



Environmental Anthropology

By Patricia Townsend

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Environmental anthropologists organize the realities of interdependent lands, plants, animals, and human beings; advocate for the neediest among them; and provide understandings that preserve what is needed for the survival of a diverse world. Can the things that anthropologists have learned in their studies of small-scale systems have any relevance for developing policies to address global problems? Townsend explores this dilemma in her captivating, concise exploration of environmental anthropology and its place among the discipline's subfields. Maintaining the structure and clarity of the previous edition, the second edition has been revised throughout to include new research, expanded discussions of climate change, and a chapter devoted to spiritual ecology. In the historical overview of the field, Townsend shows how ideas and approaches developed earlier are relevant to understanding how today's local populations adapt to their physical and biological environments. She next presents a closer look at global environmental issues--rapid expansion of the world economic system, disease and poverty, the loss of biodiversity and its implications for human health--to demonstrate the effects of interactions between local and global communities. As a capstone, she gives thoughtful consideration to how, as professionals and as individuals, we can move toward personal engagement with environmental problems.

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