

Mumbai is generally recognized as an environment of extraordinary religious diversity. The city is known at one and the same time for habitual cosmopolitanism and a series of violent religion-related conflicts and clashes. While there is much academic scholarship on various aspects of urban history and realities, this volume is the first international academic publication focusing on religion(s) in Mumbai. An extended introductory essay provides a scenario of the religious history of the city from the earliest colonial periods to the present; it also discusses such topics as public celebration and landmark religious places. By taking a thematic approach, the contributions highlight the dynamics of religious life in the city. Chapters discuss spatial settings such as so-called slums (Dharavi) and ghettos (Mumbra), but also roadside shrines and taxis. Other chapters focus on class and civil society organizations. Contributions discuss the crossing of religious boundaries, e.g., in dealing with intermarriage and conversion, and challenges faced by religious groups as to how to reconcile the religious diversity of the city with their own desire for recognition. Lines of tension and conflict often run within, and not so much between, communities. The two final chapters of the volume address the reflection of religion in fiction set in Mumbai and in the work of the Bombay poet Arun Kolatkar.

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