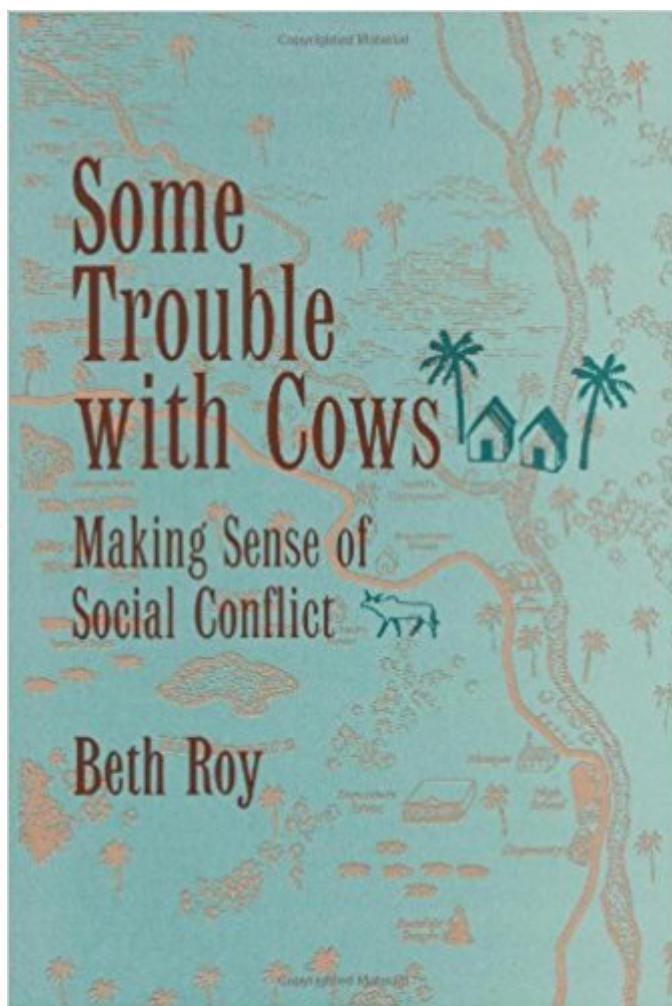


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Some Trouble With Cows: Making Sense Of Social Conflict



Synopsis

Fascinating in its combination of personal stories and analytical insights, *Some Trouble with Cows* will help students of conflict understand how a seemingly irrational and archaic riot becomes a means for renegotiating the distribution of power and rights in a small community. Using first-person accounts of Hindus and Muslims in a remote Bangladeshi village, Beth Roy evocatively describes and analyzes a large-scale riot that profoundly altered life in the area in the 1950s. She provides a rare glimpse into the hearts and minds of the participants and their families, while touching on a range of broader issues that are vital to the sociology of communities in conflict: the changing meaning of community; the impact of the state on local society; the nature of memory; and the force of neighborly enmity in reshaping power relationships during periods of change. Roy's findings illustrate important theoretical issues in psychology and sociology, and her conclusions will greatly interest students of ethnic/race relations, conflict resolution, the sociology of violence, agrarian society, and South Asia.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"This is an extremely important piece of work. In an unpretentious fashion, Roy challenges the traditional wisdom on communal riots and raises bold new questions about how they might be understood. A lucid piece of writing, *Some Trouble with Cows* is a pleasure to read."—Amrita Basu, author of *The Two Faces of Protest*"A brilliant contribution to the study of group conflict, written with immediacy and clarity."—Bob Blauner, author of *Black Lives, White Lives*

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This is an academic study of social conflict. The author investigated a previously unreported riot in what is today the country of Bangladesh, though at the time of the riot was East Pakistan. Her methodology was to talk in detail to persons involved to understand what happened, and perhaps more importantly, their interpretation of what happened. Initially, the book is easy and engaging reading as she describes how she learned of the riot, and how the riot reportedly occurred. She then proceeds to explain the conflict in terms of the broader scholarship of social conflict. Roy's analysis of the power relationships in the village, the precipitation of the riot, and the meaning of the riot to Hindus and Muslims provide a refreshing balance of the perception of common villagers, and academic social conflict theory. For persons interested in the social relationships in South Asia, and social conflict broadly, this is a terrific book.

Beth Roy's account of how a dispute between two neighboring farmers - cow grazes neighbor's crop - turns into a family conflict, then a village conflict, then a religious-ethnic conflict, then embroils the surrounding villages and finally an entire region. She went there, she spoke with the people most directly involved, and she uncovered the underlying national and international issues here being played out on a village level. It takes great insight and empathy to accomplish what Beth Roy has done. This is such a good book.

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