Tanur

# Visualizing Social Science

Rachel Dorothy Tanur (1958-2002) wasn't trained as a social scientist, but she cared deeply about people and their lives and was an acute observer of living conditions and interactions. Her profound empathy for others and her commitment to helping those less fortunate than herself accompanied her on her travels and often guided her photography. She delighted in capturing the interaction between people and the artifacts they created and used, which, of course, are the raw materials of social science. In 1999 Tanur was diagnosed with cancer, and in response, she made several trips to Cuba, South and Central America, Africa, and Europe, as well as across the United States, before her death at the age of 43.The following year, Tanur's family and friends organized a memorial exhibit at Gilda's Club in New York called Cancer Journeys. The Social Science Research Council then opened its space for second show entitled Photographic Journeys. When Nikita Pokrovsky of Moscow's State University-Higher School of Economics experienced the SSRC exhibit, he was struck by the "human passion and compassion" of Tanur's work. He suggested combining the photographs with commentary, transforming the photos into useful tools for visual social science. These commentaries, written by an international group of social scientists, now accompany close to fifty of Rachel's photographs, and together the exhibit made its debut at the National Science Foundation in their Art of Science's 2006 show, Visualizing Social Science. This volume is an extension of that exhibition.

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