



# Dominatrix: Gender, Eroticism, and Control in the Dungeon

By Danielle J. Lindemann



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Our lives are full of small tensions, our closest relationships full of struggle: between woman and man, artist and customer, purist and commercialist, professional and client—and between the dominant and the submissive.

In *Dominatrix*, Danielle Lindemann draws on extensive fieldwork and interviews with professional dominatrices in New York City and San Francisco to offer a sophisticated portrait of these unusual professionals, their work, and their clients. Prior research on sex work has focused primarily on prostitutes and most studies of BDSM absorb pro-domme/client relationships without exploring what makes them unique. Lindemann satisfies our curiosity about these paid encounters, shining a light on one of the most secretive and least understood of personal relationships and unthreading a heretofore unexamined patch of our social tapestry. Upending the idea that these erotic laborers engage in simple exchanges and revealing the therapeutic and analytic nature of their work, Lindemann makes a major contribution to cultural studies, anthropology, and queer studies with her analysis of how gender, power, sexuality, and hierarchy shape all of our social experiences.



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## **Editorial Review**

### **Review**

“Breaking ranks with the legions of writers who have exoticized the people, places, things, and activities in this supposedly ‘seedy’ quarter of the retail sadomasochism economy, Danielle J. Lindemann offers up a lithe and sharp account of life in the dominatrix’s jungle and, in the telling, places the reader and the dominatrix side by side. While *Dominatrix* is a must-read for anyone interested in sociology, sex, pleasure, pain, or work, this isn’t just a book about gender and power. It’s also an occupational study rooted in the venerable tradition of Everett Hughes and his colleagues and protégés of the Chicago School of Sociology. This is sociology—and the exercise of the sociological imagination—at its finest.”

(Greg Scott *DePaul University*)

“In the tradition of the great occupational ethnographies, Danielle J. Lindemann takes us into professional dominatrices’ worlds and shows us, with graceful and consistently engaging prose, how the women she studied build careers, negotiate with clients, and develop accounts that make sense of their work and of the relationships it entails. *Dominatrix* has much to teach us about gender and sexuality.”

(Paul DiMaggio *Princeton University*)

“In wonderfully evocative vignettes and provocative analyses, Danielle J. Lindemann’s stunning ethnographic study of professional dominatrices shows just how much supposed deviance has to tell us about the normal, the ordinary, and the everyday. Theoretically innovative and methodologically perceptive, Lindemann’s work shows a sociological imagination at its most engaging.”

(Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson *Columbia University*)

### **About the Author**

**Danielle J. Lindemann** is a postdoctoral research scholar at Vanderbilt University. She lives with her husband in New York—a city she loves masochistically.

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Dora Campfield:**

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