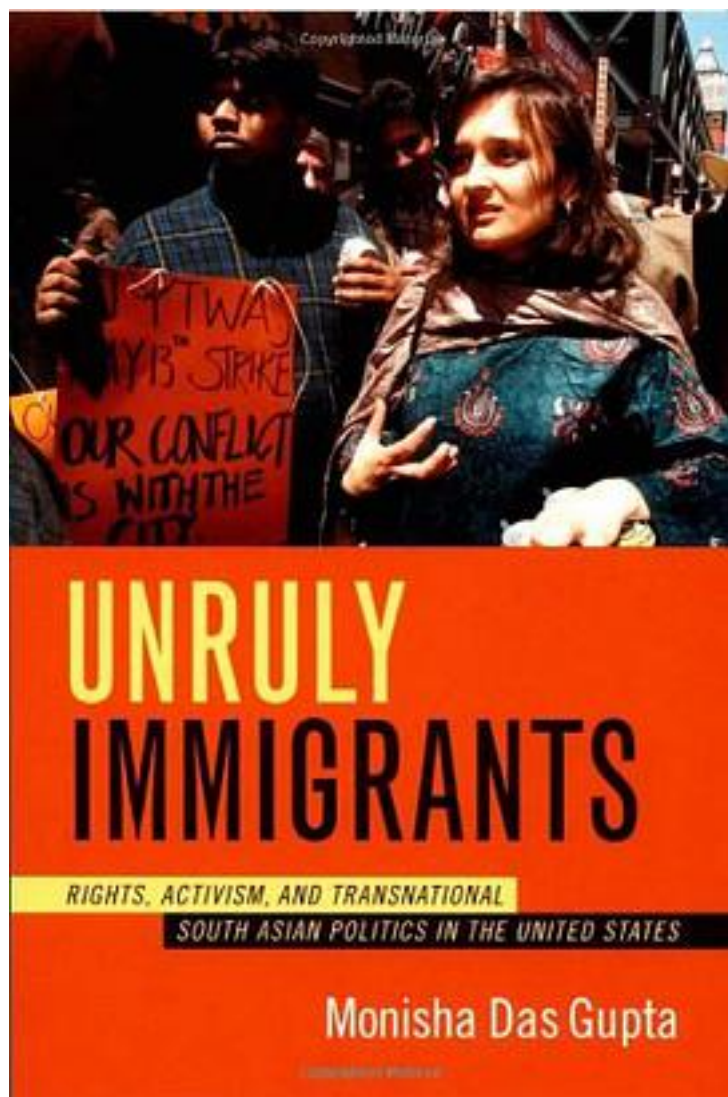


Unruly Immigrants



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In "Unruly Immigrants", Monisha Das Gupta explores the innovative strategies that South Asian feminist, queer, and labor organizations in the United States have developed to assert claims to rights - such as fair wages or protection from violence - for immigrants without the privileges or security of citizenship. Since the 1980s, many South Asian immigrants have found the India-centered, 'model minority' politics of previous generations inadequate to the task of redressing problems such as violence against women, homophobia, racism, and poverty. Thus they have developed new models of immigrant advocacy. They have sought rights that are mobile rather than rooted in national membership; they have advanced their claims as migrants rather than as citizens-to-be. Creating social justice organizations, they have inventively constructed a trans-national complex of rights by drawing on local, national, and international laws to seek entitlements for their constituencies. Das Gupta offers an ethnography of seven South Asian organizations in the north-eastern United States, looking at how these groups developed, how they envisioned their politics, and the conflicts that emerged within the groups over questions of sexual, class, and political identities. She explores the ways that women's organizations defined and responded to questions of domestic violence as they related to women's immigration status, the construction of a trans-national South Asian queer identity and culture by people who found themselves marginalized by both mainstream South Asian and queer communities in the United States, and the efforts of labor groups who sought economic justice for taxi drivers and domestic workers by confronting local policies that exploited cheap immigrant labor. Creatively responding to the shortcomings of the state, their communities, and the larger social movements of which they are a part, these groups challenge the assumption that citizenship is the necessary basis of rights claims.

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