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# **Bias in the Biography: Bias and Subjectivity in Ethnographic Research**

**MARGARET D. LECOMPTE**

*This article is concerned with bias and subjectivity in ethnographic research. Since the research in ethnography cannot eliminate biographical determinants,*

*...number of factors that det... the article suggests some ways to...*

bias in my own work. In so doing, I have been guided by the assumption that bias derives from personal human history and experience, and have based my inquiry into my own work and that of others in our field accordingly. I have been helped in this endeavor by a series

pology, and who worked in museums or university departments of anthropology. They were united by an interest in cultural transmission and its impact on personality, and they focused on the *context* of learning, as embodied in descriptions of the characteristics of cultural

sources of influence when examining the impact of particular forms of

*The domestic or institutional stage. This period lasted from the mid-1950s*



from all of the articles by those who had attempted to define what anthropology and education is. I thought that in that way I could define who belonged to what camp by seeing who cited whom. I didn't do it.

metaphor of an archeological dig to understand the impact of opportunity costs in my own intellectual career. My dig was occasioned by a thorough housecleaning of my existing files. necessitated in part by

estant family in the neighborhood. As such, I was the only public

**In Conclusion**

definitions in cultural transmission and learning, and too many of the studies carried out in our field seem "merely descriptive" and devoid of a theoretical base.

I would like to close with a challenge: Can we not use an examina-

sis for the next era in anthropology and education? And can we not