



Universiteit  
Leiden  
The Netherlands

## 'Let us Live as Hindus': Narrating Hindu Identity Through Temple Building Processes in Amsterdam Zuidoost (1988-2015)

Swamy, P.

### Citation

Swamy, P. (2016, October 27). 'Let us Live as Hindus': Narrating Hindu Identity Through Temple Building Processes in Amsterdam Zuidoost (1988-2015). Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/43733>

Version: Not Applicable (or Unknown)

License: [Licence agreement concerning inclusion of doctoral thesis in the Institutional Repository of the University of Leiden](#)

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/43733>

**Note:** To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

Cover Page



Universiteit Leiden



The handle <http://hdl.handle.net/1887/43733> holds various files of this Leiden University dissertation.

**Author:** Swamy, P.

**Title:** 'Let us Live as Hindus': Narrating Hindu Identity Through Temple Building Processes in Amsterdam Zuidoost (1988-2015)

**Issue Date:** 2016-10-27

# CONCLUSION TO PART II

The DD community continues to engage in a struggle to establish a Hindu temple in Amsterdam Zuidoost. From the 1980s, it is clear that those entrusted to liaison with the local district government chose to frame their grievances in narratives of Hindu hurt rather than to engage with the legal background of their request. The six narrative registers that I discuss, the Hindu as citizen, the strategic ‘coolie’ stereotype, Hindu ‘exceptionalism’, multicultural competition, ambivalent orientalism and Hindu isolationism, demonstrate that the DD temple board actors strategically use affect and hurt as a justification for receiving a subsidised piece of land for a temple. This also reveals how the narratives of Hindu hurt and suffering in this case make strategic use of images that are often taboo, such as that of the ‘helpless coolie’, or even contradictory, in the case of coolie identity in relation to the ‘model minority’ Hindustani stereotype. Such a blatant, sustained disregard for the legal parameters of the issue of temple-building may be confusing and at times, frustrating, especially in light of the repeated request to be treated equally as Dutch citizens. This however reveals how affect is used as a strategy that the temple board actors believe may help them to circumvent the law.

The closing of the temporary DD space was no doubt a traumatic event for Hindus in the neighbourhood. Chapter 5 has explored how this trauma was narrated across various media in order to demonstrate that the collective experience of suffering was portrayed as a moral boundary between the community and the selfish temple board.

The current voices of my respondents express their hurt as a wrong done to them by their own community. The lack of in-group solidarity and the lack of a sense of moral duty or dharma is now reflected as the main undoing of the DD community. Even as the prospect of co-operative healing becomes a reality through the SMO, there is still much apprehension across various temple communities. It appears that with so much hurt having been experienced until so recently, many DD community members choose to distance themselves rather than risk more pain and humiliation. These narrative registers and experiences ultimately show how the processes of templeisation in the neighbourhood have set up powerful symbolic boundaries that change the way that Hindu identity is defined and idealised.

Part III focuses in more detail on the post 2010 narrative registers of Hindu identity and values and the impact of templeisation processes in order to highlight how makeshift temple spaces in Amsterdam Zuidoost since 2010 have become sites of civic activity and education. As current temple spaces in Amsterdam Zuidoost take on new tasks of civic education, and the community lays more and more value on democratising temple structures, the aftermath of the

2010 evacuation is entwined with articulations of an emerging moral economy of 'active Hinduism'.