



## **The Persistence of Partition: The Sindhis in India**

**By Rita Kothari**

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Sixty years, and two generations after Partition, it is worth asking if as a historical event, or metaphor, Partition persists in the lives of the Sindhis. Is Partition a shared referential trope for the translocal Sindhi who does business in three continents, or the one who lives in an urban Indian city and runs a cloth shop, or the one who continues to live in what-were-once refugee camps, and waits for more gentrified (and therefore non-Sindhi) location? Kothari's work on the Partition experience and resettlement of the Sindhis defies some of the oft-made generalizations about Partition. The focus shifts from the history to sociology of Partition, from the day of departure to the trauma of arrival, from collective memory to collective forgetting. The narrative is not plotted in terms of adversaries/friends from different religions, because the 'other' is absent from oral testimonies of the Sindhis. The 'others' had to be created, and believed as part of citizenship in the new nation-state, and boundaries of religion and culture had to be redrawn for membership in majoritarian circles.

The narrative of the Sindhis is shot through with irony: they emerge as winners by having escaped brutal violence, by rising spectacularly well out of the ashes of Partition and by putting behind the memory of pre-Partition lives. And yet, as Kothari illustrates through Gujarat, they paid some of the heaviest prices, and made losses which remain unacknowledged by everyone, including the Sindhis themselves.

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