

Martin Latreille

HONOR, THE GENDER DIVISION OF LABOR,
AND THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN RURAL
TUNISIA—A SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONAL
READING

This article is based on the assumption that in anthropology cultural and social organizational perspectives should be distinguished and refer to two analytically separate levels of reality, sometimes shed a different light on a single phenomenon, and have different analytical value. I demonstrate this by studying the notion of “honor” and its relation to the gender division of labor and to the status of women in northwest Tunisia, in the context of the “feminization” of agriculture. After showing the limitations of a cultural perspective that defines honor as a code—that is to say, a set of normative representations aimed at the regulation of (interpersonal) behavior—I propose an alternative, social organizational (or “groupal”) reading of honor, focused on the dynamics of the peasant household. I then test its analytical usefulness on the case at hand.