General Business Anthropology. By Robert Guang Tian, Michael P. Lillis, and Alfons van Marrewijk. Miami FL: North American Business Press, 2010.

Review by Pedro Oliveira

As an anthropologist, qualitative methods teacher, and consumer research practitioner I found the book 'General Business Anthropology' of great interest. Anthropologists have been involved in business since the beginning of the discipline, yet it is truly only in the last two decades that a greater body of scholarly work addressing the application of anthropological research to problems of business world has been developed under the umbrella of business and corporate anthropologies. 'General Business Anthropology' represents a step forward in making the sources and literature on the matter systematic and accessible to both specialists and novices to the area.

The book is co-written by Robert Guang Tian, Michael P. Lillis and Alfons H. Van Marrewijk, three scholars and applied practitioners in the field of business anthropology, and published by North American Business Press. In Chapter I, the reader is offered a detailed introduction of the relation between business and anthropology, followed by the delimitation of the several fields which have come to constitute business anthropology. Chapter II provides us with a historically-situated reflection on the evolution of business anthropology. Chapter III

introduces the question of methodology, to which the remaining chapters return, with specific examples of case studies worked on by anthropologists involved in business research. Chapters IV and V dwell on culture as the prime unit of analysis in the understanding of human and organizational behavior. Chapter IV returns to the question of methodology by placing the emphasis on ethnographic research in the context of business. Chapters VII to XII deal with the application of business anthropology to specific areas that have been traditionally taken over by business, finance and economics.

Chapter VII brings culture into marketing science by expanding on cross-cultural factors in marketing in general and introducing the role of anthropologists in social marketing. Chapter VIII lays down the implications of conducting anthropologically-oriented consumer research. Chapter IX focuses on design ethnography by emphasizing the collaboration between anthropologists, designers and others in the product design industry. Chapter X returns to the role and importance of cultural factors, this time touching on questions of competitive intelligence and knowledge management. Chapter XI introduces the theme of globalization with the stress on cultural dimensions in international business and cross-cultural business communication.

Chapter XII provides an overview of entrepreneurship theories by taking into account long-standing anthropological categories such as kinship, gender and ethnicity. The book ends with a considered reflection on the future of business anthropology (Chapter XIII) and business anthropology education.

Written as a textbook, 'General Business Anthropology' is a precious resource for all anthropology students and scholars interested in finding out more about an area of anthropology that is still finding its institutional place, both in standard curricula and in the wider job and educational markets. By clearly delimiting the specific areas of work that anthropologists can occupy in business professions, this book is a precious resource to any anthropology student interested in a career beyond the conventional realm of standard anthropological scholarship.

Like other academically-trained anthropologists, the idea that an anthropologist could make a living by working in fields as diverse as design research, marketing and consumer research or even cross- cultural management is something I was less than familiar with by the end of my training. Thus I believe that as an introductory manual to the various applications of anthropology in the business world, 'General Business Anthropology' should be made part of the reading lists of any anthropology department open to the integration of anthropologists in fields that so far have not been at the core of the discipline. In so doing, it could help future generations of anthropologists to push forward a discipline whose potential to affect business successfully is hitherto

unexplored to its full extent.

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