as well as one of the local Members of Parliament, now a government minister. None of these Christian councillors have roots in Black Majority Pentecostal Churches, however. There are also about half a dozen Muslim councillors, some of whom are leading members of local mosque committees, several Sikhs with good connections to the gurdwaras, and a number of Hindus have also served in previous years. The issue therefore is not one of lack of representation of faith communities in local politics, it is rather about the nature of that representation and whether the interests pursued are narrow sectarian ones, some shared notion of the common good, or proactive advocacy for the socially excluded sections of the local population.

Both nationally and locally today, the discourse of human rights and religious tolerance is in the ascendant as far as the state is concerned, although translating it into equal outcomes in the context of institutional racism is often problematic. State schools in Newham, for example, have developed a multi-faith syllabus for religious education, take special additional holidays for Diwali, Eid and Guru Nanak's birthday, and negotiate interesting compromises such as Christmas parties where the food is taken home in party bags because the festive season coincides with Ramadan, when many pupils are fasting. However conflicts and tension remain over religious and ethnic identity. For example many White (not necessarily actively Christian) parents resent the concessions that have been made to "foreign religions", while Muslims in particular may perceive the state and the schools as aggressively Christian. In the background lies the sad truth that levels of racial harassment and violence in East London are persistently high, and that sometimes racial abuse includes religious name-calling.

At the borough level, the Muslim demand for single-sex secondary education is recognised and the two girls' schools in the borough now have a majority of Muslim pupils who are allowed to dress in traditionally modest uniform, or even the full *hijab* in school colours. At the national level, funding for independent Islamic schools has been conceded, although so far there is no such school in Newham, and an application for planning permission for a self-financing Islamic school was recently turned down. On the other hand, Anglican and Roman Catholic schools do operate, and are largely funded by the local authority. In a borough where educational standards are low, but improving, in the climate of intense competition over examination performance, Church secondary schools have a high reputation and many middle-class and aspiring parents of all ethnic backgrounds, including some Hindus and Muslims, fight hard to obtain places for their children. Some parents have certainly moved house and changed their Church membership in order to qualify for a place in Church schools, and anxious parents joke about Muslims and atheists who are willing to become Roman Catholic in order to enrol their children in a Church school.

Civic services for the borough is one area in which inter-faith issues arise. Traditionally they are held at the church of the Mayor's chaplain. Newham already has had one Sikh and three Muslim mayors. But even in years where the mayor has

been Christian and the chaplain a local vicar, some effort to be sensitive to other faiths has been required as all councillors and communities are invited to attend. Interestingly, it was under the leadership of an evangelical Christian in the early 1990s that Newham Council agreed to abandon the practice of beginning each council meeting with a formal prayer. While the annual civic service has not been an event of great local interest, a civil religion with multi-faith aspects exhibited itself during the global grieving for Diana, Princess of Wales, in September 1997. Hindu and Muslim people and groups marked the funeral by closing their activities and shops just as much as did the White Christian and secular British.

The expectation that religions are structured on the Christendom model leads to a number of current difficulties as the statutory agencies and mainline denominations seek to engage with the newer faith communities. There has been much discussion and some development of good practice, for example in chaplaincy at local hospitals. However, this may founder on the fact that the very concept of chaplaincy is grounded in mainline denominational Christianity. Likewise, when the local Council tries to seek out representative leaders of faith communities for consultation on urban regeneration schemes or community care, it has found difficulty in dealing with anyone except the mainline denominational clergy. In the Church of England, for example, the structures of the local authority are partially mirrored, with a vicar being both spiritual/political leader and manager of the enterprise, with clear lines of accountability to the denominational hierarchy, and downwards to the congregation/electorate. In contrast, the imam of the local mosque is primarily a religious teacher, may have very little English, and may be clearly under the management of a committee of lay leaders. Furthermore, the mosque may be far more sectarian than mainline Christian groups – if it belongs in any sense to a wider movement within Islam the headquarters of the movement may well be in Lahore, and the nearest local branch in Birmingham. So far the organised networks of Muslim groups in Newham are not so well developed as those in Bradford described by Lewis (1996). Similar issues of fragmentation and representation apply in local Hindusim, Sikhism and Pentecostalism and the official system has not yet adapted to engage with this reality.

There is some evidence from a 1994 survey by the Newham Association of Faiths (Smith 1998) that there are relatively high levels of inter-faith contact and laissez-faire tolerance in the population of Newham at large, and that this is increasing in the younger generation. However there is very limited contact between organised religious groups across the faith communities. Whatever contact does exist has usually been initiated by Christians with a specific liberal theology, and has met a more open response among Hindus, Buddhists and Baha'ists than among Muslim leaders.

7. Impact of the Global Missions Movement

The major established religious movements and denominations in East London also have their own global systems and structures which influence the way they behave

and understand the social and religious world. Christianity has a well-established global system and structure, dating back to the colonial era of foreign missions, now modified by transport and telecommunications systems allowing for unprecedented levels of two-way traffic. This system made possible the global spread of Christianity from Europe in the last two or three centuries and the transmission of the theological tradition and structures of Western Christendom, including its denominations, Churches, rituals, values and cultural norms. Some of these are now being "returned to sender" with greater or lesser modification. For example, some local Anglican parishes feel under pressure to change their theology and ethos (sometimes referred to as "churchmanship") from Anglo-Catholic to evangelical or the reverse, depending on whether the influx of new worshippers originates from a diocese founded by High Church or Low Church Missionaries.

The historical mission links continue today as local Churches still send out and finance missionaries, albeit with roles that were formerly unknown: community health workers, agriculturalists and pilots alongside Bible translators and evangelists. Most Churches have links of giving and information exchange with their denominational mission society and/or interdenominational missions or aid agencies. There is probably more world awareness and sympathy for global campaigns against poverty, such as the Jubilee 2000 movement, among Church congregations than among the public at large.

Globalisation has however meant that mission is not a one-way traffic and this change has made a particular impact on Churches in East London. In the first place, East London seems to attract a high proportion of returned missionaries who wish to enjoy life in a multicultural environment and often have a sense of calling to use the cross-cultural skills and languages that they have acquired overseas. There are, for example, returned VSO volunteers, one-time development workers who served in Bangladesh and are now community workers in London, people who taught English at mission schools in Africa or India who now do the same in local secondary schools, ministers and pastors who once worked in countries as diverse as Peru, India, Ghana and the Falkland Islands, and members of Roman Catholic orders who worked previously in the Philippines and Latin America. The main denominations also experience what they sometimes describe as mission in reverse; Newham Anglican Churches have received and employed priests from Pakistan (one of them married to a Finnish woman missionary), and from Uganda. Several structured programmes and organised visits or exchanges have been arranged in which local Churches have sought to learn from African or Latin American visitors. For example, the Lambeth Bishops' Conference held in the summer of 1998 included an international episcopal minibus tour of East London. There are also international teams of missionaries operating in the area, usually on a short-term basis, such as the teams sent to the area by Youth with a Mission.

Christian approaches to relationships with other faith communities are also grounded in mission history and common representations thereof. The Victorian discourses of "benighted heathen" may not be so evident now, yet the notion that

the Christian gospel needs to be universally proclaimed as the only way of salvation still dominates many Christians' thinking. More fundamentalist Christians may even regard Islam and Hinduism as works of the devil. The picture is further complicated by the "home country" experiences of immigrant Christians. For example, Nigerian Christian views of Islam are inevitably coloured by the ongoing communal conflict between Muslim and Christian ethno-religious groups in northern Nigeria, and Pakistani Christians struggle to find charitable things to say about Islam when the experience of their kinsfolk back home has been one of discrimination and persecution.

Muslim and Hindu views of Christianity are also coloured by readings of history. The hostility between Islam and the West from the Crusades to the Gulf War is not insignificant as a basis for mistrust. The experience of colonialism and Christian mission working hand in hand in British India has not yet been forgotten.

8. Impact of Globalisation on Membership and Organisation of Faith Communities

We should now be in a position to move from an understanding of global and local social systems and structures to the day-to-day experience of the tension between global and local in the religious life of people and groups in East London. The groups responding to our survey mentioned a total of 142 international links that they felt to be significant (about two-thirds of the number of local links reported). Twenty-three missionary societies, individual missionaries or international relief agencies (such as Christian Aid) were mentioned, thirty-two groups mentioned a direct link with some specific Christian group or work in Africa, eleven a link with a place in Asia, seven with the Caribbean, eleven with Europe, three with Israel and one with Australia. Fifteen had significant links with ministries in North America, and one in Latin America. The remainder were unspecific or generic worldwide relationships. Apart from one Muslim relationship to a group in Pakistan and half a dozen links to Hindu temples in India and Malaysia, the majority of the links reported in our data were through and with Christian Churches and missions, but this reflects our problems in gathering high-quality data from more groups peripheral to our established networks, rather than a lack of actual links. The nature and content of these links are even more interesting and are discussed below.

For the mainstream Christian Churches in East London, the biggest impact of globalisation has been congregational growth and renewal resulting from the settlement of migrants from the Caribbean and Asia, and more recently of refugees and asylum seekers from Africa and Latin America. Almost all local congregations are multiracial, and many Methodist and Baptist, and some Anglican congregations are majority (in some cases more than 80%) Black. Each Christian denomination in East London has a distinctive mix of membership depending on its particular mission history. For example, the Baptist and Methodist Churches have recruited from Jamaicans, Ghanaians and Nigerians. Anglicans additionally have Pakistanis,

Ugandans and Barbadians in their congregations, Moravians are exclusively from Caribbean backgrounds while Roman Catholic Churches have concentrations of people from the Catholic islands of the Caribbean (e.g. Trinidad and Tobago, Dominica) as well as francophone Africans, Filipinos, Goans and Vietnamese mixed with longer-established Irish and Polish members. The local United Reformed Church has more limited impact from historical mission ties, yet as a result of outreach and welfare work among refugees has planted new congregations of Iranian and Colombian Christians. In some cases, such as these in the URC and in Anglican and Roman Catholic parishes, linguistic groups sometimes meet for worship in their first language.

Pentecostalism is even more dependent on recent migration, for although there are still a small number of long-established, White-led (but now multi-ethnic) Elim and Assemblies of God Churches, the new African groups are increasingly dominant. In Newham, Freston's (1998) description of Pentecostalism as "globalisation from below" resonates strongly, and some of the most recent new Church plants have origins in the Brazil he describes. Global population movement has had a massive impact on the local shape of Christianity in East London through the emergence in the last half-century of hundreds of new congregations. These are mostly independent of major denominations, majority Black in membership and Pentecostal in emphasis. They have been started on a "free market" Church-planting model, and in many cases their memberships are often ethnically, even tribally determined, depending for success on what the Church Growth movement calls the "homogeneous unit principle".

There are, however, some notable distinctions within this very broad category of Church. The Caribbean Christians who came to the UK in the 1950s and 1960s were for the most part members in good standing with mainline denominations. There are many well-documented stories of how on arrival at local Churches they encountered racist rejection, or at best a lukewarm welcome and what they perceived as a watered-down version of Christianity. As a result many new groups met together for prayer and worship and eventually some of these grew as Churches in their own right. Many of them became Pentecostal in experience and allied themselves with North American Pentecostal or Holiness denominations that had become established in the West Indies. Others remained vigorously independent or associated into new denominations with branches in major British cities (MacRobert 1989).

Globalisation has varying impacts, mediated through correspondence and visits back home, and to and from the USA. Some denominations, such as the New Testament Church of God and the Church of God of Prophecy, have international structures which are dominated by White North Americans (from the southern States) with the strange result that sometimes the National Overseer of what is in the UK a 97% Black denomination has been a White American. Other Black British denominations, such as the New Testament Assemblies, have re-established the Triangle of Trade by sending missionaries and planting Churches in West

Africa. The subculture style and theology of many of these Churches show considerable signs of influence from North American (Black) Church sources. The first "saints" from the Caribbean, many of whom are now retiring back home, were and still are predominantly working class (and female), though where second- and third-generation people (especially young women) have stayed with the Church there are some signs of upward social mobility.

Local Churches based in and serving African communities were later to emerge (generally since 1980) and at the present time are mushrooming in numbers both of congregations and members. The variety in this category is immense, with many different denominational and national traditions represented. The majority of congregations seem to be broadly in the charismatic, Baptist, or Pentecostal stream with Ghana and Nigeria as the main originating countries. A distinct grouping of African Churches are those in the African indigenous or prophetic tradition. West African Aladura Churches, such as the Holy Order of the Cherubim and Seraphim, the Christ Apostolic Church and the Celestial Church of Christ, have had an established presence in London for as long as a quarter of a century. More recent arrivals have included the Kimbanguiste Church from Zaire/Democratic Republic of the Congo, which serves a section of the refugee population that has settled in East London since 1990. Each of these congregations appears to be thriving in terms of numbers and in some cases have substantial buildings. International agendas are reflected in their concerns, be it the political, ethnic or theological conflicts of their homelands, or the difficulties encountered by refugees and asylum seekers in immigration legislation.

While it has been difficult to document the impact of globalisation on the major world faith communities, it is clear that their memberships are largely determined by migration and ethnicity. Religious affiliation and active membership of a faith community is clearly a cultural resource, a mechanism of heritage maintenance and practical solidarity for marginalised groups (Beckford 1999*a*). For many people it also represents a personal and living faith or world view, and for some young people Islam or Sikhism can be a powerful element in constructing personal identity, in which religion rather than ethnic traditional culture is the dominant theme (Jacobsen 1998). For some young Muslims at least identity formation centres around Islam as a universal meaning system and fellowship that transcends both traditional Asian and (post)modern Western cultures. For some young women Islam even has feminist emphases, and the political significance of Islamic identity in the UK is increasingly well-articulated (Modood 2000).

Clearly the growing global confidence of Islam has made an impact here, and media coverage (however distorted), the global circulation of Islamic literature, and world travel (including bargain flights for the haj offered by local travel agents) have been important. Our knowledge of local religious activity and anecdotal evidence suggests that there are many important international links, such as the recruitment of or visits by imams, gurus and pundits from the subcontinent. The local press has reported responses to communal crises in South Asia, such as the

Kashmir conflict, the storming of the Golden Temple at Amritsar, or the destruction of the mosque at Ayodya, which was followed within a week by an arson attempt on a Hindu temple in Newham.

The Indian religions of Hinduism, Sikhism and Buddhism are also well-represented in Newham, with five major Hindu temples/centres, four gurdwaras and two Buddhist centres. To a large extent the organised forms of these religions appear to be communal or caste-based. The Sri Muragan Temple is used more or less exclusively by Tamil people, the Sri Kutch Swami Narayan Temple by the Gujarati-speaking community and the Ravidassi Temple by a particular caste of Punjabi Hindus. Sikh organisations serve three distinct communal/caste groups separately; Jaats, Ramgrahias and NaamDharis (who have their national headquarters in the borough). Some organisations take on an overtly politically tone, such has the VHP (Vishwa Hindu Parishad) which has links and sympathies with the Hindu Nationalist parties in India.

There is also a wide range of Hindu organisations that meet for meditation or worship or describe themselves as missions. Some of the mission groups are more global in their understanding of the religious market place, describing themselves as universal or omniversal religions. They do from time to time organise meetings and lectures involving visits from internationally renowned gurus. However, the groups that are renowned for recruiting Western converts, such as the ISKC (Hare Krishna), Transcendental Meditation and Sri Rajnesh movements, do not appear to be actively organising in Newham. The single exception in this category would be the Sai Baba cult, which has two outlets, one of which claims 175 members. They are all from within the local Indian community.

9. Globalisation and Social Action

One issue which has become a concern of most faith communities in East London is that of immigration and the needs of refugees and asylum seekers. There have been Church-based support schemes and English-language classes for new immigrants since at least 1971, when East African Asians arrived. More recently, mosques have been involved in helping the victims of conflict in the former Yugoslavia. The Bishop of Barking has become an active spokesperson for the rights of asylum seekers as legislation and government regulation have made their entry to the UK and survival here more difficult. An ecumenical immigration support group has been running for over ten years in Newham and has fought individual cases on behalf of local Church members threatened with deportation. A number of these cases have been successful, sometimes only after a long campaign in which sanctuary in a church building was offered. An ecumenical community-work agency runs a refugee support centre and can offer emergency accommodation to homeless refugees through its associated church-based night shelter. Within a week of the outbreak of conflict in Kosovo the shelter was dealing with the first Kosovar refugees.

Local community action and involvement in urban-regeneration partnerships increasingly rely on input from faith groups working alone or together. For example, broad-based community organising (a global product imported from Chicago by Church of England community workers and community-oriented clergy) has recently taken off in East London. A group known as TELCO has formed a coalition of over thirty faith communities representing several thousand members to work together on issues of social policy by calling politicians and global business people, such as the developers of Canary Wharf, to account for their (mis)deeds in public. Roman Catholics, Anglicans, Methodists, Black Majority Pentecostals, mosques, gurdwaras and Hindu temples have all joined up. One recent event brought the Bishop of Barking as guest speaker at a celebration of Martin Luther King's birthday held in the East London Mosque.

A final impact of globalisation on the mainline Churches has been in the area of theology and ideas. Two or three examples from Christianity will suffice:

- Liberation theologies have been received with interest by the more radical members of the clergy and a minority of politically active lay people, as they have identified situations of oppression in East London having structural resonances with situations in the two thirds world. Contextualisation of the gospel has its advocates in most denominations. More significantly perhaps, the social justice agendas (on global issues such as world trade, debt, aid and development and local ones such as housing, poverty, racism and family breakdown) associated with the Lausanne Movement on World Evangelisation, are on the mainstream agenda of many evangelical Churches in East London.

- A second global agenda that has emerged among some (not evangelical) clergy is that of inter-faith dialogue and encounter derived from ecumenical debates in the World Council of Churches.

- A third global stream, that of the charismatic Vineyard Churches led by John Wimber, made some ephemeral impact on certain Churches in the early 1990s. A minority of mainstream evangelical Churches in East London experienced the so-called "Toronto Blessing" and some even sent visiting parties to the fellowship at Toronto airport where it originated (Lyon 1998), However the main networks for its spread were the well-established charismatic evangelical ones within the UK, and in particular the leading Central London churches of Holy Trinity Brompton and Kensington Temple. Other global manifestations of international evangelicalism on Church life in East London are evangelistic visits from

Billy Graham and the rapid spread of "new songs" such as those of Graham Kendrick.[6]

10.   Conclusion

East London and its religion represent a situation which is extremely diverse in comparison with less urbanised areas of the UK, and only approached by conurbations such as the West Midlands (Birmingham), Greater Manchester and West Yorkshire (Leeds and Bradford). Yet the situation is not without parallel in, say, New York or Chicago, Toronto or Melbourne, Paris or Singapore. In this sense the locality may be said to be at the cutting edge of globalisation, in the social transformations of late- or post-modernity.

This paper has described how various systems and processes within the global/local matrix have shaped the life of religious institutions in one locality. Economic forces, the history of colonialism, political systems, communications systems, urban ecology and systems of religion have all played a part in the formation of new religious institutions, the adaptation of old ones and the interactions between them and the state. The outcome for East London is that today religious identity is more significant, participation in religious organisations is more widespread, and the politics of faith communities is more salient than it has been for over half a century. Our final task is to attempt to place this account in a framework of sociological theory and to consider some of the policy options for its management.

In terms of social theory I would not wish to downplay the potential contribution of classical sociology of religion in the description and explanation of contemporary religious and social transformations. The three great founding fathers of sociology all devoted much energy to the study of religion with long-term consequences for the discipline, which are summed up by Riis (1999) as follows:

> "We may broadly distinguish between three major strands of theoretical schools in the sociology of religion, which are associated with three main founders of sociology [...]: functionalism (Emile Durkheim), cognitivism (Max Weber) and critical theory (Karl Marx). Functionalism regards religion as an institution constitutive for social integration, cognitivism sees it as a world view providing meaning for both individuals and groups, and critical theory interprets it as an ideology legitimating the power structure of society."

At the very least, these theoretical approaches offer a research and interpretative agenda for the local situation. Durkheim could be of use where our concerns are about social cohesion and solidarity among ethnic-minority communities, and in the developing debate around social capital and faith communities. Weber offers insights into the relationship of faith and modernisation, leadership and authority in

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[6]   For further examples of global/local dynamics affecting congregations and individuals, the reader may wish to access the author's file of Case Studies on the impact of globalisation on local congregations and individuals. (A better formatted RTF version is available.)

religious organisations and the religious values that link with economic enterprise, which one suspects may be found among Pentecostals, Hindus and Sikhs as much as within early-modern Protestantism. Marxism and critical theory pose the question of the class and group interests reflected in the discourses and practices of religion, and sensitise us to the ideological and political struggles that may be reflected in the life of faith communities. For example, some forms of Christian fundamentalism observable in East London may derive their theology from North American sources that are uncritical of capitalism, while some forms of Islam and Christianity may take stands for liberation and against the oppression perceived to lie in global capitalism.

A more recent approach is found in rational choice theory and the notion of the religious market. Indeed the model is discussed by Warner (1993) as an entirely new paradigm despite its roots in Adam Smith (see Iannocone 1991). In some respects it fits the local case in East London, and the claim cannot be dismissed lightly that increased religious diversity and competition for adherents increases the vitality of religious organisations and overall levels of public participation in them (Finke and Stark 1988). However, I would argue that the metaphor of a free religious market and rational choice of religious affiliation by individual consumers is not an accurate portrayal of what may be better described as a mixed economy (Smith 1998), or of the reality of life in communities where religious affiliation is generally ascribed at birth.

However, it is possible that an overall understanding of the religious ecology of urban areas may be made easier by considering the possible contribution of chaos and complexity theory. In fact, the case study of religion in East London has highlighted a situation of extreme complexity and fluidity. Globalisation processes are grounded in history and economics, rich in diversity, and produce new relationships and interactions at different levels between neighbours and organisations. They are also affected by feedback loops through the global communications systems that allow personal relationships to be maintained and information to be exchanged across the world. Although it is possible to discern patterns and structures at a number of discrete levels, it appears that the future shape of local (let alone global) society is highly unpredictable. Yet there is a sense in which new systemic elements are already emerging. It will be the task of future sociological research to explore the theoretical potential of chaos and complexity theory in linking the global and local levels by identifying patterns of recursive iterations and reflexivity, links between structure and action, and properties of emerging systems (see Ammerman 1997 and Eve et al. 1997).

If chaos and complexity theory does provide a plausible description of this area of social reality, one consequence would be that in terms of policy interventions it becomes more difficult to make recommendations, since a small intervention could lead to cataclysmic change for good or ill, as in the mythical "butterfly effect" where the flapping of an insect's wings in South America could lead to a hurricane in Europe. Furthermore, in such a world of global interconnectedness and

complexity, local and national governments may only have limited and geographically-bounded power – insufficient to allow them to control global economic, social and cultural processes. Nor are there as yet international structures and authorities able to impose their will across national borders. In contrast, many religious networks and institutions increasingly foster a sense of transnational identity and loyalty among believers. The least one might suggest is that in an age when the discourse of human rights is widely respected, and when religious freedom is taken as the norm, it would be unwise for governments or international bodies to regulate too heavily the religious sector of civil society.

Given that most national and many local governments will need to manage a population in which religious diversity is likely to persist and grow, the options for management of that diversity are limited. A few states will opt for a confessional approach in which those who refuse to follow the official religion (or irreligion) are excluded from some or all of the privileges of citizenship. However, in a globalised world where the rhetoric of democracy and individual freedom is loudly proclaimed, such a course will be difficult to sustain. Nor will a radically secular approach, in which all questions of faith are relegated to the private domain, solve the problem, as religious groupings sooner or later develop global identities leading to local political demands. Religion will inevitably make its mark in the public domain.

The new public significance of religion, particularly within the UK and Western Europe, does not however mark a return to the pattern of medieval Christendom or the *cuius regio, eius religio* Constantinianism of the post-Reformation period. The relationship of faith to politics in the twenty-first century cannot be one where states demand conformity of belief and participation in a single established religion. The significant motifs in public discourse will be individual freedom of choice and human rights, the political representation of group identity based around religious affiliation, and equality of opportunity and social justice for all religious groups as they participate in civil society. A second concern will be the articulation and application in policy of values drawn explicitly or implicitly from the major faith traditions, as they encounter each other and secular enlightenment values, in the context of rapid technological and social transformations, globalised communi-cations and information technology. We can look forward with interest to debates on issues such as world peace and national identity, women's rights, genetic engineering, the global environment, and international debt.

The task of government, especially in Western democratic societies and particularly in urban areas of religious diversity, will be sensitive management of faith communities, and their competing claims for rights and resources. At the negative end of the continuum, governments will need to act to ensure that competition between faiths does not develop into segregation and mutual hatred, ultimately into a new round of religious wars. Equal opportunities and anti-discrimination policies will need to be one element in programmes of social inclusion. On a more positive note, particularly at the local level, states have many

opportunities to engage in community development and urban regeneration in which faith communities and religious organisations can be involved as partners. Some positive examples are emerging in the UK through the work of agencies such as the Inner Cities Religious Council.[7] In some cases programmes will need to be delivered with resources spread fairly among individual faith communities, but where local conditions are favourable it should be possible for collaborative initiatives across faiths to be established.

Whatever local policies are adopted – and these are bound to vary given the historical differences in state relationships with religion – one thing is clear. Religion in all its diversity remains significant to a large majority of the world's population, and in cities and states where a wide cross-section of the global population is represented, it becomes increasingly necessary for governments to understand and take into account the varied meanings of faith for social and political life. We can be fairly confident that the sociology of religion will be in growing demand during the century that is dawning.

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[7] See the new (September 2000) www.faithandcommunity.org.uk website resulting from a Shaftesbury Society project sponsored by the DETR which reports on research and provides good practice materials for faith based urban regeneration.

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Religious Diversity in Prisons and in the Military – the Rights of Muslim Immigrants in Norwegian State Institutions[1]

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This article analyses the right of Muslims to practise their religion within two state institutions in Norway, the prisons and the military. Whereas the Norwegian Constitution acknowledges the fundamental right of individuals to practise their religious faiths, the case of Muslim immigrants demonstrates that these constitutional principles are often challenged by social practices. Structural barriers to full participation of Muslims in society are exemplified by state institutions such as the prisons and the military, where the responsibility for administrating religious life rests mainly with the clergy of the Church of Norway. While differences in the management of religious diversity in these two institutions may well be explained by their particular characteristics, the differential treatment of Christians and non-Christians in both of them indicates that structural barriers to full recognition of Muslims still prevail in Norway. The increasing diversity of religion caused by immigration processes in many Western European countries thus calls for the redesign of public policies of equal opportunity in order to effectively protect the fundamental right to religious freedom.

The importance of policies governing religious diversity in multicultural societies is increasingly recognised in both academic and public debate (see e.g. Beckford 1999). The management of religious diversity raises a variety of practical questions concerning effective ways of protecting the fundamental right to religious freedom. In Norwegian society, for example, the individual's right to the free formation and choice of his or her religious belief is constitutionally guaranteed and is respected by the Norwegian Government. However, increased religious diversity highlights some major problems in acknowledging in practice

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the equality of religious beliefs; of particular relevance in this respect is the existence of a national Lutheran Church enjoying privileges denied to non-Christian religious groups. Further, the debate about the management of religious diversity is related to wider issues pertaining to the empowerment of minorities. Religion, and culture in general, are certainly not the only channels through which minorities participate in society but, as the Norwegian case demonstrates, effective policies of equal opportunity for minorities need to consider the social, political, and legal conditions under which minority identities are sustained, even if such identities are based on religion.

This article discusses policies governing religious diversity by means of a case study of the place of religion in state institutions in Norway, the focus being on Muslims in the prisons and the military. Attention is drawn to a particular set of public-policy problems resulting from immigration processes experienced by most Western European societies in the past decades, that of the recognition of immigrants' religious identities, most notably of Islam. The prison and military systems are very good indicators of policies governing religious diversity, because such diversity, often understood in fairly theoretical and abstract terms, is experienced in everyday life in these "total institutions". The fact that the Church of Norway is privileged in the provision of religious care to prisoners or military personnel moreover raises questions about the extent to which public policy effectively respects the equality of religious faiths. On a more theoretical level, it is argued that the circumstances of prison and military institutions call into question the classical idea that religion should be restricted to the private sphere; on the contrary, the practical problems of policies of equal opportunity in these institutions demonstrate the relevance of religion in the public sphere, even in modern societies.

1. Muslims in Norway – Background Information on a New Field of Research

Norway is a sparsely populated country with a total population of a little under 4.5 million people in 1998. According to the Norwegian law on individual registration of June 1978, a licence is required to register information about race, religion and political affiliation. No statistical information is therefore available on the number of Muslims in the military or prison systems. However, the Defence Department estimates that in 1998 approximately 3% of all 18,100 Norwegian conscripts were of non-Western immigrant origin (*Handlingsplan* 1998–2001, 8). In the same year, the total number of inmates in Norwegian prisons was 1,945. The number of Muslims in prison varies greatly. One of the largest groups seems to be located in Ullersmo National Prison and is estimated to consist of 40 to 50 persons out of a total prison population of approximately 130 (*Dagsavisen* 1999). These estimates suggest that the Muslim population in the prisons and the military is now of a noteworthy size. Based on the age structure of the population of immigrant descent in Norway, there is also reason to believe that this population will increase in the

years ahead. According to the Central Bureau of Statistics, in 1999, 66% of all persons of immigrant descent were under the age of 10, whereas 14% of the total population belonged to this age group. The growing Muslim population in these types of institution poses fundamental questions on the extent of religious freedom and of equal opportunity to practise religion for minorities. These issues are discussed below in more detail, following a brief overview of the state of research in this field.

Scholars have shown a growing interest in Muslims in Europe (Kepel 1997; Nielsen 1995; Shadid and Van Koningsveld 1996; Vertovec and Peach 1997), but social science research in Norway has primarily been limited to two areas. First, documentation on the situation of Muslims in the country was sparse until the 1980s. Such information had to be sought in the literature on immigrants and ethnic minorities. The people in question were often classified as *innvandrer* (immigrant) or *gjestearbeider* (guest worker), and they were mainly discussed in the context of the sociology of work or of migration. Second, few studies have focused on Muslims in state institutions other than public schools (Grande 1989; Lingås and London 1996; Østberg 1998). In the United Kingdom a social science study has recently been conducted on religion in British prisons (Beckford and Gilliat 1998). However, no studies exist on Muslims in the prisons or the military in Norway.

2. Religion in the Public Sphere – New Issues, New Debates

Most social science research on immigrants to Norwegian society has tended to ignore the religious dimension of the immigrant and the ethnic minority communities. Dominated by the secularist assumptions of sociology and anthropology, these analyses seemed to expect that communities of immigrant origin would follow a course where religion was limited to the private sphere. In the 1970s this seemed to be a reasonable assumption, since there were few visible signs of religious worship among the men who came for temporary work without their families. When family reunification became more common, religious expression also became more evident. At that point, the assumption was frequently made that this was a transitory phase while the immigrant communities went through a process of adaptation and assimilation into their new society. Many Norwegian scholars who studied populations of Muslim origin tended to direct their attention to questions of ethnicity and culture (Eriksen and Sørheim 1994; Lien 1997). In spite of this fact, Muslims themselves seemed to emphasise their religious identities.

Towards the end of the 1980s, the tensions between religious identity, secularisation and privatisation broke out across Europe. Two events brought to the forefront tensions that had been present for some time: the "Salman Rushdie affair" and the "headscarves affair" in France. The publication of Salman Rushdie's novel *The Satanic Verses* in 1988 resulted in the fatwa issued by Ayatollah Khomeini in February 1989, to the effect that Rushdie had insulted the Prophet and Islam, and that he should be killed. There were demonstrations in several European cities,

followed by international repercussions. As a translation of the novel had been published in Norway, a few bookstores were set on fire and a leading publisher, W. Nygaard, was the victim of an attempted assassination. It was assumed that Nygaard was shot by Muslim fundamentalists because he had published the Norwegian translation of Rushdie's book, although this was never proven. A heated debate arose on the extent of religious freedom. Those who favoured stricter immigration policies and assimilation of immigrants into Norwegian culture used the "Rushdie affair" as a scare to predict future events and developments if Muslims were allowed to freely practise their religion. The issue for the Muslim communities, on the other hand, was to have the same public status and respect granted to their religion as that of the national Lutheran Church.

The second event, the "headscarves affair" in France, began in 1989 when three girls at a secondary school insisted on wearing headscarves during school hours in contravention of a new rule (Kepel 1997, 126–46, 184–95; Nielsen 1995, 158–66). Whereas the "headscarves affair" showed the refusal of a substantial proportion of Muslim immigrants and their children to adhere to the model assigned to them, namely that of confining religion to the private sphere, the "Rushdie affair" demonstrated that many Muslim communities wanted their religion to be granted the same public status as that of the Christian religion. Both events placed the subject of Muslims in Western Europe on the academic and political agendas, with the realisation that there was a growing "Islamic factor" in the social and political processes associated with immigration and ethnic minorities.

3. Freedom of Religion for Muslims in Norway?

The 1990s have continued to pose challenges to traditional models of integration. On the one hand, Muslim minorities experience severe pressures to adapt to their host societies, such as Norway. On the other hand, the host societies increasingly face the necessity of adapting their public policies to the new presence of Muslim inhabitants; this includes a reconsideration of the legal arrangements pertaining to the freedom of religion.

Freedom of religion was first acknowledged in the Norwegian Constitution in 1814. Paragraph 2 states that all immigrants to the Kingdom have the freedom to practise their religion, and that the Evangelical Lutheran religion remains the public religion of the state. The right to form non-Lutheran Christian Churches was introduced in 1845, but not until 1964 did the law guarantee full freedom for all religions (Det frivillige kirkelige landsråds paragraf 2- utvalg 1980, 57–68).

When Norwegian society became increasingly multicultural in the late 1960s and 1970s, issues of religious diversity appeared on the political agenda. Religion was first discussed as part of the government's immigration policies in the early 1970s; thus Governmental Proposal 39: Immigration Policies (Stortingsmelding 1973/74) offered foreign workers two days' leave for religious holidays. The same proposal was repeated in 1979 in Governmental Proposal 74: Immigrants in Norway. The

underlying idea was that the right of immigrants to practise their religion must be secured and that Norwegian society must consider their particular needs. When, almost ten years later, the issue of religion was not raised in Governmental Proposal 39: Immigration Policies (1987/88), this was explicitly criticised in Parliament by the Committee of Communal and Environmental Affairs. Since then, the Department of Communal and Employment Affairs has aimed at "facilitating dialogue between representatives of different faiths, and especially facilitating contact between Muslim faith communities and the authorities when it comes to areas of possible conflict" (Stortingsmelding 17 1996/97, 87). It has thus taken time to realise that many Muslims in Norway are demanding equal opportunities for their religion, and that these demands merit attention in public policy-making.

The idea that varieties of cultural meanings all have claims to equal respect is relatively new. It implies that human groups with different cultures can claim the same opportunities as other groups to put their cultures into practice (Beckford and Gilliat 1998, 6). This leads to demands for equal respect and equal opportunities (Rex 1994). In Governmental Proposal 17 of 1996/97, freedom of religion is, in fact, interpreted to mean equal opportunities for the individual to practise his or her faith in everyday life, and the right to organise religious practice through faith communities within the framework of Norwegian laws and regulations (Stortingsmelding 17 1996/97, 87). This document states that there are limitations to the notion of religious freedom pursuant to existing laws, for example, religious faith cannot justify actions that are contrary to Norwegian laws and basic human rights. One relevant issue has been the right of women to freely enter marriage, and not to be forced into arranged marriages. Furthermore, religious freedom does not exempt the individual from his or her societal duties. For example, Muslim parents have had to send their children to public or private schools, even when Muslim schools were not permitted. It is argued that the fact that one particular religion is the state's public religion is in itself no limitation to freedom of religion, and presumed that other religions and world views are tolerated and not treated in unequal ways "without probable cause" (Stortingsmelding 17 1996/97, 87).

Most importantly, the Norwegian Government interprets religious freedom to mean equal opportunities for the individual to practise religious faith in everyday life. What does the notion of equal opportunity actually imply in this document? First, it is specified that faith communities outside the national Church are equal in relation to relevant public support or other facilitation. Second, it is stated that those of a different faith are to be respected. The fact that non-Lutherans and non-Christians are termed "those of a different faith" rather than "people of all faiths" has by some been interpreted as the majority's condescending way of describing a minority (*Aftenposten* 1999, 14). Third, the individual has a right not to participate in religious activities. According to Beckford and Gilliat (1998, 7), the notion of equal opportunities for religion also includes the issue that religious care should be available to all regardless of their faith. This issue is not discussed in Government Proposal 17 but, as we shall see, it is particularly important for the type of state institutions discussed in this article.

4. Policies of Equal Opportunity: the Issue of Religion in State Institutions

So far, the debate on equal opportunities for religion has primarily been confined to the public school system, the health system and the social service system. Within the school system, the debate has centred around issues of establishing Muslim schools, and teaching religion in the public schools (Grande 1989; Lingås and London 1996; Østberg 1998). Within the health and social service systems, issues of religious ritual relating to birth and death, family law and food have been raised (Dahl 1992; Hagen and Qureshi 1996).

However, issues of equal opportunities for religion are also relevant to other state institutions, such as the prisons and the military. Why are these institutions of particular interest? Beckford and Gilliat (1998, 8), in their study of religion in English and Welsh prisons, pointed to at least three reasons why these issues are sensitive and important within prisons, reasons that can also be applied to the military. First, the confined nature of prison and military life can increase sensitivity to matters of individual and collective respect. Perhaps this is related to the fact that persons in military service as well as prison inmates are deprived of certain rights and privileges enjoyed by the rest of the population. Second, most military personnel and prisoners are subject to similar conditions, regulations and discipline. In these circumstances, if they perceive that privileges or penalties are given to some groups and not to others for no legitimate reason, feelings of resentment will tend to be strong. Finally, Beckford and Gilliat point out that religious beliefs concern absolute truths. Religious believers who perceive that their particular religion does not receive the same degree of respect as do others may feel offended and disadvantaged. For all these reasons, considerations of equal respect are important in these types of institution.

The arguments presented by Beckford and Gilliat focus on issues of potential dissatisfaction or resentment, and possible unrest. However, the argument here is that the study of equal opportunities for religion in prisons and the military poses more fundamental questions relating to issues of state and religion, for two reasons. The first has to do with the fact that these institutions are two fundamental, formal, controlling institutions in society, and they are based on power and force. Obviously, participation in the prison system is not voluntary, but forced. Further, since Norway's military defence is based on compulsory service for every fit, adult, male Norwegian citizen, participation in the military is also an obligation. Both institutions are based on state power, where each individual's right to choose participation or non-participation is limited. Second, the prisons and the military, like the school and the health systems, are funded by public resources. As they are financed by the public purse, it is in the public interest to know how fundamental rights are practised in these institutions.

5. The System of Prison and Military Chaplaincies

The issue of equal opportunities for religion in prisons and the military is intrinsically related to the relations between prison and military service chaplaincies and representatives of other faiths.

Historically, the Church of Norway provided services to the old institutions of prisons, hospitals, and asylums through the local clergy. When these types of institution were transformed into modern hospitals and prisons, specific clergymen were hired to provide these services. In Norway, there are approximately one hundred chaplains in public hospitals and nursing homes, including part-time positions, while there are about eighteen positions in the prison system (Norges Kristne Råd 2000).

According to instructions for hiring prison chaplains issued in November 1997, Lutheran chaplains who qualify for positions within the national Church are officially appointed by a regional council consisting of the director for the prison district, the local bishop in the Church of Norway, and a member of the union that organises the majority of chaplains in the diocese. The chaplains' duty is to deliver pastoral and religious care to prisoners. It is also common practice, and often set out in their job descriptions, that they are to initiate contact with representatives of other faith communities on behalf of prisoners with other confessional or religious faiths. The intention is that they will actively make contact with the pastor, the father, the rabbi or the imam and facilitate their visits to the prisons.

The chaplain service in the military, as defined in a Royal Resolution of 22 October 1954, is to provide pastoral and religious care to military personnel. This is to take place according to the order of the Church of Norway. Permanent positions have been limited to chaplains from the Church of Norway and the Evangelical Lutheran Free Church. However, during the post-war period theologians from different Christian denominations serving their compulsory military service also functioned as chaplains under the supervision of the Bishop of Oslo and the Church of Norway. In 1996 the military chaplain service was reorganised so that the number of permanent positions increased and the arrangement with engaged chaplains was discontinued. The reason was a problem with recruitment to the various positions. Members of all faith communities in Norway have the right during their military service to practise their own religion according to their own faith. It is the duty of the military chaplain to facilitate this without having to participate in the religious activities (Norges Kristne Råd 2000). To sum up, prison and military chaplains are appointed by an agency of the state to deliver pastoral and religious care to prisoners, conscripts, and military personnel.

6. Different Opportunities for Religion in these Two Types of State Institution

Although the responsibility for administrating the provision of religion in prisons and the military rests mainly with the clergy of the Church of Norway, the equality of opportunity for non-Christians to practise their religion varies considerably in these two types of institution.

In 1989 the Norwegian Defence Department decided to enforce new regulations implying that the military service would be adapted to ethnic and religious minorities. The regulations were to apply to conscripts, military officers, and civilian employees. Three issues were included: uniforms, holidays and food. In 1988 the decision had been made to allow members of Sikh society to wear turbans, and other groups were given corresponding rights, all expenses funded by the military. Religious minorities were given access to the same number of days' leave for religious festivals as those who belonged to the traditional Protestant faith. Finally, alternative food was to be offered in all units, as well as during military manoeuvres, if the main menu would conflict with religious taboos. These regulations covered persons who belonged to the largest religious minority groups: Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Russian Orthodox, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu and Sikh.

In contrast, there are few adaptations to religious minorities within the prison service. According to information from the chaplains in three of the larger prisons (Ullersmo National Prison, Bergen National Prison and Oslo County Jail), Muslim prisoners do not have the right to leave work to pray without having their wages reduced. Whereas some prisons serve halal food, others refuse to do so. Many prisons give amnesty for Christmas, but not for the Muslim festivals of 'Id al-Fitr and 'Id al-Adha. Also, Friday prayers led by an imam are seldom arranged. Finally, the Christian prison chaplains can freely visit prison cells, whereas the imams are refused such access. In short, there is no systematic adaptation of food, religious holidays, clothing or visits from religious leaders to various religious minorities within the prison system.

Why do the opportunities for non-Christians to practise their religion differ so much in these two types of institution? The answer seems to be twofold, related to the fundamental goals of the institutions and their claims for legitimacy in the larger population. The basic goal of the military is to protect the nation and its citizens from external threat. This goal implies that all citizens are treated as one unity; together they form a nation facing other nations. In a democratic society such as Norway, the unity of all citizens implies that they all have equal opportunities, rights and duties. In contrast, the basic goal of the legal system is to protect the society and its citizens against internal threat. The basic goals of the prison system imply a differentiation between groups of citizens relating to opportunities, rights and duties. In fact, the punishment of those inside the prison

walls consists largely of the deprivation of the opportunities and rights granted those outside the walls, combined with a greater amount of duties.

These contrasting fundamental goals give different degrees of legitimacy to the demands presented by persons within these institutions. Focusing first on the case of the military, the Action Plan of the Defence Department (1998–2001) aims to increase recruitment of persons of immigrant descent. Several reasons are given for this policy. First, the basis of a functioning military service in a democratic society is the widespread support of the population. It is stated that if the military is to fulfil its purpose, it must be a reflection of the society it is to serve. Since Norwegian society is becoming increasingly multicultural, the military must recruit more minorities in order to reflect the overall population. Second, the military is facing a growing shortage of personnel, due to lower birth rates and the increasing number of young men who postpone their compulsory military service for reasons related to education or work. Third, an increasing number of youths of immigrant descent will, in the years ahead, be liable for compulsory military service. Since compulsory service is the primary recruitment channel for military personnel, it is seen as important that there should be minority officers and leaders to promote further recruitment. Fourth, recruitment of persons of immigrant origin is also used to solve the problem of unemployment in this group. Fifth, persons of immigrant descent are now viewed as a resource that the Norwegian military can use in international troops under the UN, NATO, OSCE, etc.

Finally, the Defence Department is concerned that the military is suffering from a lack of legitimacy among some ethnic minority communities, because refuge from persecution and war is a major cause of immigration to Norway. Many refugees have suffered at the hands of military personnel. It is unlikely, therefore, that these parents will motivate their children to seek a career in the military. To promote recruitment of youth of immigrant descent to the military, moderate quotas are used for entrance to military education for military and civilian personnel, and so-called "multicultural competence" is rewarded in the admission process. It is on this basis that the military goes to great lengths to provide equal opportunities for religious minorities. As a result, demands from non-Christian minorities for equal opportunities to practise their religions are considered legitimate.

Since those inside the prison walls are not granted the same rights as those outside, demands for equal opportunities to practise their religions are not necessarily viewed as legitimate, either by the prison personnel or by the wider population. There seem to be at least three arguments against such demands. First, the matter of funding. If, for example, halal meat is to be served in a prison, it must be kept and prepared separate from non-halal meat, which would increase the cost of food preparation and cooking. Second, the legitimacy of spending public funds on such purposes. If it becomes public knowledge that money is spent on halal meat in prisons, some politicians may use this issue for their own purposes to further mobilise the anti-foreign sentiments that already exist among the Norwegian population. Third, the integrity of those who present these demands is questioned.

According to a newspaper interview, some personnel in Ullersmo National Prison are reported to have stated that Muslim prisoners can scarcely be serious about their religion, otherwise they would not be inmates (*Dagsavisen* 1999, 23–5). These reasons all suggest that demands from prison inmates for equal opportunities to practise their religions are not considered legitimate, and that the unequality of opportunity to practise religion may be viewed as part of their punishment.

7. Patterns of Discrimination between Christians and Muslims – a Challenge for Norwegian Society

One may conclude that there are legitimate reasons for denying the same rights to prisoners as to military personnel, since there is a fundamental difference between free citizens and prisoners. However, these reasons do not explain why the state provides services for Christian prisoners, conscripts and military personnel, but not for Muslims.

Some may argue that the privileged position of members of the Church of Norway is based on the fact that it is the largest in the country, with a little over 86% of the population as members (Morvik 1999, 136). The Church has also been the primary carrier of the nation's Christian traditions. These two factors would, then, explain why the state provides certain services for members of the Church that are not provided for non-members.

However, this view is somewhat problematic for at least three reasons. First, both the military and the prison systems form part of Norwegian society, which is characterised by freedom of religion and a diversity of world views. Yet the system of prison and military chaplaincies highlights the unequal opportunities for Christians and Muslims to practise their religion within these two state institutions. Second, there is the issue of public funding. The Norwegian Government has in its Proposal 17 defined the notion of equal opportunities to practise religion to mean that faith communities outside the national Church are equal in relation to relevant public support or other facilitation (Stortingsmelding 17 1996/97, 87). On this basis, it is scarcely legitimate for the Norwegian state to treat Christians and Muslims differently.

This brings us to a final, more theoretical issue: the distinction between the public and the private spheres. The notion of the public sphere is often understood in sociology, in terms of Habermas's social theory, as a separate arena of social life where individuals are presumed to freely exchange their opinions as citizens (see Habermas 1989). Multiculturalism is sometimes said to involve equal opportunities for minorities to participate in society, without discrimination in public life, and to practise their own cultures in private life (Rex 1994). According to Beckford and Gilliat (1998, 11), there is a secularist bias in claims that religion properly belongs only to the private sphere. They argue that a multicultural society is one in which minorities should have equal opportunities to participate in public life and to follow their own cultural practices in public as well, within the usual conditions imposed

for the upkeep of public order and safety. The term "public", as distinct from private, thus allows us to focus on the collective dimension of religion. The concern is that the activities of religious collectives (such as prison and military chaplaincy organisations) and religious groups of people (such as Muslims) take place in settings to which most members of Norwegian society have access by obligation rather than by choice. Religious activities in prisons and the military are public, then, because they are visible, collective, and available on demand to all people who enter the prison or the military systems. Religious activities in prisons and the military are also public because they have to do with legally constituted authorities. Chaplaincies in prisons and the military are public in this sense since they are organised by bodies authorised by statute on behalf of the entire population.

8. Conclusions

Participation in public life for minorities can mean a variety of things. Here, the focus has been directed on the rights of Muslims in two state institutions: the prisons and the military. If public policies are to generate equal respect and equal opportunities for religious minorities, these groups should be involved in the discussion about how religious care can be provided to conscripts, military personnel and prisoners. Other faith communities should have access to facilities funded from public resources for religion in these institutions. In this way, their requirements for religious care would be met as a matter of routine, rather than exception. These issues are related to their right to practise their religion and to have the same opportunities to do so as most Christians.

One may question whether policies based on human rights as advocated here would actually generate equal respect for religious minorities. One possible consequence is that religion would become more controversial as religious minorities threaten the position of power of a religious majority. Another consequence may be that religious minorities would become more segmented and separated from the majority population. On the other hand, religion may be an important tool with which minorities could sustain their identities, providing a basis for handling the difficult process of integration. Religion can be viewed, then, as a resource rather than as a problem. Finally, the controversies over the rights of religious minorities may also be a transitory process. Similar controversies appeared in Norway in the 1850s, when the monopoly of the national Church was broken. As the rights of the non-Lutheran Churches were secured, the controversies gradually disappeared. A public policy securing the rights of non-Christian religious minorities may eventually also lead to greater respect for these groups.

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