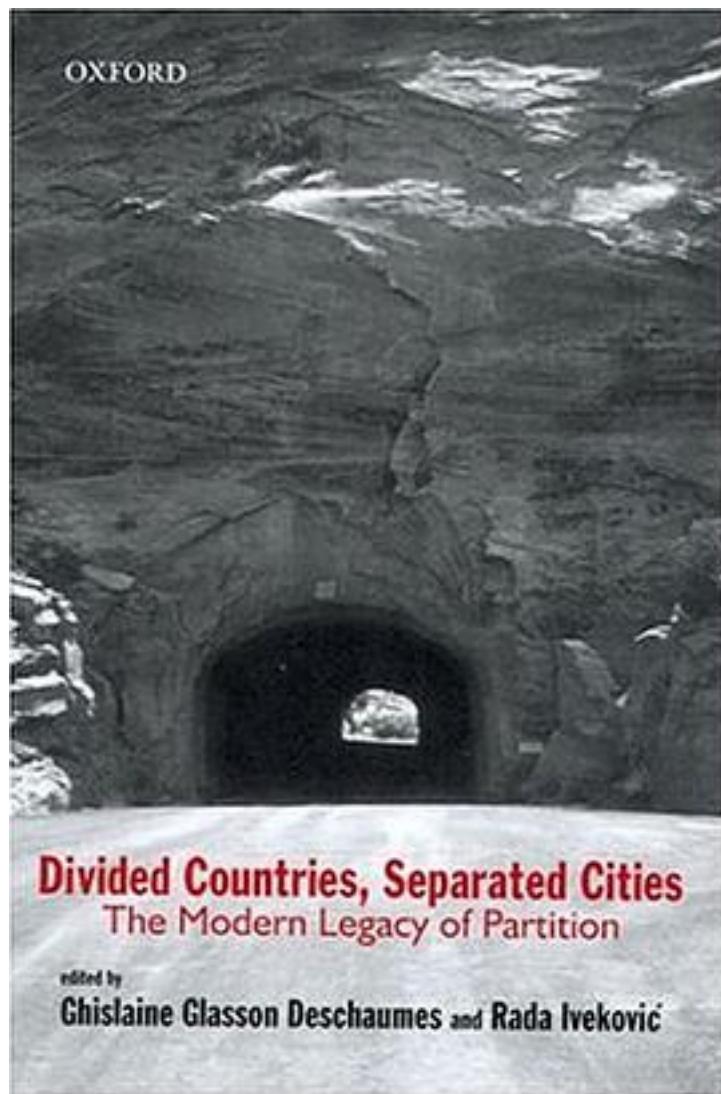


Divided Countries, Separated Cities



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This interesting collection of writings presents a sensitive, complex, and wide-ranging analysis of the mechanism of nation-building in partition, both post-colonial and in the context of post 1989 transitions in Eastern Europe and the Balkans. The partition of the Indian subcontinent acts as a paradigm case and stands out as something of a reference point in the present volume. The texts critique the ways in which narratives of nationhood naturalize and essentialize difference and hierarchy, and how received histories erase memories of possible alternative histories in situations of shared experiences and a shared past. The particular histories of nationalism and partition are different in the countries involved, but commonalities in the narrative structures, state and nation-building strategies, patriarchal patterns of control, and mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion are striking. This particularly so with respect to the ways in which exclusive national identities are constituted through gendered representations of the nation and its members. A particularly critical and far-reaching analysis of the relationships of power involved in the state and nation-building projects, the critique is, at the same time, a dismantling of these power relations. The processes of transformation in different countries and at different times, however, are not identical and move at different rates of speed and in different historical contexts. This is one reason why they are not transparent to each other and why their interpretations may clash with one another. The events following 1989 and those at the end of the colonial era exemplify these conflicts. The authors of this volume confront these clashes, compare these situations and see the entanglement of these processes not as deadlock, but rather as a challenge for theory and practice.

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