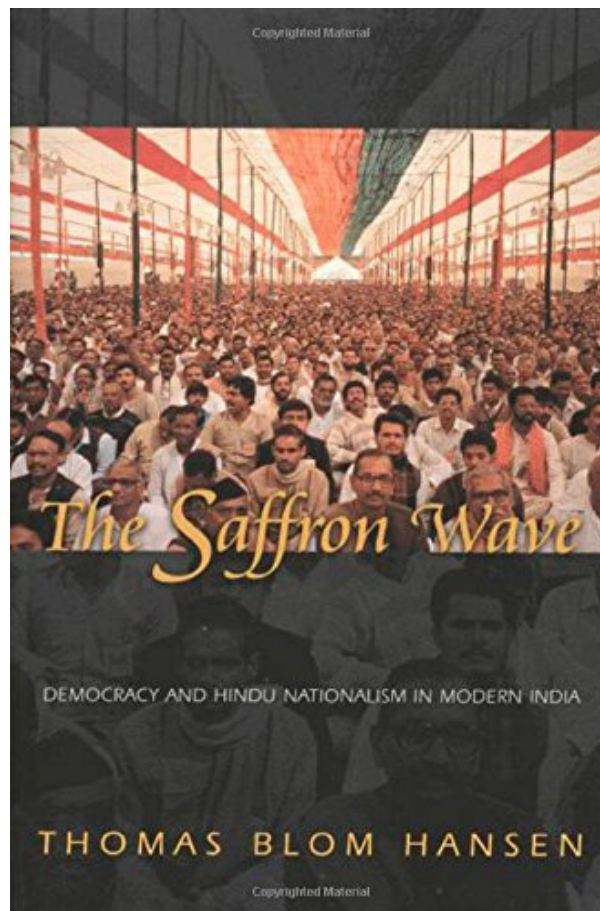
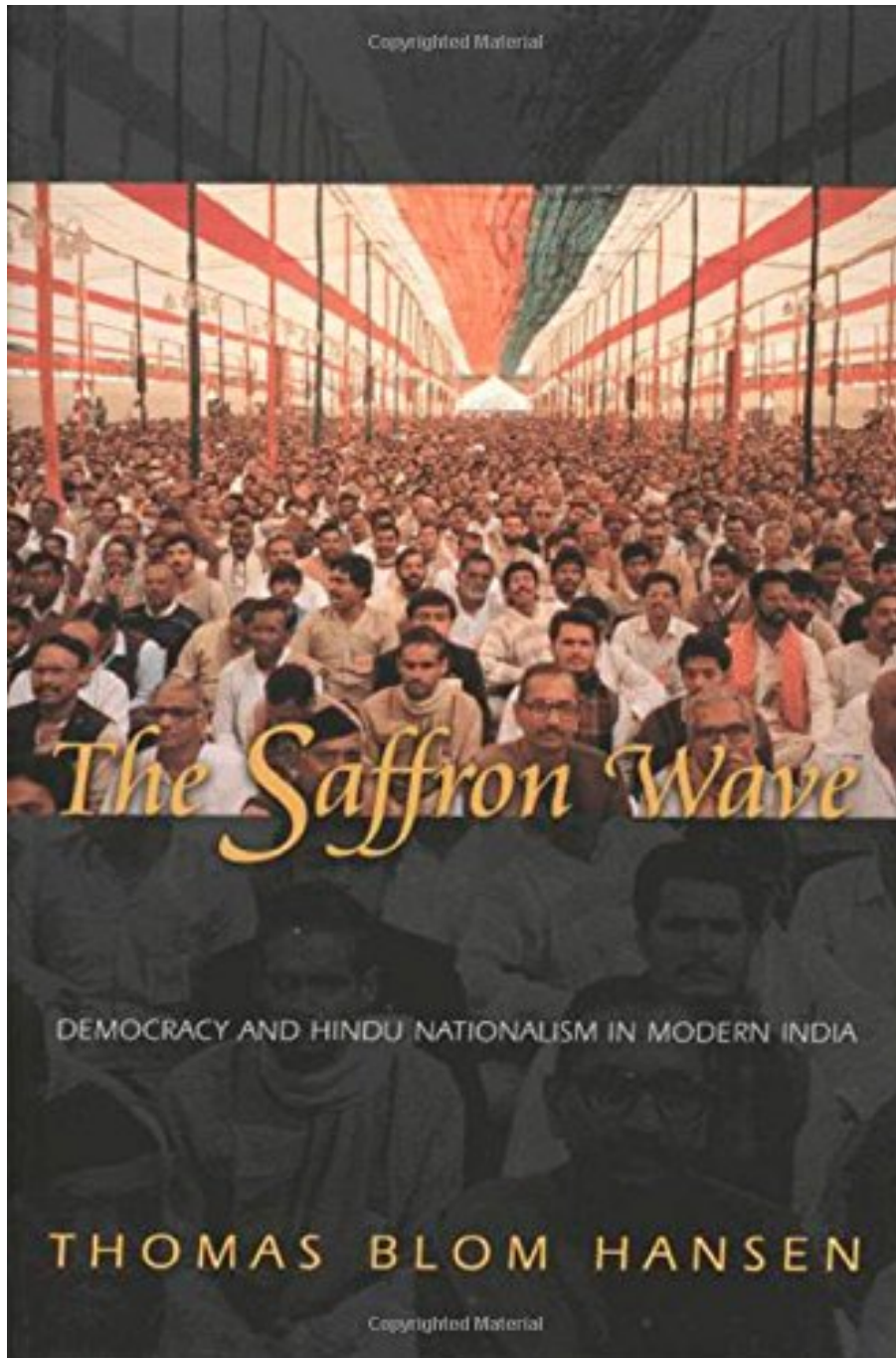


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HINDU NATIONALISM IN MODERN INDIA
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"Combining broad analysis with vivid local case studies, this book gives the reader profound insights into the turbulent world of contemporary Indian politics."--Judith M. Brown, History

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Thomas Blom Hansen is Associate Professor in the Department of Geography and International Development Studies at Roskilde University in Denmark.

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The rise of strong nationalist and religious movements in postcolonial and newly democratic countries alarms many Western observers. In *The Saffron Wave*, Thomas Hansen turns our attention to recent events in the world's largest democracy, India. Here he analyzes Indian receptivity to the right-wing Hindu nationalist party and its political wing, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which claims to create a polity based on "ancient" Hindu culture. Rather than interpreting Hindu nationalism as a mainly religious phenomenon, or a strictly political movement, Hansen places the BJP within the context of the larger transformations of democratic governance in India.

Hansen demonstrates that democratic transformation has enabled such developments as political mobilization among the lower castes and civil protections for religious minorities. Against this backdrop, the Hindu nationalist movement has successfully articulated the anxieties and desires of the large and amorphous Indian middle class. A form of conservative populism, the movement has attracted not only privileged groups fearing encroachment on their dominant positions but also "plebeian" and impoverished groups seeking recognition around a majoritarian rhetoric of cultural pride, order, and national strength. Combining political theory, ethnographic material, and sensitivity to colonial and postcolonial history, *The Saffron Wave* offers fresh insights into Indian politics and, by focusing on the links between democracy and ethnic majoritarianism, advances our understanding of democracy in the postcolonial world.

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Thomas Blom Hansen is Associate Professor in the Department of Geography and International Development Studies at Roskilde University in Denmark.

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8 of 11 people found the following review helpful.

Sound Scholarship Based on Extensive Research

By A Customer

Hansen's "Saffron Wave" is among the best of the recent spate of publications on the rise of the BJP and transformation of the Indian political landscape that has accompanied it. Based on a comprehensive incorporation of previous scholarship as well as a great deal of field-work primarily in Maharashtra state, Hansen is in absolute control of his material. Indeed, though the introduction is a bit clogged with "theoretical" ruminations, even the Lacanianism is put to good use. Thus, what seems at first gratuitous and extraneous to the argument, is well integrated over the course of the text and enables some of Hansen's richest insights into the sort of mentality that is responsible for, among many things besides, the sort of indecent ranting seen in the review above.

10 of 18 people found the following review helpful.

Response to previous "Reader"

By A Customer

Not only does "A reader" go on and on at inordinate length for an online review, but he/she also cannot punctuate. Seriously, a review such as this is typical of the present situation whereby any attempt to analyze and criticize present-day Hindu nationalists is countered not by argument but by the assertion of the radically community specific truth. It should be stated from the first that the "we" of his review has no definite reference but is itself a coercive move to define who is and who is not a member of the nation and of Hinduism. Does the review tell one anything about the book? Does it question its facts and sources? Does it begin to engage its argument? No. Rather, the shrillness of the invocation of Darwin with its overtones of brute survivalism sets the tone for another tirade in what has of late become all too familiar a vein. This is why these online reviews are so often useless. Among other things, it precludes others, such as myself, from doing anything more than parrying the grossest puerility. The problem of the book is precisely its inability to grapple fully with the evisceration of considered public discourse in South Asia, as most everywhere else, in the present. Nevertheless, it is a very solid beginning in a literature still finding its bearings.

3 of 7 people found the following review helpful.

A Landmark Work

By A Customer

This is a landmark work on a subject that the rest of the world should become aware of, but unfortunately not enough is written about it. The Author has clear insights into the Hindu nationalist movement and his writing keeps you interested throughout the book. A previous poster said that the percentage of minorities in Pakistan was 40% in 1947 when in fact it was only 15 percent. 40% is actually the percentage of Muslims that were in British India before partition. I am not sure where he is getting his numbers but they are not correct. I am quoting my numbers from the South Asian Analysis group.

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