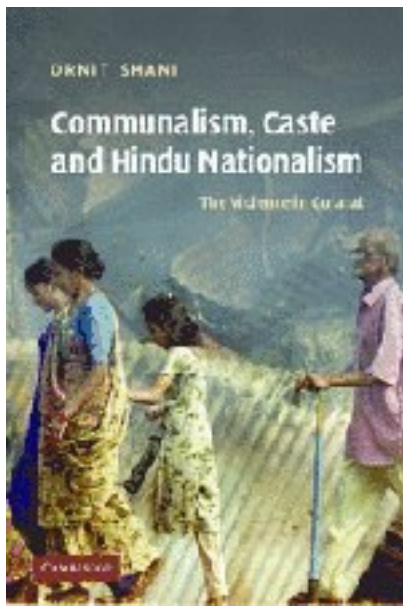


Communalism, Caste and Hindu Nationalism



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Belligerent Hindu nationalism, accompanied by recurring communal violence between Hindus and Muslims, has become a compelling force in Indian politics over the last two decades. Ornit Shani's book examines the rise of Hindu nationalism, asking why distinct groups of Hindus, deeply divided by caste, mobilised on the basis of unitary Hindu nationalism, and why the Hindu nationalist rhetoric about the threat of the impoverished Muslim minority was so persuasive to the Hindu majority. Using evidence from communal violence in Gujarat, Shani argues that the growth of communalism was not simply a result of Hindu-Muslim antagonisms, but was driven by intensifying tensions among Hindus, nurtured by changes in the relations between castes and associated state policies. These, in turn, were frequently displaced onto Muslims, thus enabling caste conflicts to develop and deepen communal rivalries. The book offers a challenge to previous scholarship on the rise of communalism, which will

be welcomed by students and professionals.

作者介绍:

目录: Cover.....	Page 1
Half-title.....	Page 3
Title.....	Page 5
Copyright.....	Page 6
Dedication.....	Page 7
Contents.....	Page 9
Acknowledgements.....	Page 10
Glossary.....	Page 12
Abbreviations.....	Page 14
Map of Ahmedabad.....	Page 16
Introduction.....	Page 17
Part I The background.....	Page 39
1 Setting the scene.....	Page 41
The urban profile.....	Page 42
The making of three cities.....	Page 49
De-industrialisation.....	Page 53
Housing.....	Page 61
2 The politics and discourse of reservations and caste.....	Page 68
Reservations: between caste and class.....	Page 69
From caste and class to communalism.....	Page 75
The making of caste (1).....	Page 79
The political context of reservations and communalism.....	Page 82
The making of caste (2).....	Page 90
Part II The 1985 Ahmedabad riots: the historical conjunction between caste conflicts and communalism.....	Page 93
Outlining the riots – the plot.....	Page 95
3 The official account.....	Page 105
The walled city.....	Page 124
The Cow of the Temple Decapitated: Its Head Thrown in the Temple at Dariapur.....	Page 127
Ahmedabad of the chimneys: the eastern industrial belt.....	Page 138
A Challenge to Reservation.....	Page 144
O BROTHER PATELS OF ALL-GUJARAT! AWAKEN, AWAKEN!.....	Page 146
Part III The making of ethnoHinduism.....	Page 149
5 The making of ethnoHinduism: from the politics of redistribution to the politics of recognition.....	Page 151
The making of ethnoHinduism and caste.....	Page 156
The state and the making of ethnoHinduism.....	Page 163
Communal violence and the state.....	Page 169
6 The role of violence in ethnic politics.....	Page 172
1985.....	Page 175
1969.....	Page 177
2002.....	Page 184
Violence and ethnoHinduism in the 1990s.....	Page 189
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.....	Page 205
AHMEDABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION.....	Page 206
PAPERS AND NON-OFFICIAL PUBLICATIONS.....	Page 207
NON-OFFICIAL REPORTS.....	Page 208

NEWSPAPERS.....Page 209
BOOKS AND ARTICLES.....Page 210
UNPUBLISHED DISSERTATIONS.....Page 220
BACKGROUND READING.....Page 221
Index.....Page 227
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