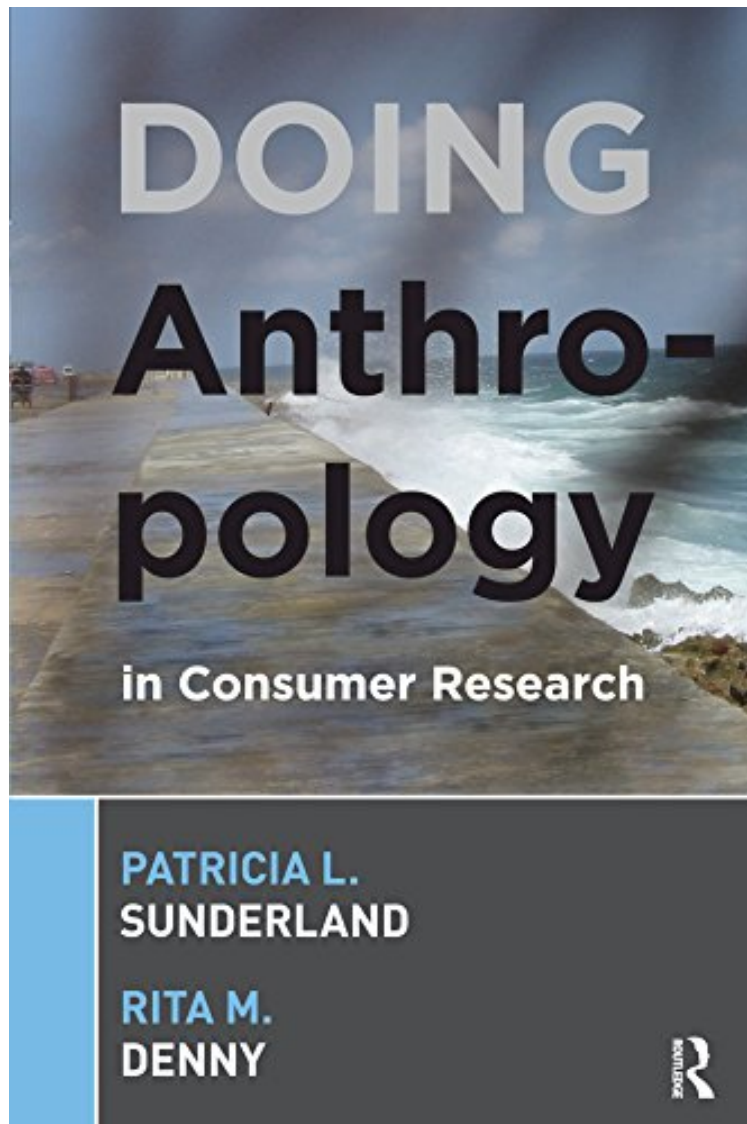


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Doing Anthropology in Consumer Research

Patricia L Sunderland, Rita M Denny

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convinces students instantly that this old stereotype is wrong, and that in studying anthropology are absolutely in the right place to gain an advantage in the business world. Anthropology is superbly suited for a creative business career, and this book shows everyone how and why.

Doing Anthropology in Consumer Research is the essential guide to the theory and practice of conducting ethnographic research in consumer environments. Patricia Sunderland and Rita Denny argue that, while the recent explosion in the use of "ethnography" in the corporate world has provided unprecedented opportunities for anthropologists and other qualitative researchers, this popularization too often results in shallow understandings of culture, divorcing ethnography from its foundations. In response, they reframe the field by re-attaching ethnography to theoretically robust and methodologically rigorous cultural analysis. The engrossing text draws on decades of the authors' own eclectic research—from coffee in Bangkok and boredom in New Zealand to computing in the United States—using methodologies from focus groups and rapid appraisal to semiotics and visual ethnography. Five provocative forewords by leaders in consumer research further push the boundaries of the field and challenge the boundaries of academic and applied work. In addition to reorienting the field for academics and practitioners, this book is an ideal text for students, who are increasingly likely to both study and work in corporate environments.

"This work succeeds brilliantly in blurring the increasingly unhelpful perception of a divide between 'applied' and 'academic' anthropology. Along several dimensions, it demonstrates how 'cutting edge' and indeed 'theoretical' post-1980s ethnographic research on consumers and marketing has been. Among the current literature in this field, this book has the comprehensiveness to serve as an ideal teaching tool." —George Marcus, Univ. California Irvine "Whatever type of anthropology you might pursue, you'll find an entree to the field in the following pages." —John Sherry, Northwestern University "This book is a gem, and one long awaited by academic applied anthropologists like me. I have taught courses in applied anthropology and ethnographic research methods for many years, and several of my former students have gone on to careers in market research. Had I had access to such a text earlier, my students would have been far more aware of, and far better prepared for, the careers that awaited them.... [It is] eloquently written with wit and candor, and filled with intriguing vignettes illustrating just how important the work of practitioners can be in advancing anthropological theory and method. Their use of multiple methods within the overall ethnographic framework, including rapid appraisal and semiotic analysis, is a model for contemporary fieldworkers, regardless of the location or domain of their work." —Donald Stull, University of Kansas "The varied engagements with research problems, the entanglements considered in the doing of research, and the reflexive requirements examined when the self is the instrument doing research makes this book a valuable resource for qualitative researchers and students across the disciplines of the social sciences and the varied locales of applied practice associated with these disciplines." —Hartmut Mokros, Rutgers University "Patti Sunderland and Rita Denny (Practica Group, LLC) have done what many have only talked about. They have published a book on doing anthropology in industry and in commercial research. . . . offering a work like this to a client can go a long way to clarifying what we do, and facilitating dialogue over problem definition." —Inga E. Treitler, Anthropology News

From the Inside Flap: An essential new guide to the theory and practice of conducting ethnographic research in consumer environments, drawing on decades of the authors' own research—from coffee in Bangkok and boredom in New Zealand to computing in the United States—using methodologies from focus groups and rapid appraisal to semiotics and visual ethnography.

About the Author: Rita Denny and Patricia Sunderland are anthropologists and founding partners of Practica Group, LLC, where their clients have included General Motors, Daimler-Chrysler, ATT, Verizon, Boeing, and The Miss America Pageant. They have published articles in Journal of Business Research, Anthropological Quarterly, Human Organization, Consumption Markets and Culture, Research Magazine, and Anthropology News, and book chapters in Advertising Cultures (Berg); Creating Breakthrough Ideas (Bergin and Garvey); and Handbook of Qualitative Research Methods in Marketing (Edward Elgar).