A Random Walk

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Not one of the twenty anthropologists I interviewed had pursued anthropology as a path into business. In fact, none of them even knew that such a path existed upon starting their programs. Most hoped for tenure track professor positions. After all, why else would one get an advanced degree in anthropology? It is common sense that if you want to go into *business*, then you go to *business* school. Many were neither exposed nor encouraged by academia to explore a trajectory into business. Nonetheless, each of my "academic anthropologists" ultimately was employed in for-profit business contexts as an anthropologist. Referring to anthropologist Mary Butler's concept of "a random walk" (Butler 2006), Susan Squires captured perfectly a theme that was pervasive across my interviews:

> I really think that [a random walk] is true for my generation of anthropologists or for Ph.D. anthropologists who love anthropology. They really want to get a degree in anthropology but are not really sure what they want to do when they get out except maybe academia. There is a 50/50 chance of doing that. There are random odds because positions are not available. Or, in my case, you can work for U.S. AID [United States Agency for International Development], working for the government supporting projects for other countries. Those were the two choices that I thought I had. The negative about getting a Ph.D. in

anthropology is that I did not have experience working in business. (Squires 2014: Princeton University thesis interview)

In this piece, I'll investigate why and how these anthropologists sacrificed their academic passions and culture in order to pursue careers in business. What catalyzed their shift in plans and paths? My analysis reflected in this piece will set the stage for proceeding articles evaluating the implications of the challenges they faced integrating as new members into an entirely new and unknown business culture, the value they added in their roles, their experiences interfacing with academia, and their views regarding the relationship between academic and business anthropology.

Set forth below are informant experiences illustrating common academic career orientations across my research group. Nearly all lacked any awareness of, or interest in, applying their academic training in business. However, in each case, the anthropologist noted being either effectively forced out, or drawn out of, their academic culture and career path into a career immersed in a business culture.

I intentionally refer to these as separate cultures based on what I have gleaned through my research on the experience of anthropologists transitioning from academia to business. My research suggests that each business is a web of its own unique set of values, sociopolitical structures, "common sense" orientations and expectations, languages, and norms of communication — indeed its own unique cultural system (Geertz 1973, 1975). This cultural system differs notably from the cultural context of academia, as an analysis of my informants' experiences will reveal.

The anthropologists with whom I spoke were *forced out* of academia either in need of employment due to a dearth of job opportunities in academia or academic contexts (e.g., museum management, non-profit organizations), or due to lifestyle requirements. They were *drawn out* of academia in search of career stability or through unplanned exposure to applied anthropology contexts that bridged into full-time business roles — described as "involuntary" in every case.

Forced Out of Academia

Kevin Baker's experience vividly captured the issue facing anthropology graduates and the discipline of anthropology in general, corroborated through the statistics provided in the previous article. After returning from fieldwork in Papua, New Guinea, in the late 1990's, Baker faced a dismal employment market in traditional academic jobs:

I was looking at the prospects for work to sustain myself. That meant getting a job, making money, and when you're honest with yourself as a graduate student in anthropology, the opportunities for a really great academic position aren't just limited, but it's kind

of a joke for 99% of grad students. (Baker 2014: Princeton University thesis interview)

He described the chances for graduate students from other than one of the top institutions to secure an academic position as "like winning the lottery" (Baker 2014).

Though perhaps exaggerating his point, Baker's comments reflect the reality faced by many of my informants, and possibly the anthropology profession as a whole: a high demand by graduating (and graduated) academic anthropologists for a very low supply of academic jobs. Recall, the American Anthropological Association's 1995 study of anthropology Ph.D. employment reported that in the 1990's, there were fewer academic job opportunities for anthropology Ph.D.'s than there were nonacademic positions. As my interviewees noted, a shortage of career academic positions clearly served as a major catalyst for their pursuit of non-academic career paths.

Susan Mitchell* (pseudonym) had a similar catalyst, though more complex, for diverging from an academic career path. When she began her graduate studies in anthropology at an Ivy League university, she "had romantic ideas about being an anthropologist." She recalled, "I really wanted kind of a bohemian lifestyle. I saw myself living in faraway places and doing really obscure things" (Mitchell 2014: Princeton University thesis interview). Focusing on performance anthropology, Mitchell conducted her fieldwork exploring the performative aspects of ritual and religion in the context of the annual festival cycle. After Mitchell returned from the field in 1992, she gave birth to a child with a developmental disability. The reality of health insurance and large health care bills "forced" her to change her life course. She told me, "We kind of went, 'Oh my God, we need real jobs. We can't run around and be adjunct professors and live that life with this child.'"

During her graduate studies, Mitchell had gained experience in technology through a fellowship working as an ethnographer looking at emerging technologies. She emphasized, "Technology was not my focus. It was just kind of the thing that was paying for my school." However, faced with the reality of needing a significant and reliable income, she ended up asking a friend at a technology company if his employer could use an anthropologist. Fortunately, they could. She was offered an internship in the early 1990's that became a career as a self-proclaimed "pioneer" in "using anthropology to inform product design and to inform broader kinds of product strategies looking more futuristically" (2014).

Mitchell's pursuit of a career in the private sector was driven by her need for stable employment and benefits. Similar to many of my informants, Mitchell worked "on the side" in whatever capacity was available in order to fund her academic studies and support herself while in graduate school. Nonetheless, her experience applying anthropology in

her work "on the side" paved the way for her full-time employment and career in business.

Another informant, Richard Hill* (pseudonym), was effectively forced out of academia in search of employment, with his path to business paved inadvertently by academic applied anthropology fieldwork. As an undergraduate student, Hill conducted fieldwork on the role of spirituality in the recovery of alcoholics, piquing his interest in cultural anthropology. However, believing that cultural anthropology was not "practical," he pursued an advanced degree in museum studies in addition to anthropology. He reasoned that museums might allow him to apply his anthropological studies "in the real world" (Hill 2014: Princeton University thesis interview).

Ironically, given his eventual employment, Hill's negative views of business and strong preference for academia were actually reinforced by his applied academic experiences. During his studies, Hill earned a museum internship that led to a contract position to study the feasibility of building a cultural center for the indigenous population and visitors in rural Southeast Asia. He "became increasingly jaded about the notion of a distinct separation between applied and academic anthropology" when he realized that he was essentially there so that a western industrial company could say they had an anthropologist serving the indigenous population (including the industrial company's workforce) (2014).

While performing his study, Hill discovered human rights abuses and a complete disconnect between the western industrial company, the indigenous people, and the government. Refusing to cover up what he had discovered, Hill briefed the industrial company executives on the human rights abuses and what the company appeared to be doing wrong. Remarkably, the industrial company embraced Hill's views and asked him to brief the country's President. Hill "was blunt and direct, which are not ways to communicate in that country's culture, and basically told the President everything he'd done wrong" (2014). To Hill's complete surprise, the President offered him a consulting job to address the issue and recommend solutions.

Admittedly, Hill had reservations about "applied" work. He explained that he perceived a negative attitude among academic anthropologists "ingrained in the American system" that applied work was not "real anthropology" and was looked upon with disdain. Despite his reservations, he agreed to the project on the condition that the indigenous population wanted him there. He recalled, "When I talked to them, their emphatic answer was, 'Yes! Come back. It doesn't matter if you are working for the industrial company or for the government. You understand us: our language, our culture, and the people in charge'" (2014).

I think it is quite powerful that the people whom he studied recognized his understanding of them and wanted him as their advocate, their "voice" in the room with the industrial company executives and government officials. Though he may not have realized it at the time, Hill had an invaluable experience on the application of anthropology to improve workplace organization and processes, workforce treatment and worker motivation.

After completing his Ph.D. in 2001, Hill returned with his family to the United States in need of employment. Despite extensive applied anthropology fieldwork for businesses, Hill's career interest had always been to practice his anthropology profession in an academic context. However, there were no such employment options available.

After a short freelance museum project, Hill searched job postings on monster.com and discovered that a big computer company was hiring for an anthropologist. A relative of the person in charge of hiring had completed her Ph.D. in the same program as Hill, so his CV "floated to the top," and he was hired after only a phone interview to work in a corporate organizational strategy role. Thus, Hill described his detachment from academia as a "strange route" through academic-oriented applied projects focused on "understanding people's educational backgrounds and economic and social standings" (2014).

Hill's experience testifies to the direct relevance of his academic anthropological training to business interests. His experience, like those of others noted in this piece, also illustrates the strength of the network of business anthropologists — largely unknown to my informants during their studies. This network proved instrumental in helping transition Hill and a number of other anthropologists coming out of academia into entry-level business positions and careers. Through a shared experience of graduate studies in anthropology, a bond is formed among many individuals with similar academic roots and perspectives that leads to their helping each other in their careers.

A relatively recent graduate, Rachel Smith's* (pseudonym) "initiation story" is particularly relevant (2011). Interestingly, she has experienced issues similar to the majority of my informants who "came of age" a decade or more before. Smith described her Ivy League anthropology graduate program as "not oriented towards business at all." As a graduate student, she gained experience teaching and, indeed, took a teaching position after completing her dissertation. However, in a difficult academic job market, Smith was forced to look at other career options when her husband's job required that her family move to another city (Smith 2014: Princeton University thesis interview).

Smith reflected that she was completely at a loss as to where to look for employment: "I spent quite a bit of time researching what anthropologists do when they are not teaching, because that was what I

was doing and that was my experience." Her entire career trajectory had been oriented toward academia, and she had not been exposed to alternative career paths. Smith described essentially embarking upon a "research project" to identify anthropologists employed outside of academia and learn what they did. Much like my own job search, she did not even know the relevant terms were to search for: "What do you call it? That was a big question." She found that most of the jobs employing anthropologists are not advertised as "we want an anthropologist." She reflected, "I didn't know what the job title was and did not know what the job was. I didn't know what they called it. I didn't even know how to talk about what it is that I should do!"

Ultimately, she identified a sector that seemed to match her interests and searched on Google for the name of anthropologists employed at relevant companies. Then, she explained, "I essentially cold called Company Y. I said, 'I hear that you have anthropologists. I want to talk to one.'" To her surprise, she was put through to an anthropologist working there and learned that they were actually recruiting for an anthropologist. After a long conversation, she was offered the job over the phone (2014).

Smith's experience indicates that the "invisibility" of business anthropology within the academic anthropology culture persists (in at least some academic contexts) even after decades of anthropologists migrating to business careers. Although only one "data point," Smith's experience serves to confirm for me the magnitude of the issue, which I will explore further in proceeding articles.

Drawn Out of Academia

Certain of my informants described their detachment from their academic culture and expected career pursuit, and their path to a business context, as occurring inadvertently through an unplanned exposure to business. Again, in each of these cases, the anthropologist had not considered a business career pursuit during graduate school, nor was any business orientation directly a part of their academic experience.

While she was in graduate school (1986 – 1993), Melissa Cefkin told me that a career in business "was not a route or path that I knew of at all. There was not really a field of business anthropology or people working in the corporate sector at that point in time." She explained that she could not "even imagine doing work in business" (Cefkin 2014: Princeton University thesis interview).

A history professor introduced Cefkin to a freelance position with a non-profit called Institute for Research on Learning. Cefkin was surprised that the non-profit sought anthropological work: "It was very novel. It was very unusual. I couldn't believe that stuff like that was going

on." Cefkin described the position "as a good way to make some money while on the academic job market" still pursuing an academic career. However, due to a poor academic job market, she "ended up staying with it and found it to be a whole new way of thinking about what to do with anthropology and how [her] life would play out" (2014).

Cefkin's dissertation work was purely academic, focusing on embodiment and identity construction through participation in folkloric dance. She asked, "How do people engage in the emotional, the cognitive, the physical dimensions of performing work alone and together?" (Cefkin 1993). Reflecting on her business career, she told me how surprised she was to discover an "unexpected carry-over" of her academic focus on observational and embodied aspects of work (2014).

Across all of my interviews, I identified a clear pattern in which anthropologists' traditional academic, theoretical training and perspectives were crucial in both academic and business work. Many of my informants reflected on the "remarkable relevance" of their "purely academic" studies and fieldwork experiences to their business contexts. However, these anthropologists never contemplated during their academic studies that their anthropology experiences and training could be relevant, in fact incredibly valuable, when applied to business purposes. I will explore this fascinating discovery in greater detail in coming articles. Moreover, in the next article, I will argue that experience in fieldwork regardless of the specific topic was and would be "relevant" in their transitions and integration into business contexts.

Echoing a common theme of the "invisibility" of business careers, Tracey Lovejoy's Master's program at the University of Chicago did not (and still does not) have a branch of applied anthropology, so "the pathway to corporate anthropology was really invisible to [her]" in 1993. It was certainly "not a long premeditated jump into the business world," Lovejoy told me. "I tripped completely into it." She wanted to pursue her Ph.D. in anthropology, but there was infighting in her Master's program. She recalled, "So I had my first early twenty something crisis of, 'what I am going to do with my life?' because [academia] was my trajectory" (Lovejoy 2014: Princeton University thesis interview).

Shortly thereafter, she discovered that a company interviewing on campus did "corporate anthropology." She left their Information Session saying to herself, "Oh my gosh, this is amazing that I can use the stuff that I have been studying. I can apply it in work." Lovejoy explained that she had "never heard of" corporate anthropology before. She interviewed for a position, but with the onset of a recession, the position was cancelled. She recounted, "So I was like, what am I going to do now? I had discovered this super cool thing called 'corporate anthropology.' Now what am I going to do?" (2014). This theme of "discovery" of the uses of anthropology in business cut across the majority of my informants'

accounts and signals how absent these paths were within academic programs.

Serendipitously, Lovejoy's husband happened to be working at Microsoft at the time with an anthropologist who was seeking to fill an open position on her team. Lovejoy was incredulous: "I was like, 'what?' I had no idea that Microsoft hired anthropologists!" In 2001, she got the job, noting, "It was pretty phenomenal to trip into it" (2014).

Two decades before Lovejoy embarked upon her career in business, Patricia Sachs-Chess discovered business indirectly through an academic postdoctoral experience extending from her dissertation research on the concept of work among retired coal mining families in a tiny town in West Virginia. Her dissertation led her to think more about the nature of work, knowledge and training. However, she told me that at the time (1975-1982), anthropologists hardly studied United States contexts, and there was not yet an "anthropology of work" (Sachs-Chess 2014: Princeton University thesis interview).

Her postdoctoral project focused on discontinuities in learning at school and learning at work: "What's the nature of learning outside the context of school?" With her research partner, a cognitive and developmental psychologist, Sachs-Chess studied why many "brainiacs in school" are not successful in the workplace, while many "C students turn into CEO's." She spent five years doing fieldwork in a manufacturing plant in New York investigating those questions. Based on that research, Sachs-Chess and her partner wrote two monographs for the Department of Education and the Department of Labor, and also provided copies to the workers at the plant. Never hearing from the government, she thought her work on the subject was done.

Having developed relationships with many of the men at the plant during her five years there, Sachs-Chess went back to visit. To her complete surprise, she recalled that the men excitedly pulled out her report, which was totally "dog-eared and underlined." In fact, the men had implemented changes in the plant based on her report. She told me, "That was my moment of recognizing. It was like 'ding!' — the light bulb went off. I recognized that basic research could be practical and meaningful to the people with whom you have worked."

She recalled that this model differed profoundly from the one that she had been exposed to in traditional anthropology, in which you go conduct fieldwork for several years and return to write, speak and teach about your fieldwork until you retire. In this academic model, informants do not "participate back." Of her work in the manufacturing plant, she told me, "This was clearly anthropology. It was also clearly psychology. And it was clearly very practical. And it was clearly basic research." Prior to this revelation, Sachs-Chess had assumed that becoming a professor was "the only path" for an individual pursuing her Ph.D. in anthropology. However,

this experience opened her eyes to alternative forms and contexts of anthropological research and analysis (2014).

Like Hill, part of Sachs-Chess' impetus for a business career was discovering that her work could be "meaningful" to the people with whom she worked. Recall that Hill's rationale for transcending his learned academic bias against applied work was to help give voice to the indigenous workforce and their associated culture.

Her realization of the applicability of anthropological research outside of academia happened to occur at a time during which the academic job market had extremely limited positions. Moreover, Sachs-Chess did not think that the academic life requiring moves across the country for one-year positions would be best for her family. So, Sachs-Chess started her own consulting firm in 1990 based on her philosophy that "basic research can be meaningful and practical if you have a collaborative relationship with the client" (2014).

Along with a number of my other interviewees, Sachs-Chess made her discovery "by doing." By contrast, others "discovered" the possibility of a career as an anthropologist in business through exposure to those who had already taken those paths. None were taught about the path within their academic departments. I will address the apparent "invisibility" of business anthropology in academia in a proceeding article, addressing a view captured by Hill above: that academia did not deem anthropology in non-academic contexts as "real anthropology" or "legitimate" pursuits for anthropologists (2014).

With a slightly different orientation, Alexandra Mack, who was focused on archaeology, believed when she began her program that anthropologists with Ph.D.'s in archaeology followed a single path after graduate school: "You have to get a job, so you go work in a museum." In fact, referencing her academic focus on archaeology, she said, "That tells you that I wasn't studying anything that has to do with business" (Mack 2014: Princeton University thesis interview). Respectively, however, I disagree. Perhaps the actual topic she studied did not directly relate to business (although she later discovered that the topic did relate!), but her academic anthropology studies have everything to do with business, as I will examine more fully in coming articles.

It was not until several years into her graduate program that Mack began to realize that she did not want an academic career enough to "jump through the hoops to go anywhere in the country for a one year job" (2014). While attending American Anthropological Association meetings, Mack discovered trajectories for anthropologists other than just in academia or museum roles. Anthropologists actually worked in a variety of roles in the private sector.

Previously, she had not known that there were "anthropologists doing things like working at design firms." She told me, "Realizing that working in design actually resonated with some of my interests, I started pursuing that" (2014). Moreover, she found her dissertation work on space and spatial analysis in the context of pilgrimages in medieval India surprisingly relevant to design. She positioned her anthropological, archaeological training as valuable in design by explaining that it could help understand material culture with a holistic approach. Plus, she "knew how to talk to people."[1]

Mack also informed me that work done for a small consulting firm "to make extra money" while in graduate school actually ended up helping her in her job search because it added business experience to her otherwise academia-dominated resume. Mack accepted a position at a small design consulting firm as a "Work Practice Designer" from January 2001 through September 2002. She took the job because it was an opportunity to gain valuable business experience. It was also one of few offers she had received. This experience set her up for her career as a "Workplace Anthropologist" at Pitney Bowes in January 2003 (2014). Once again, academia helped catalyze a transition, though not by encouraging or even making visible the path into business. In Mack's case, the academic anthropologist-dominated American Anthropological Association meetings provided the context for Mack's discovery of alternative career paths.

Another of my informants, Marietta Baba, pursued graduate studies in physical anthropology focusing on molecular evolution to develop a molecular based phylogeny of new world primates. As a graduate student during a major recession, Baba became involved in a strong community effort to help empower business people to "not sink economically." She joined a team in an initiative to transform a university building into an "incubation center," helping small businesses start up and thrive economically. The opportunity "to do something important economically and contribute to the larger society and the university" drove her engagement. Though she "didn't know anything about applied anthropology" at the time, she essentially was doing "cultural slash applied anthropology," engaging in a form of "participant observation inside the building" in order to support the incubating start-up businesses (Baba 2014: Princeton University thesis interview).

Hearing of her work, the university's Anthropology Department asked her to teach a course on anthropology and business to which she replied, "What's that?" She had never heard of "anthropology and

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[1] Though this last point may seem extraneous, learning to communicate effectively in collaborative, multidisciplinary business contexts was a major challenge faced by my interlocutors in integrating into their business roles and cultures.

business" and certainly never thought of herself as doing such work. Having accepted the teaching position and seeking to create business relationships, Baba hosted a party at the 1984 American Anthropological Association meetings "to announce business anthropology." At the black tie optional event, she met a recruiter for General Motors who asked for her help in hiring an anthropologist. Baba didn't have any anthropologists employed in businesses to refer to him. Nonetheless, through the recruiter, she was put in touch with the anthropologist they ended up hiring: Elizabeth Briody. Briody asked her to help with a single project that developed into a series of consulting projects for General Motors over many years — a path to the private sector she described as starting "as an accident" (2014). Yet again, an academic context (an American Anthropological Association annual meeting) served to connect academically oriented anthropologists with anthropologists employed in business, though without any plan in that regard.

A Networked Profession

I was fascinated to discover the impact that one "pioneer" could have on the business careers and lives of so many anthropologists. Anthropologist Steve Barnett and Holen North America served important roles in transitioning several of my informants from their academic contexts into industry. Barnett had done his graduate work and received his Ph.D. in anthropology from the University of Chicago in 1970. He founded Holen North America in the 1980's as the first prominent consulting firm specializing in applied anthropology for market research and advertising applications.

Maryann McCabe was the first of my informants to join Barnett and Holen North America. McCabe told me a now-familiar rationale for her non-academic career pursuit: "When I finished my Ph.D. at NYU [in 1981], the field of anthropology at that point in time was producing more Ph.D.'s than there was space for in the academic world, so there were many people like myself who in a sense were forced to find employment elsewhere." McCabe's first employment after earning her Ph.D. stemmed out of her dissertation research on child protective services and the Family Court in cases of sexually abused children. Having built relationships with government agencies during her research, she was asked by the state of New York's Department of Social Services to work on the problem of child sexual abuse (McCabe 2014: Princeton University thesis interview).

Thus, similar to several of my other informants, her first employment outside of academia was in "applied anthropology" in a public sector academic extension — not directly into the private sector. However, McCabe reflected that she got "burned out" working in the human services field. Her transition into for-profit employment occurred

by "happenstance." She attended an American Anthropological Association practitioner group meeting and met Steve Barnett, who, after a brief discussion, asked McCabe to join his firm. Again, common membership in and engagement with the American Anthropological Association provided the key context exposing an academic anthropologist to business anthropologists (2014).

Similarly, while Timothy Malefyt was in his graduate program focused on performance studies at Brown (1989-1997), he recalled having concerns about the vitality of anthropology departments and the future of anthropology as a unique, valuable discipline. Worried about what he was "going to do with a degree in anthropology," Malefyt cold-called and met with the "legendary character," Steve Barnett. Malefyt "loved" what Barnett was doing and found his insights on consumer trends absolutely fascinating. This exposure opened Malefyt's eyes to the potential for him to apply his training in the private sector. He secured a graduate intern position working at Holen for Maryann McCabe, along with anthropologists Rita Denny and John Lowes. He also met anthropologist, Grant McCracken, who visited Barnett at Holen. Clearly, Holen was an anthropologists' hub!

Despite his foray into business, the pull of academia proved stronger, and Malefyt continued pursuing an academic path doing his dissertation on flamenco performance and culture (Malefyt 1997). Upon returning in 1997 from his fieldwork in Spain with no academic job prospects, he pursued positions with dozens of advertising firms. He was denied by all except for one small advertising agency in New York — the only firm that recognized the value of his anthropological work for Holen. As their recruiter said in 1997, "I see you've done ethnographic research for corporations. That's hot right now. It's the newest thing" (Malefyt 2014: Princeton University thesis interview). The recruiter seemed interested in him as an anthropologist to the extent that he could conduct ethnographies.

Based on my research, I am not surprised by this narrow perception of an anthropologist's value in business. In a proceeding article, I will analyze the common misconception in business that anthropologists are valuable only for their research methods. Although training in methodologies is often invaluable, it is only a portion of what an anthropologist can add to business. Often overlooked is the depth of anthropological perspective, theoretical orientation and training embedded in their ability to understand human (i.e., employees, customers, governmental officials) behavior. Demonstrating that value has been a major challenge — and a major success — for my informants.

Also finding her way to Steve Barnett and Holen North America, Rita Denny fully expected to have an academic career after completing her dissertation at University of Chicago in 1982. However, because of a

"terrible" academic job market, she did not get her desired job at a research institution or a university. Serendipitously, a journalist friend mailed her a clip from Steve Barnett's column in the Wall Street Journal. Fascinated by the description of Barnett's application of anthropological methods and theory to consumer research, Denny wrote him a letter, and he hired her to join his team. In this case, Barnett's media presence opened an anthropologist's eyes as to the possibility of "doing anthropology" in business contexts as a full-time career (Denny 2014: Princeton University thesis interview).

Another Barnett protégé, Patricia Sunderland, was referred to Holen while in a graduate program at NYU by her anthropology department for a freelancing project supervised by Maryann McCabe (Sunderland 2014: Princeton University thesis interview). McCabe told me that she frequently asked students from her alma mater's anthropology department to help on projects requiring significant observational research (McCabe 2014). This is an interesting example to me of an anthropologist's desire to stay academically connected, as well as an examplar of the role of business anthropologists in helping more junior anthropologists make their ways into business.

Though Sunderland was exposed to business through her freelancing work, she still intended on pursuing an academic career. She considered the freelancing work as simply "a way to make extra money in graduate school" — a view shared by a number of my informants. Non-academic employment was merely a means of support as the anthropologists pursued their academic studies and careers (Sunderland 2014).

After completing her degree in 1992, Sunderland went to work at a research institute focused on evaluations for drugs and AIDS programs. She left the institute to write, thinking the whole time that she would still end up in an academic position. Meanwhile, she continued to freelance on the side. She told me that one day in 1996, it dawned on her, "I really enjoy the projects. I do not have to think of this as just freelancing on the side. This can actually be a career." She ultimately launched her consulting firm, Practica Group, LLC, with her former intern partner at Holen, Rita Denny (2014). Sunderland's experience emphasizes the network of interconnections that I discovered among anthropologists in business. That network, a cultural web of sorts it would seem, is exposing graduates to anthropology career opportunities and creating paths for graduates from their academic cultures into business.

Moreover, I was surprised to discover that "academic" contexts such as American Anthropological Association meetings helped to facilitate those connections in multiple cases. The entanglement of academic anthropology and business anthropology appears to be a close one, despite the apparent conflict (or at least lack of recognition of

business anthropologists) perceived by the majority of my informants while in graduate anthropology programs. The boundaries between academia and industry do not appear to be as distinct and discrete as I had envisioned!

Actively Pursuing and Pursued by Business

In a small minority of cases, my informants pursued business careers as their primary objective in lieu of an academic career. Robert Morais earned his Ph.D. at a time when few anthropologists were "actively involved in business" (1980). According to Morais, in the past, anthropologists had done some work in businesses, but rarely "on behalf of corporations." During a brief stint teaching, he decided to change directions entirely and pursue a career in business (Morais 2014: Princeton University thesis interview). His active decision to "detach" from academia and to seek employment in business is an outlier among my informants.

He enrolled in a program at NYU's business school, describing the program as one specifically for Ph.D.'s in the social sciences and humanities. The program "philosophy was actually that you put your Ph.D. aside, and use your smarts and your analytical abilities to get a job in business" (2014). NYU, and Morais, linked a career in business to education in a business school — not an advanced education in anthropology. Not only was a Ph.D. anthropologist transitioning into business not a "common sense" path, the Ph.D. also was regarded as completely irrelevant to getting a job in business.

Of them all, Genevieve Bell is the true outlier of my interview group. In her case, the corporation and business career found and pursued her, even though she indicated repeatedly that she had no interest in the position. She was quite content having secured a tenure-track academic teaching position at Stanford. Unlike every other informant, Bell's exposure to anthropology began long before her undergraduate and graduate studies. In fact, Bell told me that she took her first anthropology course in Australia as a four-year-old tagging along with her mother, who was an anthropology graduate student at the time. She recalled, "I was kicked out of class when I could work out what a multilateral cross-kinship marriage looked like on a kinship diagram" (Bell 2014: Princeton University thesis interview).

Having engaged in years of participant-observation within her mother's anthropological work, Bell developed an understanding of and orientation toward anthropology quite unique to my other informants whose primary exposure to anthropology was within U.S. academic anthropology programs:

> I grew up thinking about what the conversation was that you were driving, and what the better world was that you were advocating for. If you could see a better world, you ought to be putting everything on the line to get there — your heart, your body, your soul, your intellect, your life ought to be on the line for that. I grew up watching my mother do that, and I was implicated in that. I thought the place you did anthropology mattered less than the end you were attempting to drive, and I grew up with an awareness that you could do anthropology from many places. (2014)

Clearly, Bell's upbringing led her to conceive of academic anthropology as "applied" work, with priority on using anthropology to advocate for and create a better world. However, Bell encountered quite a different attitude toward applications of anthropology than she had been exposed to in Australia when she did her graduate studies in Stanford's anthropology department:

> Australia was not yet as parochial as I think the U.S. has become in the last ten or fifteen years about the fact that 'real' anthropology is done in universities, and everyone else does 'practicing' or 'applied' anthropology. 'Practicing anthropologists' versus 'perfect anthropologists' or as 'out of shape anthropologists'? 'Applied anthropology' versus 'NOT applied anthropology'? 'Irrelevant anthropology'? I find it a fascinating category mark as to what they attempt to say. (2014)

I am intrigued by Bell's observations regarding the distinctions between what counts as legitimate and valuable anthropological work among academic anthropologists in the U.S. compared to those in Australia. Most pertinent to the present discussion is Bell's learned perception within an academic anthropology program in the U.S. to look upon non-academic work with disdain. Indeed, Bell explained that "Stanford was not big on imagining that there were careers in anthropology beyond teaching and maybe a begrudging awareness of nongovernmental organizations [and] a little bit of public policy work in government" (2014). Thus, she was not exposed to a trajectory into private sector work as an anthropologist during her graduate studies.

Moreover, with her academic focus on Native American ethno-history, postcolonial queer theory, critical race theory and feminist theory "thrown in for good measure," Bell reflected that she did not imagine that she would end up pursuing a career in business. Rather, throughout graduate school, she "always assumed that [she] would be a professor" (2014). In fact, Bell launched her career as an academic anthropologist on the tenure track at Stanford, reflecting that she "loved teaching" and was not looking for a career in industry at all. However, she explained, "The

job found me." Initially, Bell declined Intel's job offer, reasoning, "Why would I want to do that? It doesn't make any sense: tenured track job at Stanford versus an indeterminate job in an industry that I don't understand? That was an easy decision" (2014).

Nonetheless, seven months later, the offer still stood, and Bell changed her mind. She explained that she had been in academic contexts since she was four, and she realized the potential magnitude of the opportunity before her:

> I was in Silicon Valley, and I was watching the web come to life around me. Here was Intel, a big company with reasonably big politics. I knew that. I knew that it was instrumental in making the building blocks for this 'Internet web thing.' I remember thinking that if this web thing was going to be as big as it looked like it could be, I wanted to be in that conversation. I didn't want to leave the future of the most important technology in the 21st century up to a bunch of engineers. I remember thinking that if Intel didn't know how to define the job for me, that may actually mean that I would be able to define it for myself. (2014)

Bell identified the need for an underrepresented, in fact completely absent, anthropological voice among decision-makers who might be on the verge of profoundly changing cultures all over the world through innovative technologies. Her commitment to advocating for a better world, learned by observing her Australian mother's anthropological work, led her to take a major career risk unprecedented among my other informants in rejecting a prestigious academic position to pursue a role in business.

After "a lot of soul searching," Bell decided to accept Intel's offer, despite the lack of support from her anthropology department at Stanford. In fact, she recalled that her decision was met with "an inordinate amount of criticism from [her] department and the ultimate shunning by [her] mentor, which hurt a great deal." She reflected that since accepting Intel's offer sixteen years ago, her mentor has not spoken to her. She explained that her mentor had considered her his best student since feminist anthropologist, Emily Martin. He expressed to her his disdain over time spent training her just "to waste [her] on industry," to which she countered, "If I am the best and the brightest, surely you want me driving the most important conversations?" However, she recalled that her mentor demonstrated a sentiment shared by most of Stanford's faculty that the only legitimate place for "the best and the brightest" was within the university system (2014).

Like virtually all of my interviewees, Bell had no interest in or exposure to business as a student. There, her experience diverges from my other informants in that she had secured a teaching position on a tenure track at an elite institution. In her case, business ultimately made

her a better career path offer, on the premise that she could leverage her background and talents in order to drive positive impact on the lives of those she studied, though not without a great deal of convincing required.

Ruminations

My interviewees characterized their paths into business as "random," "strange and circuitous," "accidental," "not the usual route", "by happenstance," and "fortuitous." However, considering their narratives holistically reveals a subtle consistency among their individual trajectories. In every case, my informant pursued graduate studies in a traditional anthropology program with the intent or assumption of "doing anthropology" academically. This academic anthropology career path was reinforced by academic programs that in many cases did not even acknowledge alternative paths.

When academic programs recognized "applied" anthropology at all, it was generally with an attitude of disapproval and disdain. Within "applied" trajectories, careers in for-profit contexts were particularly invisible to my informants during their graduate studies. Even a recent graduate was completely oblivious as to anthropologists employed in business, despite numerous cases of such paths being taken over the past few decades. Clearly, business is still not a "common sense" employment context for anthropologists. By not acknowledging tracks for anthropologists in business, these academic programs implicitly articulate value judgments regarding what "counts" as "real" anthropology and as "legitimate" pursuits for anthropologists. Careers in business do not qualify.

Despite learned academic cultural values of pursuing academic anthropology careers, many of my informants reflected that the highly competitive academic job market precluded such trajectories (refer to the previous article for statistical context). Bell was the only case in which a graduate secured a prestigious tenure-track academic position, and then was pursued aggressively by a major international business on the forefront of culture-changing technological innovations. In combination with a dismal job market, other idiosyncratic factors either forced informants into, or drew them towards, careers in business.

Another important pattern across my informants' individual "random walks" is in the nature of "discovery" that anthropologists could and do work in business. These discoveries occurred in a variety of ways. For some of my informants, it was a "discovery by doing," mostly in "applied" work though not specifically in for-profit employment initially. For others, the "discoveries" occurred through exposure to other anthropologists who had already made the transition from academia into business.

For most, though, exposure occurred "by chance": a news clip, an "Information Session," or a recruiter at an American Anthropological Association party. I find it fascinating that these "chance" encounters often occurred through anthropological organizations and forums, such as American Anthropological Association meetings and practitioner groups. Though academic programs themselves did not support my informants' non-academic career paths, a shared academic identity and cultural bond, despite "departing" from academia, served as a conduit for many of their "discoveries" of careers in business.

Considering this pattern of "random walks" holistically, I am reminded of my lessons on anthropological theory regarding the concept of "social structure." Throughout my anthropology education, I have learned to consider individual experiences in the context of their embeddedness in cultural systems and social structures. Perhaps these walks were less random than the interviewees first perceived.

I discovered another important pattern: the direct relevance and value of many of my informants' purely academic training and fieldwork to their business careers. No matter how "obscure," almost every one of my informants experienced an "unexpected carry-over" from their academic studies. Indeed, as will be drawn out in coming articles, my informants reflected that their traditional academic, theoretical training and perspectives in anthropology proved critical in their ultimate successes and contributions in business, highlighting surprising entanglements between academia and business through these connecting figures — business anthropologists.

Despite discovering strands of embeddedness between academia and business, the worlds of academia and business clearly appear as different, in many aspects opposed, cultural systems. This article characterizes my informants' detachments from their familiar cultural contexts steeped in academic anthropology ethics, values, norms and worldviews. Transitioning from academia into occupations in business, I contend, is not simply a change in occupations. It can also be understood as a change in cultures.

Thus, as will be detailed in proceeding articles, integration into business contexts involves learning the basic building blocks, the "rules," of that culture: the language, norms of communication and behavior, and the sociopolitical structure. Reminiscent of Turner's concept of the "initiate" or "neophyte," my informants were untrained in the cultural role (and culture) that they found themselves thrust into, fully immersed in, and effectively dependent upon for survival (Turner 1967).

True, their anthropology education in no case trained them in "being a business person." However, it did train them in analyzing how to understand what being a business person means: their worldviews,

values, language, and positions within power hierarchies and social structures. Each of my informants left academia to embark upon an intense immersion in effectively a foreign culture. Perhaps the most important "fieldwork" of their lives, their careers and abilities to support themselves and their families depended upon "getting it right." Fortunately, anthropologists are expertly trained through their traditional anthropological education on how to make sense of new cultural contexts.

Unlike in academic research, they will not be returning from the field to analyze, write about, and present on their ethnographic findings and interpretations. Rather, they will be analyzing the cultural context in order to understand their role within it and how to effectively perform in that role, adding value to the business. In many cases (though not, I am sure, true of every anthropologist in business — some may "sell out" and leave their anthropological cultural identity in academia), that value is deeply entrenched in their academic anthropological perspective, training and analytical lens, though importantly translated into "culturally relevant" terms within their business contexts. Indeed, approaches drawing on academic anthropology's conceptual resources seem crucial to the way by which many of my informants make sense of their world — despite that lens not being the "common sense" worldview in business.

After detaching from their academic anthropology contexts, these anthropologists had to transition and integrate into the foreign cultures of business. What was their transition like? What was most challenging in their process of "socialization"? What did they have to offer in their new social roles? To those questions I turn in the next installment.

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*These interviewees are anonymous per their request.

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