Article

Nationalism 2.0

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A film on social media, nationalism, and the Indian diaspora

India is home to the second-largest online user community globally. Its global diaspora adds to its expansive scope. Sahana Udupa's film *Nationalism 2.0* dives into the worlds of social media users in India and the diaspora in the United Kingdom and how they post, repost, joke, troll, and abuse, for the sake of the "nation". Traversing the rhetoric and reflections of five protagonists from the Hindu and Muslim communities and a cascading world of online posts, memes and media that fill up their felt time and rhythm, the film looks at a fractured national imagining and cantankerous social media cultures that undergird it. Is social media just a channel or does it play an even greater role in the eruption of nationalist sentiments and agendas we are seeing in the digital age?

Trailer of the film Nationalism 2.0. Source: director/producer Sahana Udupa.

What Kind of Nationalism is Developing?

As scholars like Patricia Hill Collins have observed, nationalism can be seen as a tool,

one that can be used to the benefit or detriment of humanity. For stateless peoples, aspirations of nationhood are logical, given that the nation-state system is perhaps "the only game in town" when it comes to geopolitical representation and competition. On the other hand, nationalism is frequently marshaled against minority groups. Unfortunately, much of what we have seen so far concerning nationalism in the digital age has not been promising. Much of the research for *Nationalism 2.0* focuses on online religious politics for and against the nationalist policies championed by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Social media has proven to be a powerful tool wielded against minority groups that have been targeted by BJP policies; it has also been used as a key mobilizing tool for protesting against exclusion and discrimination. Sahana Udupa's film raises troubling questions about the role that nationalist ideologies and digital media might play in the twenty-first century and beyond.

More About the Film

Nationalism 2.0 is part of the project For Digital Dignity. Many of the findings discussed in the film are described in the article "Multiple Interfaces," by Sahana Udupa and Max Kramer. The film was directed and produced by Sahana Udupa. Its editing was completed by Priyanka Chhabra, Florian Geierstanger, and Caspar Wallarabe. The film's research and coordination team includes Miriam Homer, Max Kramer, Oeendrila Lahiri, and Salma Siddique. Camerawork was done by Anubhav Verma, Nitish Kanjilal, Pedro Castro Alves, Swaraj Sriwastav, and Adwait Parchure. Music for the film was arranged by Varun Pradeep and Ghatam Giridhar Udupa. Sound design was overseen by Aditya Virmani.