

Gendered Fields: Women, Men and Ethnography

Edited by Diane Bell, Pat Caplan and Wazir Jahan Karim
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Cover Blurb

What is the effect of the anthropologist's gender on the process of fieldwork? *Gendered Fields* explores a cluster of issues to do with gender and fieldwork from within the framework of recent feminist and postmodernist debates.

International in its scope and in the background of its contributors, the book bridges the gap between practical experience and theoretical investigation by taking a gender perspective and showing how it actually takes shape in interpersonal or group dynamics in the field. The contributors cross disciplinary boundaries and draw on the work of philosophers, literary critics, linguists, historians and postmodern thinkers to build in and advance a dialogue between anthropology, feminism and postmodernism. They highlight the complex position of the ethnographer in the field, exploring the uncertainties of dealing with male-female relationships at both a personal and cultural level, and showing the extent to which the anthropologist becomes dependent on learning through experience. The contributions reveal how personality, intuition, ingenuity and self-analysis become tools of research as ethnographers sort out meaningful ways of understanding gender in context.

Gendered Fields will appeal to students and teachers in anthropology, social sciences and gender studies. Its insights on gender, knowledge and power – by both women and men – will enable future anthropologists to carry out fieldwork with greater sensitivity and caution and will stimulate ethnographers to rethink their own fieldwork.

Addendum

In the summer of 1988, the Indian sociologist Leela Dube organised a pre-conference session to the Twelfth IUAES (International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences) Congress, which that year was held in Zagreb, Yugoslavia. The title of the pre-Congress was 'Anthropological Perspectives on Research and Teaching Concerning Women' and out of the ensuing discussions was born the idea of publishing a book on gender and fieldwork, on which there was felt to be a dearth of material. While two of the original pre-Congress participants provided papers (Shrijvers and Ganesh), the remainder of the articles was solicited through the editors' networks, and covers a wide geographical area: Africa, Europe, Asia and Latin America.