



Gender and Anthropology

Frances E. Mascia-Lees, Nancy Johnson Black

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A major accomplishment of synthesis and distillation! Is the difference in men's and women's behavior the result of the human species' long evolutionary struggle for survival, or is it due to society's child-rearing practices and cultural mythologies? Is the exclusion of women from the highest positions of power and authority a universal trait of human societies, or does women's access to such positions depend on how a society is organized? Gender and Anthropology focuses on the central questions that have concerned anthropologists interested in the nature and determinants of gender roles and gender inequality. This concise treatment clearly traces how anthropologists have used different theoretical orientations to examine such questions and how these approaches have changed over time in relation to changing social and political conditions. Ranging from work in the nineteenth century to contemporary anthropological studies, this work analyzes evolutionary, psychological, materialist, Foucauldian, structuralist, sociolinguistic, and reflexive approaches to understanding gender behavior and gender stratification. Gender and Anthropology explores how anthropological data from around the world are crucial for questioning unproven but widely held assumptions about men and women in contemporary societies. A major accomplishment—a succinct presentation that unfolds our culture's view of women!

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