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Small Town Capitalism in Western India: Artisans, Merchants and the Making of the Informal Economy, 1870-1960 (Cambridge Studies in Indian History and Society)

Douglas E. Haynes

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This book charts the history of artisan production and marketing in the Bombay Presidency from 1870 to 1960. While the textile mills of western India's biggest cities have been the subject of many rich studies, the role of artisan producers located in the region's small towns have been virtually ignored. Based upon extensive archival research as well as numerous interviews with participants in the handloom and powerloom industries, this book explores the role of weavers, merchants, consumers, and laborers in the making of what the author calls "small-town capitalism." By focusing on the politics of negotiation and resistance in local workshops, the book challenges conventional narratives of industrial change. The book provides the first in-depth work on the origins of powerloom manufacture in South Asia. It affords unique insights into the social and economic experience of small-town artisans as well as the informal economy of late colonial and early post-independence India.

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