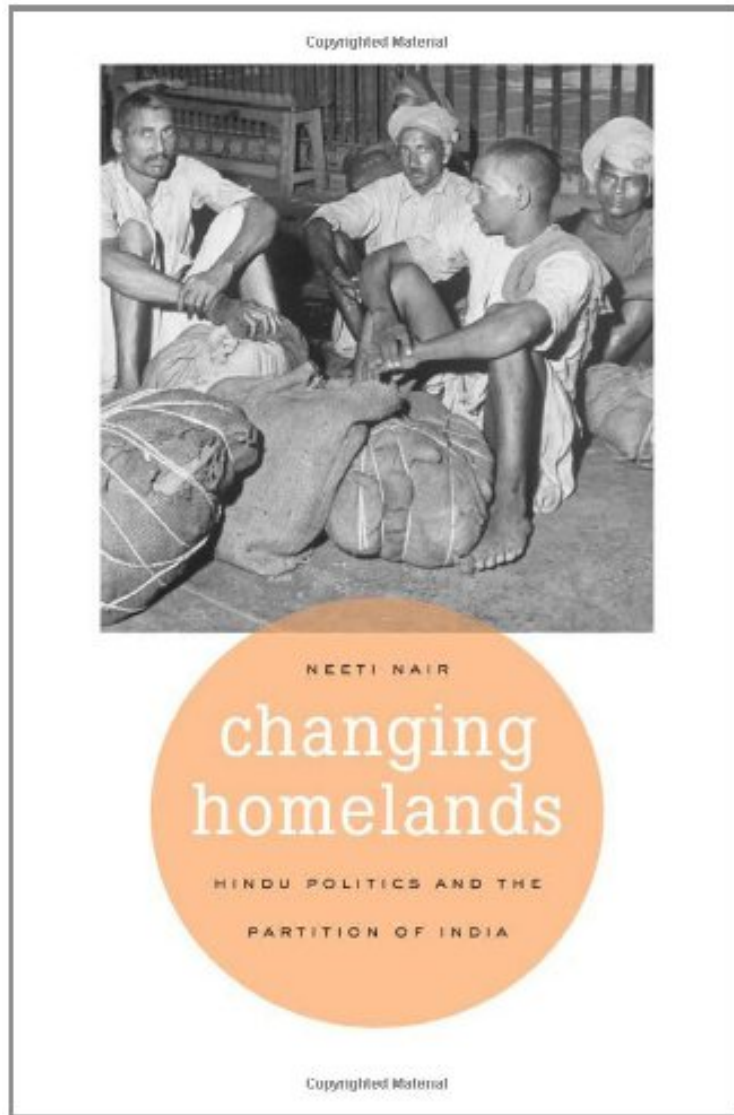


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Changing Homelands: Hindu Politics and the Partition of India

Neeti Nair

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Neeti Nair : Changing Homelands: Hindu Politics and the Partition of India before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Changing Homelands: Hindu Politics and the Partition of India:

3 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Review of "Changing Homelands:Hindu Politics and the Partition of India" by Neeti NairBy Jagdeep Chhokar"Changing Homelands: Hindu Politics and the Partition of India" by Neeti Nair is a very insightful and extremely well documented historical perspective on the events leading up to the partition

of India in 1947 when the British colonial era ended. Using some well known and some new archival sources, supplemented by interviews with some of the affected participants, Nair has created a very informative book. Lucidly written, it presents an hitherto unexplored window on the epoch making event of South Asia which continues to haunt approximately one fifth of humanity. I strongly recommend it to any one interested in this part of the world.

Changing Homelands offers a startling new perspective on what was and was not politically possible in late colonial India. In this highly readable account of the partition in the Punjab, Neeti Nair rejects the idea that essential differences between the Hindu and Muslim communities made political settlement impossible. Far from being an inevitable solution, the idea of partition was a very late, stunning surprise to the majority of Hindus in the region. In tracing the political and social history of the Punjab from the early years of the twentieth century, Nair overturns the entrenched view that Muslims were responsible for the partition of India. Some powerful Punjabi Hindus also preferred partition and contributed to its adoption. Almost no one, however, foresaw the deaths and devastation that would follow in its wake. Though much has been written on the politics of the Muslim and Sikh communities in the Punjab, Nair is the first historian to focus on the Hindu minority, both before and long after the divide of 1947. She engages with politics in post-Partition India by drawing from oral histories that reveal the complex relationship between memory and history a relationship that continues to inform politics between India and Pakistan.

It is an excellent work of meticulous research. Its argument is sharp and well executed. In many ways, what Joya Chatterji accomplished in her book, *Bengal Divided*, Nair does for Punjab. Nair's is a fine illustration of Rancire's dissensus: it derails the received wisdom on Partition.-- Irfan Ahmad, *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*