



The Trouble with Community: Anthropological Reflections on Movement, Identity and Collectivity (Anthropology, Culture and Society)

Vered Amit, Nigel Rapport

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'Community' is one of social science's longest-standing concepts. The assumption, of much social science, has been that it is in communities -- and to communities -- that human individuals, as social and cultural beings, belong. Communities are said to embody that interactive environment from which individuals' identities and senses of self derive, and in which they continue to dwell.

The trouble with 'community' is that this is not necessarily so; the personal social networks of individuals' actual experience crosscut collective categories, situations and institutions. Communities can prove unviable or imprisoning; the reality of community life and identity can often be very different from the ideology and the ideal.

In this provocative new book, anthropologists Vered Amit and Nigel Rapport draw on their various ethnographic experiences to reappraise the concept and the reality of 'community', in the light of globalization, religious fundamentalism, identity politics, and renascent localisms. How might anthropology better apprehend social identities which are intrinsically plural, transgressive and ironic? What has anthropology to say about the way in which civil society might hope to accommodate the on-going construction and the rightful expression of such migrant identities? Nigel Rapport and Vered Amit give their own answers to these questions before entering into dialogue to assess each other's positions.

Nigel Rapport is Professor of Anthropological and Philosophical Studies at the University of St. Andrews. He is author of *Transcendent Individual* (1997). Vered Amit is an Associate Professor at Concordia University in Montreal. She is the editor of *Realizing Community* (2002).

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