



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 III

After the closing of the DD temple space in 2010, attitudes towards what it means to be a ‘Hindu’ or practice Hindu religion have shifted. Increasingly, my respondents have begun to see their model minority status as a superficial cover for pressing issues such as materialism, self-centeredness and apathy that are real problems for Hindus in Amsterdam Zuidoost. What is more, some even see their model minority status as an impediment to establishing a purpose built temple in the neighbourhood. With all the emphasis on personal socio-economic success, my respondents feel as if group solidarity and a sense of empathy for one’s fellow citizens have suffered. The moral economy of active Hinduism that my respondents construct therefore relies on more ubiquitous ‘spiritual’ aspects of Hindu practice such as yoga, meditation and self-reflection, on top of distinctly localised preoccupations with politics.

The newly emerging focus on being Hindus through political involvement is a broadly defined, multigenerational engagement. While some community actors can become closely entwined with party politics and politicians, others use their devotion to the goddess as the main expression of solidarity with the DD community and its struggles. With the temple taking on an increasingly civic role in the public sphere, the nature of religious narratives, such as the life of Ram told at SSD temple, are re-drawn so that gods and goddesses not only guide devotees through the experience of exile and migration but also civic re-integration. It is increasingly important for community actors to assert direct links between their religious practices and principles of ‘Dutchness’ such as equality, civic engagement and democracy in order to demonstrate not only that they have learned from the experiences of 2010, but also that Hindus ‘belong’ to Dutch society.

I now turn to a final discussion and conclusion of my research to examine how public Hindu identity has emerged from a need to produce and re-produce locality in such a way that reflects the public place and importance of Hindus. The processes of templeisation have become the chief ways in which going public is legitimised and realised: even though attempts in the past have been unsuccessful, and processes are still ongoing, the move towards a public Hindu identity has involve strategies of local representation, co-operation and active citizenship that have had far-reaching consequences for how Hindu identity is practiced, understood and valued inside the larger Hindu community in Amsterdam Zuidoost.