

Religion and Politics



Inter-Contextual Approaches on India and Europe

Workshop at University of Antwerp

Centrum Pieter Gillis

December 7, 2010

University of Antwerp & UCSIA

in cooperation with

IRNRD-International Research Network on Religion and Democracy

Generously sponsored by the India Fund - UA

VENUE: HOF VAN LIERE – ZAAL B, UNIVERSITY OF ANTWERP, PRINSSTRAAT 13

The complexities of the pluralistic scenario that determines the present-day socio-cultural and political conditions of democratic societies trigger essential dilemmas for these political communities. One of the most important challenges these societies encounter is how to accommodate the specific attitudes and opinions of religious citizens within the liberal-secular framework of the democratic political system. India is the most populated democracy of the globe and Indian society is best characterized by its pulsating religious and cultural pluralism. The debates over secularization and the controversies following from the political role that religious driving forces play in this compound society are most intensive and bear important components that may be interesting for the evolving 'postsecular' scholarly discourse in Europe. The workshop aims at bringing the most important elements of these debates into the European context discussing the contemporary Indian discourse on secularization.

10.00-10.10: WELCOME

Walter Van Herck (Department of Philosophy/Centrum Pieter Gillis, University of Antwerp)

10.10-10.40: KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Prof Dr. em. Winand Callewaert (Centre for Advanced India-EU Studies, KU Leuven)

10.40-11.40 SESSION 1 / CHAIR: AAKASH SINGH

10.40-11.20: Lecture

Jakob De Roover (Research Centre for Comparative Science of Cultures, Ghent University)

Liberalism, Secularism and the Cultural Migration of Ideas

11.20-11.30: Respondent: **Walter Van Herck**

Discussion

COFFEE BREAK

11.40-12.40 SESSION 2 / CHAIR: PATRICK LOOBUYCK

11.40-12.20: Lecture

Valentina Gentile (LUISS Guido Carli University, Rome)

Secularism, Modernity and Democracy in Post-Colonial India: the Idea of Political Society

12.20-12.30: Respondent: **Sarah Claerhout** (Research Centre for Comparative Science of Cultures, Ghent University)

Discussion

LUNCH

14.00-15.00 SESSION 3 / CHAIR: WALTER VAN HERCK

14.00-14.40: Lecture

Aakash Singh (Developing Countries Research Centre, University of Delhi)

Versions of Modernity? Public Religion in India and Europe

14.40-14.50: Respondent: **Patrick Loobuyck** (Department of Philosophy/Centrum Pieter Gillis, University of Antwerp)

Discussion

COFFEE BREAK

15.20-16.20 SESSION / CHAIR SARAH CLAERHOUT

15.20-16.00: Lecture

Péter Losonczi (University of West Hungary, Szombathely / UCSIA Visiting Fellow, CPG-UA)

**The Return of the Political and the Return of Religion:
Reflections on Mouffe and Bilgrami**

16.00-16.10: Respondent: **Leni Franken** (Centrum Pieter Gillis, University of Antwerp)

Discussion

**The workshop will be followed by an UCSIA Public Lecture, presented by Péter Losonczi
18.30-19.30: Postsecular Democracies? Europe and India in Context**

Contemporary studies in the social sciences and political theory, as well as in philosophy reflect in multiple ways on the alleged 'postsecular' conditions of the present-day socio-cultural conditions and the possible political consequences of this situation. This lecture intends to give a survey of these developments with a focus on the internally compound European context, on the one hand, and on the Indian debates on secularization, on the other. It will be examined whether it is possible to develop such 'comparative analytical framework' (José Casanova) that, considering important elements of the Indian context, would make these insights adaptable within the European milieu, where the debates regarding the political consequences of this new situation are especially important and vibrant.

Workshop and evening lecture are free of charge. Attendants are expected to send an email to peter.losonczi@ua.ac.be

Info: www.ua.ac.be/pietergillis