CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Communalism in India has a long history and is wrongly seen as a problem primarily between Hindus and Muslims. To begin with, therefore, it is important to define communalism for the purpose of this study. Communalism had been defined as an illegitimate intrusion of religion into politics. ¹ Colonial administrators also saw it as the struggle for power between the two main ‘rival communities’ in India.² Socio-economic disparity between Hindus and Muslims, especially in Bengal, led to the rise of the ‘lag theory’ to explain Muslim communalism. Quite obviously, Hindu communalism in these circumstances was excused as a natural ‘reaction’ to Muslim communal assertion. We will discuss this view at some length later in the section on Muslim communal mobilization. Using the insights provided by sociologists, anthropologists and psychologists, some efforts are also being made now to define communalism in the context of concepts like prejudice and group dynamics, community and ‘scapegoating’, self/other dialogue etc.³ For our purposes, we would go with the definition given by

¹ It was defined as ‘that peculiarly destructive Indian expression of religion in politics which emphasizes the religious identity of social groups and requires political society to be organised as a confederation of religious communities.’ Gopal Krishna, “Religion in Politics,” Indian Economic and Social History Review, Vol. 8 (4), 1971, p. 393.
² Report of the Indian Statutory Commission, Vol. I, pp. 29-30. No academic has said this but at the popular level, communalists keep propagating that communalism was a hangover of the natural animosities between Hindus and Muslims in the past.
³ Peter Heehs, Nationalism, Terrorism, Communalism Essays in Modern Indian History (Delhi, Oxford University Press (OUP), 1998), especially the chapter entitled “Indian Communalism: A Survey of Historical and Social-Scientific Approaches.” Political solutions like advocating mutual respect and tolerance are necessary but not sufficient, says Heehs. The author holds that insights of social sciences will be helpful to get at the root of the communal problem and provide a deeper solution to it. Making individuals secure in their diverse identities is a lasting solution, asserts Heehs. Inclusive pluralism based on ‘multiple definition’ which recognises and respects differences can make individuals secure in their diverse identities, he implores. Ibid., pp. 136-7.
historians who see communalism as a modern ideological phenomenon based on two assumptions. Firstly, this ideology holds that the believers in one religion have common social, economic and political interests. Secondly, communalism is based on the belief that there is a socio-economic and politico-cultural conflict between groups because they follow different religions.\footnote{Bipan Chandra, \textit{Communalism in Modern India} (Delhi, Vani Educational Books, 1984), pp. 1-3.}

Communalism, like any other historical phenomenon, changed after it came into existence. Bipan Chandra distinguishes three forms of communalism, viz. communal nationalism, Liberal communalism and extreme or fascist communalism. Communal nationalists believed that the political and socio-economic interests of members of each religious group were similar but they also thought that it was possible to somehow reconcile them with national interests. M. A. Jinnah and V. D. Savarkar in their early political careers were good examples of communal nationalism. Liberal communalism came with cries of 'Hindu or Muslim first and nation later.' Till 1937, the Muslim League followed this form but liberal Hindu communalists hid their sectarianism behind nationalism by not stepping out to be counted even among ardent Hindu Mahasbha followers. The extreme or fascist form of communalism was unleashed after 1937 when communal organisations felt the necessity to garner mass support by arousing irrational fears for which aggressive politics, extremist demands and a fascist outlook were consciously adopted. The Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (R.S.S.) joined the Hindu communalist platform at this stage when the Hindu Mahasabha started demanding 'militarisation of Hindus' and the Muslim League demanded
Pakistan without really defining its form. In its extremist form, 'communal politics evolved without evolving political thought and emphasised the role of tactics at the expense of a political programme.'\(^5\) We would find examples of the existence of all these forms of communalism at Kanpur during the period of our study.

Two things about this study on communal politics need to be mentioned at the very outset. Firstly, communal politics was one of the outcomes of the ideology and practice of communalism. It was both a product and progenitor of some of the other malevolent outcomes of communalism, like communal competition for jobs, communal stereotypes or communal riots. So, any study of communal politics would have to see its evolution in relation to the ideology of communalism and its practice. Secondly, the period of this study is concerned with the last twenty-eight eventful years of colonial rule, viz. 1919-1947, which ended with Independence and Partition. Communal politics was not invented in this period. Instead, it only played its divisive role in the context of colonialism and the structure of representation based on separate electorates. So, this study on communal politics would not cover the entire gamut of issues encompassed by communal ideology and it would not cover all the different kinds of phenomena spawned by the practice of communalism. Neither can this study, on its own, unravel the options available to secular political formations and the

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machinations adopted by the colonial state to hegemonize Indian polity and dominate society.

In this chapter, we would first try to explore the role of the colonial state and its policy in providing the backdrop for communal politics. We would then discuss the recent theoretical approaches to identity formation in social sciences. In two other sections, we would separately discuss the relation of communalism and communal riots and 'communal and other forms of politics'. The debate between scholars on the causes, nature and outcome of communal mobilization among Muslims and Hindus would constitute our next section. Finally, we would briefly mention our methodology and sources.

**Role of the Colonial State**

Scholars have argued that the Colonial State, like any state, controlled the resources and politics of colonies. But it did not do this like a Capitalist State does to oppress one class and protect the interests of another. Instead, the Colonial State tried to oppress entire colonial societies on behalf of the metropolitan ruling class. The Colonial State was different from its Capitalist counterparts in another more fundamental sense. Whereas economic domination of the capitalists leads to political power for them under Capitalism, it is the reverse under Colonialism. The control over the Colonial State enabled the
metropolitan ruling class to economically exploit the colony by subordinating its producers and controlling its surplus.⁶

Colonial policy was the cause of communalism, according to some scholar activists.⁷ This simplistic understanding was challenged in their own day by Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore by his memorable phrase that 'Satan cannot enter till he finds a flaw.' The Congress's Kanpur Riots Enquiry Committee in 1931 had also argued that social, religious and political factors were mainly responsible for the rise and growth of communalism.⁸ Later, scholars have tried to painstakingly show that colonialists did not give all out support to communal organisations and individuals till 1937. Support for communalists by the colonial state was spurred by the fact that the anti-imperialist forces were demanding radical changes in the political and economic structure whereas communal demands (like more jobs or weightages) did not lessen colonial controls. Unbridled extreme forms of communalism were, however, not considered useful and colonialists preferred parliamentary, dependent politics. So, communalism helped some middle class job hunters, social status seekers, money-lenders, landlords and other jagirdari elements to establish a relationship of mutual dependence with colonialism.⁹

⁶ See, for example, Bipan Chandra, Essays on Colonialism (New Delhi, Orient Longman, 1999), pp. 70-1.
⁷ Asoka Mehta and Achyut Patwardhan, The Communal Triangle in India (Allahabad, Kitabistan, 1942).
⁸ The Congress Cawnpore Riots Enquiry Committee of 1931. The report was banned on its publication in 1933. See edited version of this report in N.G. Barrier (ed.), Roots of Communal Politics (Missouri, South Asia Books, n.d.).
⁹ Bipan Chandra (1984), op. cit., Chapter 8: "The Role of British Policy."
The control of the Colonial State, however, was not limited to exploiting the resources and dominating the politics of the colony. Anthropologists like Bernard Cohn have shown that the Colonial State also influenced the imagination of colonial people by controlling the pattern of knowledge generation in those societies. In his work Cohn showed that colonialists used 'the cultural technologies of rule' to ensure that 'the vast social world of India could be classified, categorized and bounded before it could be ordered'.  

In the context of communalism, and other phenomena (like corruption, factionalism and tribalism), Douglas Haynes has argued that these were 'hardly remnants of traditional social patterns'. He called them products of the rhetorical and practical adaptations of indigenous leaderships to the needs of colonial representative systems. As against this, Price suggests that centralizing, universalising tendencies of the Colonial State were not powerful enough to erase local, segmented structures and particularistic practices. In fact she goes on to assert that ideologies of particularism came from the political dynamics within segmented domains (inherited from the past). The Colonial State could only mould, not control, this dynamics, Price insists. Simply put, whereas Haynes does not think that communalism was a relic of the past, Price argues precisely this. Price adds that the Colonial State could do little either to obliterate or encourage ideologies of particularism, including communalism.

This brings us to examine the changes, if any, which were brought to Indian polity under colonialism and the impact these may have had on the 'construction' of communalism. Scholars maintain that there were segmented groups in the caste hierarchy to govern whom diverse ruling traditions were innovated by all the pre-colonial states, be they Rajput, Mughal or even that of Vijaynagar. The State had a place of political pre-eminence in pre-colonial India but in social matters, the State was relatively marginalized. It was basically due to this fact that Indian rulers had to innovate ruling traditions to suit the society they governed. Initially, and atleast in the economic sphere, colonial rulers also showed some consideration to these diversities as they made different land revenue settlements for different parts of India. However, as the interest of colonialism shifted from the land revenue of colonies to their markets, colonialism sought to homogenize colonial society, some scholars assert.

In colonial sociology, the homogenizing efforts began by shifting the focus of studies from the small village community to the somewhat bigger conglomerations such as caste and religious groups. Simultaneously, colonial ethnographers transformed Indian communities into a-historical groups with some innate or 'essentialist' attributes. For instance, caste was converted from a

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15 See, for example, Gyanendra Pandey, The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India (Delhi, OUP, 1990), p. 110. Communities asserted their territorial rights and temporal interests against such efforts to build colonial hegemony. Communities are said to have resisted the Colonial State by their myths such as that of the Golden Age in Ancient India or through self-adulatory genealogies/ histories of castes and regions (like Bengal, Tamilnad and Maharashtra). ibid., pp. 110-1.
unit of Indian society to a ‘site of particular instincts and urges’ from which flowed notions about aggressiveness (of Pathans), love for intrigue (of Brahmins), bigotry (of Julahas), turbulence (of Ahirs), etc. Not only this, colonialists also believed that these instincts of castes arose from ‘primitive religiosity’ and fed the culture of communalism. So, communalism was considered by them to be a by-product of certain ‘essentialist’ characteristics and ‘primitive religiosity’ of Indians.

In addition to the construction of communalism through colonial discursive practices, some other scholars maintain that colonial rulers played an active role in ‘working up’ divisions (as the Congress Committee on Kanpur Riots of 1931 said) in Indian society. These scholars admit that colonial rulers did not create these divisions nor were they ‘solely responsible’ for their continuance. The policy of ‘divide and rule’ was also not pursued actively by colonialists at all times and in all places. For instance, it was not followed as actively in Punjab as it was in Bengal and U.P. Similarly, the policy of ‘divide and rule’ was not pursued as aggressively between 1911 and 1923 as it was before 1911 and after 1930. During one single period some movements/organizations could be considered dangerous and others pusillanimous by the colonial rulers. Hence, in 1930s, while the ‘dangerous’ artisan and lower-class based Khaksar movement of Punjab’s Muslims was suppressed vigorously, the more middle-class based Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (R.S.S.) of ‘politically passive Hindus’ was carefully watched but left unharmed. Yet, despite the changes in it, the role of

16 Ibid., p. 108.
17 The Congress Cawnpore Riots Enquiry Committee of 1931, op. cit., p. 45.
colonial policy in 'working up' communalism was critical because communalism served as the 'chief social prop' of colonial rule. Hence, to quote Jawaharlal Nehru, the British Indian government naturally threw 'its sheltering wings over a useful ally'.

Drawing attention to the difference between a Capitalist and a Colonial State, scholars opine that these states performed contradictory roles on the issue of promoting unity and harmony in society. While the Capitalist State makes efforts to promote unity (except among workers) and harmony among the propertied and the property-less classes, the Colonial State does the reverse. The latter breaks the emerging national unity by diverting the anti-imperialist struggle into a battle of caste against caste, tribe against tribe, community against community, etc. This sectarian strife was then proclaimed by the Colonial State as the cause for its emergence and the reason for its continuance.

To sum up, we have seen that the role of the Colonial State was not insignificant in the context of communalism for two reasons. Firstly, colonialists worked up communalism by both implicit support and inaction, to prevent the emerging unity of the nation-in-the-making. In this respect, the colonial state was vastly different from the Capitalist state elsewhere. Secondly, as compared to pre-colonial times, colonialism decisively changed the governing mechanisms and through 'the cultural technologies of rule' (to quote Cohn again), it changed
the 'social imaginary' or the way Indians conceived the social world and the possibilities of its organization.20

Exploring Identity Formation

People imagined their communities and forged their identities21 in colonial India in different ways. Postcolonialists have celebrated the enormous flowering of studies on identity formation and they, in fact, claim that history writing since the II World War has been entangled with the 'politics and production of identity'.22 On the other hand, there are other scholars who have cautioned that 'identity history is not enough'.23

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20 Cornelius Castoriadis, a French scholar who taught social and political theory in Paris and who directed the influential journal Socialisme ou Barbarie for many years, first used the concept 'social imaginary' in 1975. Castoriadis believed that 'neither reality nor rationality provided answers to questions like - Who are we as a collectivity? What are we for one another? What do we want; what do we desire; what are we lacking?' Imaginary significations or symbols provide answers to these questions, Castoriadis maintained. Individuals also imagine but that is more in the nature of fantasy. So, as compared to individual fantasy, social imaginary is definitely larger (the Western 'image of the world' is an infinite extension as compared to individual image of oneself) and social imaginary has no precise place of existence (whereas the individual unconsciousness can be called the precise place of existence for individual fantasy). See Cornelius Castoriadis, The Imaginary Institution of Society (French Edition 1975) (English translation by Kathleen Blamey) (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1987), pp. 143 & 146-7. For an application of the concept in the Indian context, see Sudipta Kaviraj, "The Imaginary Institution of India," in Partha Chatterjee and Gyanendra Pandey (eds.), Subaltern Studies VII (Delhi, OUP, 1992).

21 Derived from the Latin root idem, identity implies sameness and continuity and it has a long history which examines permanence amid change and unity amid diversity. In the Modern period, identity is closely linked to the rise of individualism and its analysis is considered to start with the writings of John Locke and David Hume. It is said meaning is lost in Mass Society and this leads to a search for identity which is encapsulated in the question - 'who am I?' This search initially dealt with the crisis faced by Blacks, Jews and religious minorities but was later generalised to the whole of modern society. See, Ken Plummer, "Identity," in William Outhwaitwe (ed.), The Blackwell Dictionary of Modern Social Thought (Second Edition), (Oxford, Blackwell Publishers, 2003), pp. 280-2.


23 See, for example, Eric Hobsbawm, On History (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1997), pp. 266-77.
Ideas about identity or community existed in pre-colonial India also. But these were not the same as the ideas of community which came into being after the inauguration of two modern processes during colonial times, viz., the process of colonial enumeration through the Census and the process of mobilization of enumerated communities through new methods of organization in public arenas. Earlier communities were fuzzy because relations with 'Others' did not define the self in pre-modern times and contact with people of other groups was relatively infrequent, anyway. Scholars have stated that pre-modern communities were fuzzy in two ways. Firstly, collective identities like religion, caste or endogamous groups were not territory centric. The political rulers were also owners of territory and hence, neither individuals nor communities could make any claims on specified geographical areas. Pre-modern communities, consequently, had fuzzy boundaries. Secondly, traditional communities were not enumerated and, hence, they were incapable of any large action which is so typical of modern communities. Since traditional communities did not know how many of them lived in the world, they could not conceive of collective action for common good.24 Communities of the past, particularly in the Hindu fold, were based on occupation and caste but occasionally, they existed as a sect also. Hindus did not have a common religious identity in the past, argues Romila Thapar, because people of different regions, castes and sects were not bound by common social norms, similar religious beliefs and analogous ritual practices.25

As compared to fuzzy traditional communities, the modern communities have been called 'enumerated'. This was because not only their numbers but social precedence was also recorded precisely, their geographical concentrations were denoted exactly and their social distance from the 'Other(s)' was stated clearly by colonial ethnographers and Census Superintendents. This resulted in sharper divisions between one community and another in modern times which, in turn, accelerated the process of separate identity formation. Needless to say, the process of separate identity formation not only emphasized adjacence and similarity between some people but also marked the boundaries of distance and dis-similarity with the 'Other(s)'. Yet, though identities were defined more sharply in modern times, it is interesting to note that many new forms of identity also came into existence in these times.

Identity was formed at the individual level, said Erik Erikson, through a crisis during adolescence when different patterns of life were tested and the person developed her/his personal autonomy.\textsuperscript{26} It has been suggested by scholars that, at the level of the individual, the need for identity is based on two basic desires, viz., the need for recognition by others as someone worthy of respect and, secondly, the desire for community or 'belonging' which is said to be universal.\textsuperscript{27} Vast identity deficits are said to accrue to people uprooted from their traditional surroundings in a changing world. The need of uprooted people for


recognition remains unfulfilled by their anonymity in a new place and their sense of belonging loses its gravitational force due to their unfamiliar surroundings. To make up for the identity deficits, the uprooted people form diverse kinds of associations. This results in the creation of not just one but many identities among such people.

According to E.J. Hobsbawn, people do not choose collective identification like they choose shoes. In choosing a pair of shoes, one knows that only one pair can be worn at a time but people could simultaneously have several attachments and loyalties. People were concerned with several aspects of life, says Hobsbawn, and this concern for several separate things was at the root of multiple identities according to him. But even in pre-colonial times, no person had a monolith identity. Hence, belonging to one community did not exhaust all layers of one’s self-hood, viz., Brahman/ Ahir, Saiyad/ Ansari, Vaishnava/ Shaiva, Shia/ Sunni, Merchant/ Blacksmith, Male/ Female, Villager/ City-dweller etc.

There were, however, two fundamental differences between the multiple identities of the modern times and those of the past. Firstly, identities in the past, though multiple, could not be chosen. Traditional societies were marked by rather strict rules on social mobility. Moreover, the agrarian societies had comparatively very few economic opportunities even for those who were willing to risk turning migrants in search of livelihoods. Above all, in the absence of democratic

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Institutions, people were condemned to a virtually immutable social hierarchy and they had to live up to their community-ascribed status in pre-colonial societies. This sordid reality began changing, though marginally, during colonial times as reflected in the initial rumblings of protest by lower castes then but this change has, since Independence, acquired a more widespread reach and depth. People may still not be absolutely free to choose the identity they desire but they are no longer theoretically excluded from making these choices, as was the case in the past.

The second difference between multiple identities of the modern times and those of the past lay in the political sphere. Since people in pre-colonial times had only fuzzy notions of community, it was difficult to instil in them a common consciousness or to ensure their collective mobilization for some common political objective. In contrast with this, modern enumerated communities were more easily prone to political mobilization. Religions, castes, sects, languages etc. all spawn diverse identities and all these identities can be made available for political mobilization due to two reasons. Firstly, the people having these identities are generally aware about the number and territorial distribution of their fellow-beings. Secondly, they are also aware of the way social benefits have accrued to fellow-beings and their leaders/organizations are normally capable of turning adversity to an advantage by a 'politically adroit display of helplessness'.

Hence, while the Muslim League aroused fears against 'Hindu

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Raj' by making a fuss about the numerical minority status of Muslims in most of India, the Hindu communalists whipped up fears about the disunity and effeminacy among co-religionists. Numerical minority and alleged disunity/effeminacy of co-religionists both were converted by communal leaders of different communities into an opportunity for mobilizing their support bases through a 'politically adroit display of helplessness'.

Scholars have argued that, it was easier to define community in a village, jati or adivasi group. In urban areas community has been variously defined as members of a minority religion,\textsuperscript{30} residents of particular muhallas (or neighbourhoods)\textsuperscript{31} and even as migrant mill workers from U.P. to the mills of Bombay and Calcutta.\textsuperscript{32}

Social historians have used two kinds of definitions of community. The first is relational community and the other community is ideology-based. Relational community is localized, it is transacted through personalized face-to-face contact and it may be based on subset of caste, economic status and neighbourhood of residence. Forms of localized relational communities may be the neighbourhood akharas (literally gymnasium but frequently site for activities and training of a specialised group) and temple or festival managing

\textsuperscript{30} The debate between Francis Robinson and Paul Brass on Muslim Identity in David Taylor and Malcolm Yapp (eds.), op. cit., pp. 35-112.
\textsuperscript{32} Rajnarayan Chandavarkar, Imperial Power and Popular Politics: Class, Resistance and the State, 1850-1950 (Cambridge, CUP, 1998) and Dipesh Chakrabarty, Rethinking Working Class History: Bengal, 1890-1940 (Delhi, OUP, 1989).
communities. On the other hand, ideology-based communities are broad and inclusive of many groups spread far and wide but whose values are purportedly shared and assumptions are supposedly common. One significant difference between these two kinds of communities lies in their role in politics. While relational community has implicit politics, ideological community carries overt political messages and performs explicit political roles.33

Some scholars have recently questioned the valorisation of community identity. As we know, politics of identity usually recognizes and values differences in language and culture. This exercise has a certain validity. However, the problem arises when an excessive indulgence in the politics of identity jeopardizes the principles of equal dignity and universal rights.34 While cautioning that 'identity history is not enough', Hobsbawm asserts that universality has to prevail over identity lest scholars be tempted to isolate one part of humanity from its wider context. History designed for one specific collectivity, Hobsbawm argues, could be comforting to it but this would still be bad history. Such made-to-order history was bad history and it could be dangerous also. 'The sentences typed on apparently innocuous keyboards may become sentences of death', he warns.35

33 Sandria Freitag, Collective Action and Community Public Arenas and the Emergence of Communalism in North India (Delhi, OUP, 1990), pp. 85-90.
Some other scholars believe that identity or community is not an analytical category but is a performative one instead. Hence, they suggest that sociological/anthropological invention of the 'Self' and the 'Other' or the contrast between authentic and in-authentic identities is not enough. Instead, they hold, identity should be studied 'symptomatically' in its time and field of action. When studied thus, these scholars maintain, it is possible to explore the constitutive elements of an identity that may include not just religious but ideological, social and historical elements also. Such a study could also sketch the shifting references of an identity over time and this is of fundamental interest to social historians.

We come across several instances of the shifting demarcation of Hindu and Muslim identities in Kanpur during the period of our study. Several symbols of community identity, like dress, places of worship and religious celebrations, all acquired new antagonistic meanings with the acceleration of political mobilization along communal lines. The following examples will illustrate the shifting nature of community symbols and, more than that, the deteriorating inter-community relations between Hindus and Muslims in Kanpur.

In 1920, on the door of Radha Krishna temple in Dhobi Mohalla there lived a Muslim "Tarkash" (or wire-maker, usually employed for superfine wire making by goldsmiths). He entered this temple to eat his food, probably in the veranda. This hurt a devout Vaishnav whose complaint was that Chunilal Goswami, the

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priest of this temple who was also the priest of the temple of the Raja of Alwar, knew about this but took no action against the concerned apostate Muslim. In contrast with this generosity and magnanimity, twenty-six years later, a Hindu Sadhu was mistaken for a Muslim, probably because of his beard. On the suspicion that he was out to kill their co-religionists, some paranoid Hindus of a locality beat the Sadhu severely.

Generosity of spirit was equally marked in 1920s among Muslims and the same was giving way as time elapsed. Ganesh Samiti had been formed in 1907 at Kanpur. It celebrated Ganesh Utsav by, *inter alia*, feeding Brahmins and singing so-called vulgar songs. One Maharashtra objected to this method of celebrations but he opposed more forcefully the taking of donations from Muslims. How do Muslims benefit from such Ganesh Utsavs, the Maharastrian questioned. There was probably no apparent reason for Muslims to make donations on Ganesh festivals but the fact is that some among them did so, probably as a reflection of the cultural synthesis existing between Hindus and Muslims. Not only this; next year, we find that Hasrat Mohani, a communal nationalist-cum-socialist leader, lectured on the importance of the same Ganesh Utsav. This bonhomie and generosity of spirit gave way with time and, in 1946, Holi revelers sang an anti-Pakistan song that nearly caused a riot. to avert this

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37 Pratap, 12-7-1920, p. 15. The author has translated Pratap, a Hindi Weekly, here and elsewhere in this thesis.
39 Pratap, 29-9-1919, p. 15.
40 Ibid, 4-10-1920, p. 15.
ominous possibility, police intervened and restored order.\textsuperscript{41} Tension generated by incidents like this was responsible, \textit{inter alia}, for two riots in Kanpur.\textsuperscript{42}

The presence of police was regretted at the public processions to mark Ramlila and Moharram in 1919. Kanhaiyalal Trivedi, a newspaper correspondent, felt the police \textit{bandobast} was unnecessary because Hindus and Muslims would have cooperated to ensure peace even if a single constable was not present during those processions.\textsuperscript{43} This mutual trust and consideration also eroded with time. In the riots of 1931, on the contrary, both Hindu and Muslim communal politicians accused the police of not doing enough to contain the warring groups of people.\textsuperscript{44} In Kanpur, such demands for more and effective involvement of the police in regulating inter-community relations became more vehement with time.

It is not as if there was any inevitability about Hindu-Muslim antagonism. For instance, in Maharashtra, ideology based communities were not focused on religion. Instead, community boundaries were predominantly defined by linguistic (Gujrati and Marathi) or caste (Brahmin and non-Brahmin) divisions. The case of south India was not very different from this. The intensity of the Hindu-Muslim divide was considerably alleviated by the rhetoric of rural-urban dichotomy in

\textsuperscript{41} PAl, 22-3-1946, p. 47.
\textsuperscript{42} A riot took place in April 1941 after Hindu Sangh observed Anti-Pakistan Day on April 27, 1941. See PAl, 2-5-1941, pp. 57-8. Another riot took place when Hindu Mahasabha activists put up placards saying “Pakistan Murdabad” on Punjab Day on March 30, 1947. See The Pioneer, 1-4-1947, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{43} Pratap, 13-10-1919, p. 15.
\textsuperscript{44} See representations by both communalists in File No. 1263/ 1931, Police Department, UPSA.
Panjab’s politics and by the shared Bengali language as also devotionalism around shrines in Bengal’s culture. So, it is not wrong to say that in the ‘open and crowded market place of ideas about identities politics decides as to which arguments win or lose’.  

To sum up, therefore, colonial ethnography and social mapping laid the ground for modern identity formation in colonial India. But colonial initiatives could, per se, not have moulded the mental world of Indians nor could British Census Superintendents have, on their own, endowed Hindus and Muslims with cohesive identities. They could only help create possibilities for the construction of ideology-based communities. Identities, therefore, were not forged by the social engineering (howsoever skilful) of colonialists. They, in fact, germinated in the collective activities of the public arenas, as Sandria Freitag holds, and they were ‘re-defined during the course of resistance to colonial rule’, as other scholars maintain. It is, hence, the collective activities in the public arenas that deserve attention. We would do this after we look at the relationship between communal riots and communalism because in popular perception the two are synonymous.

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47 Freitag maintains that anti-imperialistic agitation amalgamated public arenas with state institutions in India. According to her, whereas public opinion created the public sphere in Western Europe, popular participation in public arenas provided impetus to integration of diverse people in colonial north India. But the same popular participation led to the emergence of politicised religious identity, viz., communalism, as a viable alternative to nationalism. This emergence of communalism was possible due to two reasons, says Freitag. Firstly, because there existed several definitions of community and community-as-nation was one among them. Secondly, there was a preponderance of religion-centred identities in colonial north India due to several rhetorical and symbolic reasons. Sandria Freitag (1990), op. cit., pp. 191-6.
48 Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal, Modern South Asia: History, Culture, Political Economy (Delhi, OUP, 1998).
Communal Riots and Communalism

Communal riots were 'propaganda by deed' and they were the most intense manifestation of communalism. Some scholars have considered the study of 'religious riots' an exceptionally important way of understanding the mentality and organization of less privileged groups. Riot-centric studies have been undertaken and justified by scholars on the ground that they help in understanding 'the behaviour and motivation of subordinate groups'. These riots are considered, by scholars, as convenient 'entry points' for understanding 'the diverse elements in a hybrid collective mentality of a group, class or region'.

Not only as 'entry points' to study the mentality, behaviour, motivation and organization of the less-privileged, riot-centric studies have also been undertaken for other reasons. Sandria Freitag studied communal riots in the context of collective activities in the public arena. These collective activities, according to her, produced a sense of shared community and a sub-liminal state (or *communitas*) among participants. Communal riots both reflected the process of ideology-centered community formation and accelerated this process at whose centre were collective activities in the public arena. Rioting has also been described as an action to level social inequalities. The rioters, these scholars

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50 See, for example, Suranjan Das, *Communal Riots in Bengal, 1905-1947* (Delhi, OUP, 1993), p. 207.
51 Sandria Freitag, op. cit., p. 91.
maintain, kill people and raze buildings to wipe out unfair advantages allegedly enjoyed by an enemy group, typically an ethnic minority.\footnote{See, for example, Stanley J. Tambiah, \textit{Leveling Crowds: Ethno-nationalist Conflicts and Collective Violence in South Asia} (Berkley, University of California Press, 1996).}

Another group of scholars has asserted that riot-centric studies unwillingly endorsed colonial prejudices against Indian people. This can be illustrated by the following examples. C. A. Bayly has opined that the 19\textsuperscript{th} century riots and the ones in the 20\textsuperscript{th} century appeared much the same because both invoked religious symbols and broke out in the same urban centres. This effectively meant, according to Bayly, that communal riots had a pre-history in India, just like communalism, of which they were just one manifestation.\footnote{C. A. Bayly, "The Pre-History of 'Communalism'? Religious Conflict in India, 1700-1860," \textit{Modern Asian Studies} (MAS), 19, No. 2 (1985), pp. 177-203.}

This, and such exhortations, led Sandria Freitag to study the history of riots in U.P. more deeply and trace the change in their nature since the 19\textsuperscript{th} century.

Riots in U.P., according to Freitag, started in the 1870s and the 1880s in the western region, particularly in the Rohilkhand division. They were generally triggered off in urban areas when 'participants had gathered for public ceremonial processions, protest meetings or Friday prayers and other religious observances.' The venue and symbols of these riots were similar to the one of those that broke out in the 20\textsuperscript{th} century. But whereas the riots of the 1870s and the 1880s were 'massive collective expressions of public opinion' those which took place in the 1920s were comparatively 'small-scale and staged'
confrontations, Freitag discovered. In the 1930s, riots started spreading over a wider area and their scale was big as reflected in the rising toll of life and property. Riots of the 1940s had not just acquired a dangerously bigger scale but their motivation was now to protect communal identity as a cultural force, according to Freitag.\textsuperscript{54}

So, though the nature of riots appeared much the same to Bayly, they had been actually transformed from being unrelated episodic occurrences to incidents with a pattern. Though the venue (i.e., urban centres) and symbolism (i.e., religious ceremonials and sacred spaces) of riots remained the same, the meaning of the symbols changed leading to a change in the process of rioting over them. For instance, as Freitag accepts, religion provided the vocabulary of riots in the 19\textsuperscript{th} century but, then, she indirectly also suggests the incitement to rioting provided by urban political economy and by the relationship of localized communities with one another. In contrast with this, in the 20\textsuperscript{th} century, the religious vocabulary invoked ideological, broad-based communities and each community was linked to the political activity of individuals or organizations with supra-local interests. This gave rise to communalism and, hence, it is not justified to talk of a pre-history of communalism, argues Freitag.\textsuperscript{55}

Critics of riot-centric studies believe that such studies also confirm colonial stereotypes about Indian people. In exploring the causes of riots, riot-centric

\textsuperscript{54} Sandria Freitag (1990), op. cit., pp. 93-4.
\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., pp. 94-6.
studies analyse the violation of sacred symbols and their emotive power as reflected in communal outbreaks following such violations. This leads such studies to confirm colonial prejudices that Indians were extremely superstitious and they were irrationally attached to primordial loyalties. These riot-centric studies may not endorse the claim of racial superiority assumed for themselves by colonialists but by confirming some 'essentialist' colonial notions about Indians, the riot-centric studies are guilty of denying history, agency and change to Indians.\textsuperscript{56}

Kanpur, the place, where the present study is located, also had its share of communal violence with nine big incidents taking place here during the period of this study. The first riot occurred here in 1927 and the last in March and April 1947.\textsuperscript{57} In-between the worst communal holocaust also occurred in Kanpur in 1931 which has been sufficiently reported about and analysed.\textsuperscript{58}

It will be our endeavour to take a rather holistic view of different kinds of political mobilization in Kanpur and not restrict our focus to communal riots. The


\textsuperscript{57} According to official sources, viz. Fortnightly Reports of the Home Department and the Weekly Reports on Political Activities of C.I.D., 300 persons were killed and 1,350 were injured during these riots. The first incident of 1926 was not considered a riot by the colonial authorities and, hence, according to them nine incidents of communal violence took place. These 8 incidents included the two in 1927 (i.e. one on 29\textsuperscript{th} August and another in the II half of October); the series of riots starting from March 24, 1931; the riots on February 7, 1939 and June 19, 1939, followed by those on April 27, 1941, on March 12, 1946 and in the I half of November 1946, and finally, on March 30, 1947. This data has been collected from the relevant official reports of the concerned period.

\textsuperscript{58} The Congress Cawnpore Riot Enquiry Report of 1931, \textit{op. cit.} Also see the analysis of these riots in Sandria Freitag (1990), \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 220-48 and Gyanendra Pandey, \textit{The Ascendancy of Congress in Uttar Pradesh, 1926-1934: A Study in Imperfect Mobilization} (Delhi, OUP, 1985 edn.), pp. 131-42.
riots were important but in the ultimate analysis, they were just one manifestation of communalism. Communal politics was another manifestation of communalism and the two were not symbiotically dependent on each other. Communal politics was produced, *inter alia*, in the hothouse of colonial institutions whose chief characteristic was separate electorates and it was sustained by bigoted ideologues as well as by sectarian communal organisations. So, these ideologues, organizations and the issues spawned by them would be the main focus of this study on communal politics.

Incidentally, communal riots were mentioned in the course of communal mobilization. Hindu communalists normally blamed Muslims for 'instigating' riots and wreaking havoc on their co-religionists. Hence, we would look at communal riots specifically as a tool for communal propaganda in the chapter dealing with the changing issues for communal grievance articulation.

**Communal and Other Forms of Politics**

It has been argued that identity formation (through the homogenisation of diversities in social groups) and community assertion on a mass scale was neither necessary nor possible in pre-modern times. Community assertion was normally not necessary in the status-quoist medieval times when the State was non-interfering and the notion of community was fuzzy. Different sections of the society lived back-to-back with each other as they were ignorant of the numbers of one's own community or of those of the 'Others'. In their face-to-face contact
with each other as 'relational' communities what seemed to matter to common people then was social status and caste rank, not numbers. In pre-modern times, for common people community was important mostly because it was normally from one's community that one had to decide whom one would marry, eat with or allow the privilege of touch. On these matters, social mores and values were quite rigid. Hence, the State never tried to transgress the social customs of purity and pollution, of association and avoidance. Even the occasional assertions by the lower orders in medieval times were motivated by the desire for humane treatment by arguing that 'God created us all.' The lower castes in medieval times did not claim equality because they were numerically preponderant or 'Bahujan', like they do today.

On the other hand, mass mobilization was also not possible due to technical reasons, viz. the absence of communication. Scholars who have studied mass mobilization for the formation of modern (basically national) identities have emphasized the importance of industrialisation, the school and the mass media. Hence, Gellner finds that the age of universal high culture, inaugurated by the Industrial society and sustained by the educational system, was basically responsible for the growth of nationalism. Benedict Anderson, on the other hand, argues that people collectively imagined a nation not only because they went to the same schools but also because they shared the same mental map of the nation (and the world surrounding it) due to the influence of

In the absence of schools or the mass media, therefore, it was not easy for pre-modern societies to witness the process of identity formation and community assertion on a mass scale.

Communal politics was, therefore, a modern phenomenon like communalism. Issues generated by sectarian ideologues, propagated by communal organizations and publicised by sundry newspapers went into the making of communal politics. We will study these ideologues and organizations and the issues raised by them in Kanpur by using newspapers as our main source of information on the period of our study.

Communal politics was, however, not the only form of political activity in Colonial India (or even after Independence). There were in Colonial India broadly three prominent streams of politics, excluding the super-ordinate politics of the Colonial State. These three prominent streams were the nationalist, the leftist (including both the socialists and the communists) and the communal. Needless to say, there were at least as many (if not more) forms of community being 'imagined' as there were streams of political mobilization.

Though our focus shall be on communal politics, but wherever necessary we shall try to explore it in interaction (and not in isolation from) the two other prominent streams. These three streams of politics need to be studied in

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interaction with each other because they unfolded around the same time and in
the same socio-political space. By studying them in interaction with each other,
we may be able to understand the mis-judgement (or otherwise) of the new trend
among scholars to collapse some of these political streams into each other and
declare them to be similar, if not identical, to one another.

The trend of conflating nationalism and imperialism was reflected in the
assertions of John Gallagher, the doyen of the Cambridge School. He
complimented both nationalism and imperialism for bringing about social change
and a world revolution. Not only this, Gallagher called nationalism 'the
continuation of imperialism by other means'. Not to be left far behind, the
political theorist in the Subaltern School, Partha Chatterjee, calls anti-colonial
nationalism to be something of a 'derivative discourse' because people in the
colonies were perpetual consumers of modernity atleast in the material "outside"
domain. Similarly, the recent historical writings on communalism are rife with
assertions that communalism and nationalism were a part of the "same
discourse". Going a step further, some scholars assert that nationalism had
both moderate and radical forms and that communalism was infact "radical
nationalism".

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61 John Gallagher, The Decline, Revival and Fall of the British Empire: The Ford Lectures and
62 Partha Chatterjee, Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse ?
63 See, for example, Gyanendra Pandey (1990), op. cit., p. 236.
64 See, for example, Peter van der Veer, Religious Nationalism: Hindus and Muslims in India
(Delhi, OUP, 1996), pp. 22-3.
This bunching together of nationalism with imperialism by one set of scholars, and the conflation of it with communalism by another set of them, hinges on the premise that all these phenomena were products of the Rationalist discourse produced by Enlightenment. Assuming that all these phenomena had similar birthmarks, it does not follow that they were identical in character or similar in their impact on society. In fact, scholars writing on colonialism feel that embedded within it were a plurality of perspectives even though this phenomenon was derived from the rationalist discourse. For instance, if, on the one hand, there was the whole colonial establishment that glorified Lord(s) Robert Clive and Warren Hastings, on the other hand, there stood the Puritans who condemned the illegal gratification of these colonialist pioneers. Similarly, other scholars have illustrated the contest between conservatives and Utilitarians in England that formed the backdrop for the debate about the form of British Colonial rule in India. Thus, if colonialism was not identical in character, one may ask, how could discursive practices derived from it be similar?

A group of scholars agree that communalism was a modern ideology like nationalism but they do not colligate the two phenomena. These scholars hold that communalism was political, social and economic reaction and the communal parties inevitably joined hands with colonial rulers because they were opposed to change. Communalism, these scholars illustrate, was contradictory to

nationalism in two fundamental ways. Firstly, while nationalists sought unity between people from diverse castes, creeds, linguistic groups, etc., communalists highlighted differences. Some well-known communalists initially believed in harmonious co-existence but later negated their own philosophy. We know about their roles as rabid communal leaders later, but it is worthwhile reminding ourselves that M.A. Jinnah was the ambassador of Hindu Muslim unity in the 1910s and V.D. Savarkar (in the introduction to his Revolt of 1857) wrote in 1909 that it was foolish to nurse anti-Muslim feelings. Secondly, another basic difference between them was that nationalists were committed to securing Independence from colonialism in the way communalists never were.67

The conflation of communalism and nationalism either as discursive practices or as forms of politics has also attracted adverse comment from scholars once identified with the Subaltern School. These scholars hold the view that while the personnel and assumptions of communalists and nationalists may often have been similar, the objectives and consequences of their respective activities were different.68 These theoretical distinctions will be kept in mind while exploring the trajectory of communal politics in Kanpur.

67 See, for example, Bipan Chandra (1984), op. cit., pp. 6, 78 and 321-2.
**Muslim Communal Mobilization**

There are broadly two schools of thought on the rise and growth of Muslim communalism. One of them, of which the typical representatives are Francis Robinson and Farzana Shaikh, has been called 'primordialists'. 'Separatism' was an essential part of Islam, according to these scholars, who maintain that Pakistan was the natural outcome of political efforts of the believers in separatist Islam. Francis Robinson had previously argued that U.P. Muslims were propelled to organize themselves separately not to improve their backward position but, in fact, to defend their comparatively better socio-economic situation. But later Robinson turned around to the view that political separatism, among Muslims was encouraged by Islamic traditions.

Farzana Shaikh has theorized this view more sophisticatedly. According to Shaikh the role of Islamic ideology in the making of Pakistan was not illusory but neither was it the only explanatory factor behind Muslim communalism. Asserting that ideology constitutes an independent variable in politics, Shaikh contrasts the Islamic approach to political representation with the liberal-democratic approaches at three levels. Firstly, according to Shaikh, liberalism assumes that the individual and his interests were the primary unit of representation whereas, in Islam, there was no theory of individual rights. Instead, in Islamic ideology, the communal group (or umma) was the basic unit of

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representation and focus of loyalty. Secondly, the liberal view accepts the importance of the electoral theory of representation and the legitimacy of mixed political constituencies. As against this, in Islam, asserts Shaikh, the political commitment of a representative is not distinguished from his/her religious affiliation and, hence, Muslims have to be represented by Muslims only because no one other than those of the group can be for the group. Thirdly, liberal democracy holds society to be a political assembly of free and equal heads and regards representative institutions necessary to resolve diverging interests and to generate a system of common civil law. In contrast to this, Shaikh holds that Islamic ideology views society as a mosaic of fixed communal groups consisting of Muslims and non-Muslims and political institutions as merely reflections of this communal make-up of society. The Muslim League is said to have, therefore, opposed a representative federal structure which the Congress proposed. It also opposed a common civil law because Islam rejects the idea of a common law equally applicable to Muslims and non-Muslims. And League’s insistence on separate electorates was meant to restrict the non-Muslims majority from having any access to a Muslim electorate whereas the League’s demand for parity with the Congress was based on the Islamic belief that non-Muslims could not represent Muslims.71 There is, hence, much merit in clubbing Farzana Shaikh with proponents of the two-nation theory because her arguments border on what can be called cultural essentialism.72 The assumptions that Islam is a monolithic

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ideology and Muslims follow it blindly lead to the wrong conclusions that Islam has been static (or trans-historical) and that it has a uniformly similar appeal for all Muslims (or is trans-social). We will deal with these conclusions and their empirical invalidity later.

Sandria Freitag has tried to show how the practice of Islam has not been static and that this practice tended to become uniform and stricter in modern times. They feel that the two paradigms available to understand the changes in Islamic practice are: 1) the pre-colonial period personal practices were not so important, especially when the so-called Muslim rulers employed qadis (judges), muftis (legal scholars), gave charities and patronized religious education; and 2) the reformation of personal religious practices in the colonial period. Though not all but a growing number of Muslims were drawn to the reformation-related arguments in the 19th century, argues Sandria Freitag. The public structure created by rulers was not sufficient to reform personal religious practices among Muslims. In addition to this public structure, Muslim believers needed two more things, viz. a model personal code based on Quran and hadith (sayings and actions of the Prophet) and the ulema (Islamic learned men) to guide ordinary Muslims in their daily life. After Royal support was withdrawn from the religious arena, Muslim ideologues thought of creating a public framework where public activities were so performed that 1) Muslims could be effective and exercise power; 2) Islamic ritualistic exercises were seen as public ceremonials; and 3) collective action by an increasingly self-conscious Muslim community was seen
as public activity in the name of Islam. Out of these three important arenas, the greatest emphasis was put by ideologues on the public observance of rituals by Muslims, feels Freitag.\textsuperscript{73}

In the meanwhile, some scholars have also challenged the belief that Islam was the binding force for political unity. They feel that the rhetoric of united Muslim political action did not overcome the division of Muslims into numerous parochial bodies and the rivalries among their elites, including those between factional chiefs, \textit{ulema} reformers, Sufi pirs and secularised professionals. The rivalry of elites complicated the problem of defining identity and divorced acceptable universal symbols from local roots. In transitional societies like India, argues Ira M. Lapidus, Islamic symbols also became a powerful source of inspiration and legitimation in the struggle for social and political justice.\textsuperscript{74}

The second school of thought takes into consideration diverse factors for the rise and growth of Muslim communalism. While some scholars, like Bipan Chandra and Gyanendra Pandey, analyse, \textit{inter alia}, the role of the colonial authorities,\textsuperscript{75} there are other scholars, like Sandria Freitag and Peter Hardy, who explore the ways in which ideological and social forces honed communal


\textsuperscript{74} Ira M. Lapidus, "Islamic Political Movements: Patterns of Historical Change", in Edmund Burke III and Ira M. Lapidus (eds.) \textit{op. cit.}, p. 15. Lapidus accepted that the rhetoric of united political action by Muslims also aided communal and social identity formation but he added the other argument also. \textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{75} Bipan Chandra (1984), \textit{op. cit.}; Gyanendra Pandey (1990), \textit{op. cit.}. 
identities around shared values and symbols. Kunwar Mohammad Ashraf, a participant in the national movement who later became a teacher of history, felt that Muslim communalism rose due to colonial machinations and the perception of 'lag' among the rising bourgeois class of Muslims. The emerging bourgeois class demanded 'reservations' and 'protection' to bolster its socio-economic position; while the new the Aligarh-based 'thinkers' started 'manufacturing Islamic interpretations of democracy, welfare state and socialism to keep Muslim masses away from rising progressive, anti-imperialist alignments.'

Studies on particular regions have had an area-specific set of explanations for the rise and growth of Muslim communalism. In the context of the Muslim majority province of Punjab, Ian Talbot argues that Muslim League gained a firm base only in the 1940s and a crucial role in this was played by the switching of loyalty by the traditional holders of power in the countryside. Punjab became the 'cornerstone' of Pakistan in 1944 and 1945 after landlords (of the Hayat, Noon and Daulatana families) deserted the Unionist Party and exerted their economic influence and leading positions in the biraderi (or kinship) networks (like say that of Mian Nurullah among Arian peasants of the prosperous Lyallpur district) on behalf of the Muslim League. On the other hand, David Gilmartin finds that hereditary Sajjada nashins (or descendants of the original

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76 Peter Hardy, *The Muslims of British India* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1972); Sandria Freitag (1990), op. cit.
saints) of Sufi orders (initially Chistis but later Suhrawardis and Qadris also) who represented revivalist Islam had considerable politico-economic clout in rural areas. In 1946, they transferred their baraqa (or religious charisma) from the Unionists to the Muslim League whereby at least in the rural areas, the League was transformed from a 'pragmatic political party into a chiliastic movement'.

Bengal, another Muslim majority province, did not have many Muslim landlords. Here the anti-zamindari peasant agitations easily turned into anti-Hindu campaigns particularly after the middle-of-the-road Krishak Praja Party (K.P.P) of Fazlul Huq failed to bring in the land reforms it promised. Once the jotedar (or tenant) base of the K.P.P shifted to the Muslim League around 1943, Muslim masses soon followed and from a slogan Pakistan became a movement in Bengal also.

Bengali Muslims, on the whole, were relatively less well off and even less educated than their Hindu counterparts. Using this as evidence, W.W.Hunter had advanced the theory that Muslim backwardness had been caused by British discrimination and the result was a 'lag' suffered by them in the competition for jobs and economic advancement. Paul Brass finds Muslims of U.P. to be enjoying more jobs and receiving more rent and education than their Hindu counterparts. So, he empirically challenges the 'lag' theory of Muslim

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backwardness. Muslims, Brass maintains, constituted a privileged community and dominant administrative elite whereas Hindus had a grievance for not having proportionate government employment. It has also been argued in the context of U.P that Muslim elite turned to the Muslim League neither to just preserve their privileged position nor simply out of loyalty to communal symbols being manipulated by League politicians. Instead, the Muslim League is said to have won over the Muslim elite of U.P. because the latter feared a sudden collapse of their apparently secure position built over 30 years, as they had neither ministerial representation nor British protection during Congress rule.

Kanpur, as we know, was a big commercial and industrial centre. During the period of this study, Kanpur was growing and so issues like safeguarding old privileges were of not much concern to common Muslim merchants or even workers here. Here the leadership of the Muslim League initially came from merchants, like Hafiz Mohammad Halim, and professionals, like Hafiz Hidayat Husain. Later, Maulanas with socialist sympathies, like Hasrat Mohani and Azad Sobhani, came to acquire influence over the vast working class among Muslims and the Muslim League both. The leadership of merchants and professionals fell in the category of liberal communalists, which we have described above, and it remained committed to Indian unity. The Maulanas supported Muslim League in its extremist phase but, interestingly, the Maulanas did not fully endorse the demand for Pakistan, as can be seen later in the chapter on Hasrat Mohani.

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Hindu Communal Mobilization

Hindu communal mobilization had gone, if not altogether unnoticed, at least without adequate attention from scholars for a long time. While admitting this, Gyanendra Pandey holds that the reasons for inadequate attention on Hindu communalism were that Hindus had bigger numbers and they had a wider geographical presence in India. Hence, he infers that Hindus had a lesser need to present unity of co-religionists as compared to Muslims who were geographically concentrated in fewer pockets and whose population was numerically smaller.84 Suranjan Das presents a slightly different version of this argument. Das says that due to its majority character Hindu communalism was more subterranean and informal whereas Muslim communalism had a more open and defensive character.85 Our evidence in Kanpur suggests that formal Hindu organizations came into existence quite early. However, the acquisition of anti-Muslim character by them did not start automatically; this came in stages.

In her study of Hindu communalism in Bengal, Joya Chatterji holds that the subject of her research was overlooked because most studies on communalism saw its rise and growth in relation to Partition. Consequently, Muslim communalists became the natural villains of the piece and scholars explored the role of Islamic principles, the socio-economic anxieties of Muslim elites, the grievances of lower class Muslims, etc. to explain the Partition of

84 Gyanendra Pandey (1990), op. cit., p. 162.
85 Surajan Das, op. cit., p.15. For his period and region, Surajan Das complained that material on Hindu communalism was scarce.
British India. In the process, Muslim communalism was researched deeply, while the role of Hindu communalism in dividing the Indian nation was overlooked.\textsuperscript{86}

Christophe Jaffrelot has described Hindu communalists as Hindu nationalists.\textsuperscript{87} He gives no reason for showering the encomium ‘nationalists’ on Hindu communalists. He claims to have used Anthony D. Smith’s definition of ethnic nationalism to explain the process by which diffused Hinduism was sought to be transformed into a collective political identity by Arya Samaj, Hindu Mahasabha and Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (R.S.S).\textsuperscript{88} Their self-adulation as nationalists, notwithstanding, these organizations and their leaders were pre-occupied with rather limited concepts of the nation, nationalism or nationalists. For instance, Arya Samaj did not even stand for the so-called Hindu nationalism as in the sixteenth year of its existence, and at the time of the Census of 1891, the Punjab leadership of this Samaj asked members to declare themselves Aryas and not Hindus.\textsuperscript{89} Hindu Mahasabha, formed in 1915, claimed to defend only the socio-political interest of Hindus.\textsuperscript{90} R.S.S., formed in 1925, had in its second chief M.S. Golwalkar its chief ideologue and ‘Guruji’. He defined the Indian nation in even more restrictive terms than Savarkar. Savarkar had, though only theoretically, proposed that Muslims and Christians should be excluded from the

\textsuperscript{86} Joya Chatterji (1995), op. cit., pp.150-1.
\textsuperscript{87} Christophe Jaffrelot, The Hindu Nationalist Movement and Indian Politics 1925 to the 1990s: Strategies of Identity-Building, Implantation and Mobilization [with special reference to Central India] (Delhi, Viking Penguin India, 1996)
\textsuperscript{88} Ibid. p.5.
nation as they could consider India their fatherland but not their Holy-land. Going a step further, Golwalkar laid the condition that the essential condition for an Indian national was an abiding belief in Hindu Religion and Culture. Hence, not only did he exclude Muslims and Christians but also Tribals and Dalits whose religious beliefs were amorphous. Even atheists or Communists, who were indifferent to religion, did not qualify to become Indian nationals by Golwalkar's criteria.91

Hindu communal organisations in Kanpur had very big patrons among prominent citizens and industrialists of the city. Hence, not only the regular communalist organisations of the Hindu ilk but even some new communal experiments, like Hindu Sangathanist Committee and Hindu Sangh party, were floated in Kanpur. One Hindu communal daily, like Vartman, was published throughout the period of this study because there were magnanimous donors to the cause it espoused. Yet, Hindu communal organisations did not have a hegemonic presence in Kanpur; they were immensely weak and intensely faction-ridden. This paradox calls for a serious exploration. One possible reason for this was that Hindu Mahasabha showed no generosity of spirit. It excluded in practice Jains and Buddhists who by tradition considered themselves Hindus, as we shall see in the chapter on Hindu communal mobilization.

Methodology and Sources
Politics was not unknown to people in pre-colonial India. The basic difference was that people had practically no role in politics, in the state and in the administration in traditional societies. Individual subjects sought favours and modification of policies by discrete and deferential requests to the ruling authority by appealing to social traditions and to the generosity of the rulers or their ancestors. On the other hand, mass communication (through 'print capitalism' or the public platform), organization of formal political parties, ideological indoctrination, elections and civil disobedience formed the basis of modern 'agitational politics'.

Ours is a study of modern politics, at a juncture when the agitational form was beginning to dominate, within the constraints imposed and the social imaginary unleashed by the colonial state.

Any study of politics can be undertaken in two ways. The first way is to analyse structures that take long periods to be built and basic changes to these are also very slow, almost like glacial movements. The study of structures may be like studies of colonialism and capitalism in which changes take place but as slowly as the formation and maturation of classes, the making and breaking of class coalitions, the architecture of social institutions over-arching the class coalitions and the balance of power between these social institutions. Such a

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92 McLane says that politics in traditional societies was in the nature of “administrative politics” whereas what began from the late 19th century was “agitational politics”. The fundamental difference between these two forms of politics, he feels, lay in the deferential versus assertive nature and the individualistic versus mass orientation of leaders/oranizations involved in them. See J.R. McLane (ed.), The Political Awakening in India (Engelwood Cliffs, Prentice-Hall, 1970), p. 1.

93 Sudipta Kaviraj (1997), op. cit., p. 45. Sudipta Kaviraj calls these as the story of the structures and the narrative of the State respectively.
study would necessarily cover not only a longer period but also a bigger geographical-administrative territory than the present one proposes to do, viz. Kanpur.

The second way to study politics is through a narrative of the actual political actors (governments, parties or leaders), tactics they adopted so as to be more successful than their competitors and the mobilizations they undertook to involve sympathizers in activities initiated by them. In colonial India, this mobilization was never only along class or only along caste/religious group lines. It was a mixture of both class and caste/religious group mobilization with appeals to the latter ideology and sentiment forming the forte of communal organizations. A study of political actors, their tactics and their mobilizations seems more viable for a city and more so during a limited period like the one chosen for this study, viz. 1919-1947.

In the modern age of new mass political movements, nationalists, socialists and even communalists were in 'competition for the same masses' and this indicates that people were ready to entertain the various appeals of different organizations/ideologies. Kanpur was, like any other city of colonial India, in the throes of the national movement in the first half of the 20th century. Being the

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94 A mass-based, ideology-driven and multi-class/ caste/religious mobilization, such as during the Indian national movement, does not fit into any of the categories of mobilization suggested by some western scholars, like Rudolph(s). According to them, political mobilizations are distinguished into three types by Rudolph(s). The mobilization by local notables is "vertical", the one initiated by community organizations is "horizontal" and the one started by political parties is "differentiated". See Lloyd I. Rudolph and Susanne Hoeber Rudolph, The Modernity of Tradition Political Development in India (Chicago, Chicago University Press, 1967), pp. 24-7.
biggest industrial centre outside Presidency towns, Kanpur had a history of strong trade union activity tinged with socialist politics. Hence, this study shall basically deal with communal politics but may not be able to overlook its interaction with nationalist and socialist politics in the city at that time.

Apart from having a comparative perspective on different kinds of political mobilization, a study, like the present one, seems necessary for two simple reasons. The first reason for which a study on communal politics seems necessary is because we know very little about the reasons for the mass appeal of communalism. Ironically, the outcome of communal mobilizations, i.e., identity formation, communal riots and Partition, are relatively better known than the processes through which communalism acquired mass appeal; we also know little about the practices of the protagonists primarily responsible for this phenomenon in urban areas. The rhetoric, issues, organizations and methods deployed by communalists locally would provide vital clues to the success of communalism at the grass-roots level.

Different mass movements were competing for the same masses and this meant, argues E.J. Hobsbawm, that the masses were prepared to entertain the appeals of various mass movements. Some scholars believe that it is an "axiomatic fact" that there are several political identities but the important thing is to answer why and how some (or one) of them gained wider currency. A study of

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95 E.J. Hobsbawm (1990), op. cit., p. 124.
politics and structural conditions would explain this, these scholars assert.\textsuperscript{96} Some other scholars hold that a study of communal politics alone can answer two important, inter-related questions, viz. as to what lay behind the communal appeal and as to how could communal appeal succeed.\textsuperscript{97}

Secondly, a study like the present one seems necessary because there have been few efforts to understand communal politics at the local level, especially in an industrial city like Kanpur. While there are a considerably large number of studies on communalism, if the unending accretions to the volumes on Partition or 'high politics'\textsuperscript{98} are subtracted, local communal politics still remains relatively neglected at the hands of scholars of history. Studies on communalism have made us better informed about the role colonial authorities played in the

\textsuperscript{96} See, for example, Zoya Hasan, S.N. Jha, Rasheedudin Khan (eds.), The State, Political Processes and Identity: Reflections on Modern India (New Delhi, Sage, 1989), p. 25.

\textsuperscript{97} See, for example, Achin Vanaik, Communalism Contested: Religion, Modernity and Secularization (New Delhi, Vistasr Publications, 1997), pp. 36-7

'construction' of communalism and the fanning of this ideology. We also know a good deal about the manner in which community identities were forged and how they changed during the pre-Independence period. There exist a few studies on one important, though dangerous manifestation of communalism, viz., communal violence. But a study dealing specifically with communal politics and focusing on the rhetoric of communalists at the micro-level is not easy to come by for the colonial period. The present study is a modest attempt to fill this gap; it is limited to one city and deals with only the Gandhian period in the national movement.

Urban history, like any history, has to be based on archival records, published reports/censuses, newspapers and oral history. We have tried to access these sources of history to the best of our capacity. Like Nita Kumar, the pioneer among Indian historians studying urban culture, we found local non-English newspapers particularly useful in the course of our work. Unlike her, however, we could not have access to local police records. This limitation/inability to see local police records, we hope, has been considerably overcome by our extensive use of the weekly intelligence reports on political activities maintained at C.I.D. headquarters in Lucknow.

100 Ibid., p. 13. Nita Kumar maintains that Festival Registers and Register No. 8 of Police Stations give vital information on social disputes, places of communal tension, bad characters and their activities etc. But these records, she says, are not accessible without 'contacts', diplomacy and socializing. We tried to follow this route to the police records as well, particularly at the City's Kotwali, but our efforts were stonewalled by the lingering suspicion of officers and unfriendly attitude to research of the policemen on duty there.