JBA
JOURNAL OF BUSINESS ANTHROPOLOGY

The Coming of Age of Anthropological Practice and Ethics

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Abstract

Anthropology as a discipline is well over 100 years old; as a profession it is just gearing up. It is the diversity of anthropological work, not simply by subfield and geographic location, but by job function that has contributed to the field's expansion. This growth has led to ethical questions and issues surrounding anthropological identity, adaptation, and collegiality, as increasing numbers of anthropologists are finding alternatives to the work of the professor. While the "split" or "divide" between academic and nonacademic work now seems narrower, much more needs to be done to acknowledge that practitioners are a growing and contributing segment of the field. As the career paths of anthropologists continue to differentiate, efforts will be necessary to unify anthropology so that the work of practitioners is considered on par with academics. This article takes on that challenge and proposes solutions to help practice and academia work together to advance the field.

Keywords

Anthropological practice, ethics, American Anthropological Association, General Motors

JBA Special Issue 1: 11-37, Spring 2014

ISSN 2245-4217

www.cbs.dk/jba

Anthropology as a discipline is well over 100 years old; as a profession it is just gearing itself up.[1] Many aspects of anthropological work, along with the roles played by anthropologists, have changed over time. It is the diversity of anthropological work, not simply by subfield and geographic location, but by job function that has contributed to the field's expansion. This growth has led to ethical questions and issues surrounding anthropological identity, adaptation, and collegiality as increasing numbers of anthropologists are finding alternatives to the work of the professor. While the "split" or "divide" between academic and non-academic work now seems narrower, much more needs to be done to acknowledge that practitioners are a growing and contributing segment of the field. More importantly, as the career paths of anthropologists continue to differentiate, efforts will be necessary to unify anthropology so that the work of practitioners is considered on par with that of academics. This article takes on that challenge and proposes solutions to help practice and academia work together to advance the field.

An important dimension of anthropology's coming of age is the rise and salience of anthropological practice, which is evident in such domains as student training, post-graduate employment beyond academic work, publications and visual media, electronic communication such as listservs and blogs, and professional associations. *Anthropological practice* is defined by the National Association for the Practice of Anthropology (NAPA), a section of the American Anthropological Association (AAA), as work done by anthropologists outside of academia. Practitioners "apply their work often by working in tandem with community leaders, non-profit institutions, companies, governments and other stakeholders, to understand, create, implement, and evaluate programs, products, services, policies, laws, and organizations."[2] We use the phrase anthropological practice to denote a focus on application with the intent to address a particular community, organizational, or societal problem.

With change come periodic modifications in codes of *ethics*, defined as professional standards of conduct. Professional standards of conduct are common to professional associations. Indeed, many anthropology associations – including AAA, NAPA, the Society for Applied Anthropology (SfAA), the American Association of Physical Anthropologists (AAPA), and the Society for American Archaeology (SAA) – have developed their own standards (Whiteford and Trotter 2008). Such ethical guidelines are designed to aid association members in the course of their work. Members may consult such guidelines to discern and discuss an issue, decide on a course of action, teach, or make a judgment about an ethical

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[1] An earlier version of article (Briody and Meerwarth Pester 2012) was delivered in November 2012 at the American Anthropological Association Meetings. We appreciate the discussions and advice we received from Barbara Rylko-Bauer, Mary O. Butler, Riall W. Nolan, and Marc S. Robinson. Their comments, along with those of the journal reviewers, helped to make the article stronger.

[2] practicinganthropology.org/practicing-anthro/ accessed April 26, 2013.

situation that they or their colleagues face. The AAA has been engaged in specifying, and subsequently revising, its code of ethics at least since 1967 – making it increasingly pertinent to the diversity of its membership.

We examine the intersection of anthropological practice and ethical principles based on our work in the private sector at General Motors (GM). Our article is both a friendly test of the 2012 AAA ethics code (www.aaanet.org/profdev/ethics/) from a practitioner standpoint, and an opportunity to explore its boundaries. Only a limited number of textual materials were used to inform the development of this new code. Instead, the AAA ethics task force relied heavily on a "review of ethics statements from professional/academic organizations as well as concerns that had been raised through AAA annual meetings and correspondence."[3]

Our goal is to view the principles as a set and identify where the fit works well for practitioners, and where there are weaknesses or gaps. Because we were researchers at GM R&D, an industrial research laboratory, there should be considerable alignment with the AAA ethical principles.[4] We first provide some insights into the growth of anthropological practice. Second, we describe the GM code of conduct and the AAA ethics code. Third, we discuss four of the projects on which we worked while employed at GM. We examine these projects in relation to two different ethical systems – one through our employer and one through our professional association. In the process we debunk an old myth and pervasive stereotype that private-sector organizations, and by extension their employees, are not ethical. Fourth, we suggest new avenues for the next iteration of the AAA code of ethics. Finally, we outline some strategies for strengthening collaboration and understanding between practitioners and their academic counterparts. In that process, we propose realigning anthropology's focus to be more holistic and inclusive of all kinds of anthropological work.

The growth and growing pains of anthropological practice

Anthropology is growing in the U.S. as seen in the number of new PhD and MA graduates. New PhD anthropologists rose from 22 in 1950 to 555 in 2011 (www.nsf.gov/statistics/sed/2011/pdf/tab12.pdf ; Givens and Jablonski 1996). Even more dramatic has been the rise in MA anthropology graduates. Their ranks have soared from about 50 in 1948 to over 1,700 in 2007 (Fiske et al. 2010:1), a 3,300 per cent increase! Increasingly, these anthropology graduates have found employment

[3] Niel Tashima, Member of the AAA Task Force for Comprehensive Ethics Review 2008-11, personal communication, April 30, 2013.

[4] Other practitioners do not necessarily have a research component to their jobs; they should examine and report on the AAA ethical principles for degree of fit with their work roles.

outside of academia. In the early 1970s, for example, 74 per cent of PhD graduates worked in anthropology departments compared with 42 per cent in 1995; similarly, in the early 1970s, 13 per cent held nonacademic employment compared with at least 28 per cent in 1995 (Givens and Jablonski 1996). More recent data on PhDs reveals that 27 per cent work in the business, government, and non-profit sectors (Rudd et al. 2008:25). While this statistic suggests little change from the 1995 survey, it actually reflects an undercount since it does not account for the many anthropologists employed within research and university settings who are not professors. The vast majority of PhD anthropologists today work outside academic departments of anthropology.

Practitioners serve in a variety of roles including researcher, administrator, manager, organizational-development expert, trainer, and evaluator. Applied MA programs are producing market-ready anthropologists who work in an array of jobs (Harman et al. 2004; Fiske et al. 2010). Indeed, nonacademic work is even more pronounced among MA graduates where most are employed in the private sector, government agencies, international organizations, and nonprofit organizations, or are self-employed or independent consultants (Fiske et al. 2010:28).

In concert with anthropology's changing demographics, an increasing number of anthropology graduate programs have been offering applied courses and internships. Since the late 1970s, these programs have been training students to apply their knowledge and skills to community and organizational problems. Most of these programs produce master's level graduates, although a few also produce new PhD anthropologists. The Consortium of Practicing and Applied Anthropology (www.copaa.info/) now counts 33 academic departments as members, including its first university from outside the U.S. – Copenhagen University.[5] The more mature applied anthropology programs – such as those at the University of Memphis, University of Maryland College Park, Northern Arizona University, the University of North Texas, and the University of South Florida – contribute substantially to the high proportion of the MA graduates today.

Yet, these changes have not come without a cost. Certainly academia faces important challenges. There are fewer and fewer full-time, tenure-track faculty positions in anthropology. Many members of the faculty are non-tenure track, part-time, or temporary – a fact which affects research, teaching, and advising. Additionally, many anthropology programs have not responded to student requests for practical career skills and exposure to applied work – in part because faculty often have "little experience or interest in applied work" (Briody and Nolan 2013:376). This pattern carries over into "discussion of the ethics of practice [which] tends to be hampered by the relative lack of

[5] Lisa Henry, Co-Chair, personal communication, February 4, 2014.

understanding of and experience with what practitioners actually do on a daily basis" (Nolan 2013:3).

Practitioners also have born some costs – one of which involves ethics. One of us (Briody) graduated in 1985 with a PhD and began to present results of her GM work at anthropology conferences and in university settings. Some attendees were curious about what an anthropologist did at GM – a question that arose repeatedly during her GM career from 1985-2009. Others either disparaged or voiced inaccurate assumptions about her work. She faced various allegations of unethical behavior as in these suggestive examples:

- Student question: "How can you work at a corporation (GM) that destroys the environment?"
- Professor's assertion: "You have to publish what *they* (GM) tell you to publish."

She quickly absorbed a view held by many academically-based anthropologists and their students at that time that private sector work was tainted. Practitioner research did not align with the principles of academic freedom. It was problem-oriented rather than theoretically-driven (Nolan 2013:394), and therefore not considered as scholarship-worthy. And, those studying corporate culture were reminded that they often overlooked a corporation's tendency to give "primacy to profits regardless of human costs" (Nash and Kirsch 1994). Cassell and Jacobs (1987:1) suggest one explanation of this phenomenon: "on occasion, the concept of 'ethics' is used as a weapon: my beliefs differ from yours, therefore *you* are unethical."

A lot has changed since the start of the 21st century when one of us (Meerwarth Pester) began her career, working at GM from 2000-2007. In many locations – particularly those near applied programs – the lines between academics and practitioners are blurring. Anthropology's culture has evolved to become more inclusive. The number of new graduates, shifting employment patterns, and availability of more and more applied anthropology programs illustrate the transition of an academically-based discipline to a mixed model composed of academic anthropologists and practitioners. The convergence of these three factors has put pressure on the former to reach out beyond the classroom to connect their students with the different worlds of work. Additionally, many practitioners have been enticed to reach into the classroom to offer their expertise and advice about how to apply anthropology in different work settings. All of this is very good news, given that the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics expects that employment for both anthropologists and archaeologists will increase by 21 per cent between 2010-2020, a faster rate than the average for all occupations (www.bls.gov/ooh/life-physical-and-social-science/anthropologists-and-archeologists.htm).

Yet, much more needs to be done to make anthropology a welcoming place for those engaged in a myriad of job functions who apply their knowledge and skills in innovative ways. We argue that the time for ignorance is over:

> A faculty career that begins with a PhD advisor who guides the student into the profession, leading first to a postdoc or tenure-track assistant professor position, and then tenure in a smooth and linear way is a mythical model that does not offer practical guidance for the real career paths of anthropology PhDs.
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> (Rudd et al. 2008:25)

Graduate programs that do not help "prepare students for a range of occupational sectors are behaving irresponsibly" (Bennett and Fiske 2013:313). Moreover, the time for disrespect – that only those "not good enough" for an academic appointment seek practice work (Nolan 2013: 394; Bartlo 2012:24) – is over. Some anthropologists have a strong preference for practice over academic work, and are good at it. We see that anthropology has been embroiled in ethical issues with itself, with many resisting this wave of change within the field. Denigrating practitioners' work is neither professional nor collegial. Moreover, it calls into question anthropologists' ability to evaluate practitioner work neutrally and objectively. We believe that students and professors would benefit from a deeper knowledge of the ethics of practice, along with exposure to alternative models of anthropological work.

Ethics at work

Practitioners have complex relationships with their work organizations involving peers and those in their chain of command, and often external publics such as suppliers, customers, partners, regulatory agencies, policymaking bodies, and the media. Their job responsibilities must consider not only the rules, processes, values, and expectations for conduct required by their employer, but those of other organizational entities or communities with which they interface. "Dual-identity professionals," such as practitioners working for a corporation, must deal with multiple ethical codes in their work; indeed, the work of practitioners is "inextricable from a variety of other goals and professional contexts" (Albro 2009:17). Another difficulty from a practitioner standpoint has been that the variation and complexity of anthropological work and careers continue to evolve without being fully connected with or captured by past AAA ethical codes (Tashima et al. 2008). We now describe the two ethical codes pertinent to our work as practitioners.

GM's Code of Conduct

Many organizations specify in writing a code of conduct for employees. Typically the code of conduct is linked thematically with the organization's values and sometimes with the mission and vision. GM has a corporate code of conduct called *Winning with Integrity*.[6] It consists of the following five broad categories of conduct:

1. Personal integrity
    - Understanding the rules
    - Acting with integrity when the rules seem unclear
2. Integrity in the workplace
    - Fair treatment and respect
    - Equal employment opportunity
    - Health and safety
    - Conflicts of interest
    - Accuracy of GM information and use of GM property
    - Litigation and investigations
3. Integrity in the marketplace
    - Gifts, entertainment, and gratuities
    - Fair competition
    - Insider trading
4. Integrity in society and our communities
    - Giving to U.S. government officials
    - Avoiding improper payments to non U.S. government officials
    - Export compliance
5. Integrity toward the environment
    - GM environmental principles

This code of conduct pertains first to the behavior of individual employees: they are expected to be aware of and understand corporate rules generally, and to act "with integrity." However, it extends beyond individual choice to policies, procedures, and expectations evident within departmental, unit, and corporate arenas. Fair treatment and respect, equal employment opportunity, and accuracy of GM information and use of GM property are important aspects of workplace integrity. Health and safety, another dimension of workplace integrity, matter enormously at GM. Avoiding conflicts of interest, insider trading, and improper payments to government officials globally are also part of the code of conduct along with supporting GM's environmental principles.

AAA's Principles of Professional Responsibility

The preamble to the current version of the AAA's Statement of Ethics frames anthropological work in terms of both research and practice. It

[6] www.gm.com/content/dam/gmcom/COMPANY/Investors/Corporate_Governance/PDFs/Winning_With_grity.pdf, accessed April 26, 2013.

also points to goals such as knowledge dissemination and the use of knowledge for solving human problems. Seven principles "intended to foster discussion, guide anthropologists in making responsible decisions, and educate" are described, and supplementary resources and reference documents provided.[7] The seven principles include:

1. Do no harm
2. Be open and honest regarding your work
3. Obtain informed consent and necessary permissions
4. Weigh competing ethical obligations due collaborators and affected parties
5. Make your results accessible
6. Protect and preserve your records
7. Maintain respectful and ethical professional relationships.

This ethics code emphasizes a primary ethical obligation to avoid harm and weigh the potential consequences of anthropological research. It supports transparency with respect to the goals, methods, and dissemination of the work, as well as informed consent. It describes anthropologists' obligation to figure out the appropriate balance when trying to reconcile different ethical standards held by study participants, colleagues, students, funders, and employers. Protecting and preserving one's data is considered an ethical responsibility. Professional relationships should be respectful such as when mentoring students, supervising staff, or working with clients, and ethical in terms of scientific and scholarly conduct.

Aligning GM projects with two codes of ethics

In this section we summarize four of our applied research projects. We examine our actions on these projects in light of selected principles found in the AAA's 2012 Principles of Professional Responsibility and GM's 2011 *Winning with Integrity* code of conduct. We assess the usefulness of these principles in guiding our work.

Project 1: Decision Paralysis on a GM Global Vehicle Program

GM was seeking ways of becoming a more competitive global firm. It was trying to coordinate vehicle design and engineering by having its own internal organizations, and later its strategic alliance partners, work together to develop global architectures for vehicles, share components, and reduce costs. It was believed that economies of scale would result because there would be less engineering and fewer expensive dies used in making parts. This project involved an examination of the work and interactions among three GM engineering organizations, which were

[7] www.aaanet.org/coe/Code_of_Ethics.pdf, accessed April 26, 2013.

charged with developing a car that could be sold in several markets around the world.[8]

The Anthropological Role: An earlier version of this vehicle program had failed. This time around, it was hoped that this innovative approach to product development would be successful. The role Briody played was to conduct a study of the vehicle program and offer consulting advice. She followed key guidelines to foster trust and rapport with members of the vehicle program and work with them on problem solving throughout all phased of the project:

- Maintaining study participant confidentiality
- Evaluating data as neutrally and objectively as possible
- Raising awareness of the findings through discussions, presentation, and internal reports
- Offering recommendations to improve decision making and governance of global programs
- Collaborating with program leaders on possible mitigation strategies in workshops.

Cultural Issues: The engineers and business professionals assigned to work on this program were charged with creating successful vehicles. They had to apply their knowledge, expertise, evolving cross-cultural understanding, and good humor to their daily tasks over more than a two-year period. Yet, GM's autonomous culture stood in their way. The firm had a longstanding tradition of autonomy in which individual organizational units operated largely independently. As the paradigm for global vehicle work emerged, a new corporate emphasis on collaboration and partnership integration was introduced which ran counter to the autonomous culture in place in the three engineering units. There was little agreement across organizational boundaries on the multitude of decisions that were supposed to be made, because unit work practices, assumptions, goals, and expectations were so different. Moreover, the program manager did not have the necessary authority to make the hard calls when disagreements arose. As a result, no one was able to work collaboratively and productively across organizational boundaries on a consistent basis – despite valiant efforts – because employee allegiances were to their home units. The home units paid their salaries and determined their career path. Consequently, decision paralysis set in, characterized by such factors as the amount of conflict, delays, rework, cost in labor hours, lack of an agreed-upon way of making decisions, and intervention in program decisions by corporate leaders.

Outcomes: When the program ultimately failed, with a loss of 2.2 million cars, the people working on it were not viewed favorably. The careers of those in the more senior positions on this vehicle program were

[8] For more detail on this project, see Briody (2013, 2010); and Briody, Cavusgil, and Stewart (2004).

especially affected, because they were both few in number and highly visible within the corporation. Some retired, some left the firm, and some stayed but no longer advanced up the career ladder. On the other hand, the program manager role and the structure of global product programs changed significantly after discussions with senior corporate leaders, internal presentations, and publication of technical reports. On future vehicle programs, program managers were given increased authority over decision making and resources. Reporting relationships were streamlined when engineering, design, and manufacturing operations became global. Such changes improved overall program effectiveness, as well as efficiency.

Ethics: AAA Principle 7 (Maintaining Respectful and Ethical Professional Relationships) and GM Principle 2 (Integrity in the Workplace – Fair Treatment and Respect) were consistent with the behavior and approach I tried to exhibit toward study participants who were also GM colleagues (See **Table 1**).

Table 1: Exploration of Ethical Principles by Ethics Code and GM Projects

	Principles Meeting or Exceeding Practitioner Expectations	Principles Falling Short of Practitioner Expectations
Projects		
Project 1: Decision Paralysis on a GM Global Vehicle Program	• AAA 7 • GM 2	• AAA 1
Project 2: Productivity Issues due to GM R&D Workspace	• AAA 7 • GM 1 • GM 2	• AAA 1 • AAA 2 • AAA 4 • GM 1
Project 3: Blaming Behavior in GM Truck Plant	• AAA 2 • GM 1	• AAA 1 • AAA 3
Project 4: Collaboration as GM's Ideal Plant Culture	• AAA 2 • AAA 5 • GM 1	• AAA 1 • AAA 2

Note: We do not specifically address AAA Principle 6 (Protect and Preserve Your Records) in these four projects.

AAA Principle 1 (Do No Harm) did not provide sufficient guidance for this project (See Table 1). Some "harm" came to those vehicle

program leaders who were put in an untenable situation without the proper organizational structure and support. Indeed, the study made explicit the structural, ideological, and behavioral weaknesses contributing to the program's failure. AAA Principle 1 should acknowledge that harm – job loss, for example – can and does happen, despite anthropologists' best intentions and attention to best practices. Anthropologists may not be able to change belief systems about perceptions of failure, including those who are the scapegoats. However, through their discussions, presentations, reports, and other means, they may be able to temper such beliefs by focusing the organization's attention on the actual culprit – in this case, the lack of alignment between organizational goals and structure. Had that alignment existed, and the appropriate incentives been established, those working on this vehicle program would have at least had a shot at being successful.

Project 2: Productivity Issues due to GM R&D Workspace

GM was planning to renovate parts of its Warren, Michigan R&D facility to ensure that its offices, laboratory spaces, and equipment were up-to-date given its research agenda. The renovation also would include general repair and maintenance. Three constraints were expected to affect the renovation. First, a cap on costs would limit how much remodeling could be done. Second, because of its historic designation, the R&D complex would be subject to the rules and regulations of the National Register of Historic Places. A third constraint, leadership beliefs, also played a role in the planning. The VP with responsibility for R&D appointed a group to conduct a literature review of researcher workspace. The appointed group concluded that individual offices were the most suitable for researcher workspace.[9]

The Anthropological Role: Following that literature review, GM's anthropologists were called in – twice over a five-year period – by the VP's direct report; the latter was the senior executive in charge of R&D. The assignment involved conducting two sequential field studies with the goal of identifying the most appropriate workspace for GM's researchers in the U.S. and worldwide. In the first of these two studies, our team of six anthropologists explored many aspects of R&D researcher work through observations, interviews, photographs, and validation sessions (presentations with discussion) on the preliminary findings. In the second confirmatory study, we also included work diaries, photographs, video footage, and large-forum discussions with interns. Because this project was high-visibility, those working at R&D were aware that the study was going on and typically were willing to participate in it. Establishing rapport was easy because our team and all of the other R&D researchers worked in the same complex and knew each other – at least by sight. The nature of the project, with its potential to affect how R&D

[9] For more detail on this project, see Meerwarth, Trotter, and Briody (2008).

researchers did their work, made explaining the importance of the study straightforward.

Cultural Issues: Together, the three studies demonstrated both the overwhelming preference among researchers for private offices and the detrimental effects of cubicles on their productivity. The problem was that all the executives preferred cubicles for their aesthetics, that is, their "look and feel." Cubicles were far cheaper than offices per square foot. The VP, who also had considerable influence over the renovation budget, repeatedly expressed his preference for cubicles. He believed cubicles encouraged researcher collaboration, despite our evidence to the contrary. It was at the VP's request that the three successive studies were carried out because, one R&D colleague joked to us, "He didn't like the answers he was getting."

Outcomes: The results of the first anthropological study, consistent with the early literature study, revealed that individual offices were the appropriate workspace for researchers. This study also yielded a cultural model of R&D workspace that underscored the values of productivity and pragmatism held by R&D researchers. The second anthropological study produced findings consistent with the first, even controlling for research site – Warren and Bangalore – and cohort differences. As the conclusions of each successive study were released, the VP expressed increasing annoyance and dissatisfaction. Our relationship with the VP was affected; his behavior repeatedly indicated an inability to move beyond his initial preference for cubicles. None of us wanted to be at odds with a senior leader, much less someone in our own chain of command. Ultimately, we ended up working solely with the senior executive and his staff who reported to the VP. These individuals were convinced of the validity and reliability of our studies. Their interventions based on our work led to the construction of single offices in the newly-renovated area of the Warren complex. In addition, the executive at the R&D site in Bangalore used our data to justify building individual offices as his site was expanding.

Ethics: Our actions were consistent with GM Principle 1 (Acting with Integrity When the Rules Seem Unclear) and GM Principle 2 (Integrity in the Workplace – Accuracy of GM Information) as evident in Table 1. We recognized the conflict with our VP and understood the potential difficulties of arguing for a position he did not support. However, we chose to present what we had learned as accurately as possible, thereby upholding GM's code of conduct. We also attended to AAA Principle 7 (Maintaining Respectful and Ethical Professional Relationships) even though our relationship with the VP was strained.

Table 1 also shows that we followed AAA Principle 2 (Be Open and Honest Regarding Your Work) and AAA Principle 4 (Balance Competing Ethical Obligations due Collaborators and Affected Parties) to the extent possible. However, both principles fell short of our expectations because

there seemed to be no acknowledgment of the risks that anthropologists may face – in this case with sponsors; therefore the portrayal of the two principles did not seem to be balanced. Disagreeing with a VP has a cost: it could have been, and some believe it was, a career-limiting move for our team. It would have been helpful to have some "reality check" as part of the principle on how sponsors, study participants, or other key stakeholders might respond. AAA Principle 4 also references AAA Principle 1 when it states: "Anthropologists must often make difficult decisions among competing ethical obligations while recognizing their obligation to do no harm." Our team was brought in to advise GM management on a multi-million dollar renovation. Our job was to gather data, make recommendations, and consult on the renovation – in short, to be proactive. Our work was far more than doing no harm; it was about taking a stand based on the scientific evidence. Finally, GM Principle 1 (Personal Integrity – Acting with Integrity When the Rules Seem Unclear), like AAA Principle 4, also offers no guidance in negotiating the muddy waters of power and hierarchy.

Project 3: Blaming Behavior in GM Truck Plant

This project stemmed from a request by one of us (Briody) to conduct a cultural study of a truck plant. The study occurred at a time when the U.S. quality movement was in full swing and vehicle quality was becoming an increasingly important marketplace differentiator. There was significant competition from the Japanese – primarily in car sales – which carried over into other product lines including trucks and buses. Managers in the truck plant were trained in the Philip B. Crosby quality program. Plant publications contained interviews with plant leaders on quality. Signs emphasizing quality, along with plant audit scores, were posted. Team-based problem solving on quality issues was inaugurated. Thus, quality became the stated plant goal.[10]

The Anthropological Role: The study was designed to be both exploratory and inductive. The fieldwork began with no preconceived notions of what cultural themes or patterns would be found. The mentor Briody was assigned was in charge of plant communications, including the plant newsletter. She introduced the anthropologist to employees whom she believed would help Briody develop an accurate understanding of the culture. Briody used those individuals as a foundation and expanded beyond them through their networks. Establishing rapport and building trust with selected plant employees, including several UAW committeemen, and maintaining confidentiality, were relatively easy. Her conversations with hourly employees and their supervisors in assembly, material handling, and repair occurred as people were working. She spent time at individual work stations along the assembly line, as well as

[10] For more detail on this project, see Briody, Trotter, and Meerwarth (2010).

on jitneys (as a passenger) that were used by material handlers to track down parts.

Cultural Issues: Briody's analysis of the ethnographic data revealed an endemic practice of blaming. Not only were plant employees seven times more likely to blame than praise each other, but the blaming was patterned. Employees blamed those on the previous shift, not their own shift, and those upstream from them, but not those in their own work area or those downstream from them. Employees also engaged in blame-avoidance behaviors, such as hoarding parts or trading parts, because they were fearful of being held accountable for parts that ran short. While they repeatedly indicated they wanted to produce quality work, they were unable to do so because of the incessant demand to meet efficiency and production quotas.

Outcomes: Three unexpected reactions to the release of Briody's internal technical report occurred. First, the plant manager spurned the findings and recommendations during a meeting with her and her manager. Despite the fact that the plant manager had sponsored the project, assigned Briody a mentor, and interacted with her on multiple occasions, he avoided all discussion of product quality and stridently asserted his plant's strengths (only in logistics related to vehicle delivery).

Second, and most surprising, was the response of a newly-assigned plant manager at a nearby plant. He called Briody after receiving a copy of the technical report and asked if the plant she had studied was his plant. Briody explained that it was not. The plant manager spoke at length about the quality problems and blaming that were rampant in his plant. Briody insisted that the study was not done in his plant; indeed, if it had been, he would have known about it. Despite her protests, however, the plant manager continued to declare that the study must have been done in his plant because of the high level of accuracy of the findings. Exasperated after 30 minutes of discussion, Briody told him, "It could not have been your plant because I don't do covert research." That remark seemed to mean something. He thanked her for her time and hung up.

A third unexpected and positive outcome from the release of the technical report was the review of the study at a GM Board meeting. In doing so, it raised awareness of the anthropological study and definitively introduced the notion of culture into the highest ranks of the corporation.

Ethics: GM Principle 1 (Personal Integrity – Understanding the Rules) guided Briody's approach (See Table 1). The common practice included working through her own management to get the necessary permission to do the study, and then explaining to plant employees what she was doing in relatively simple terms:

- Introductions ("My name is Elizabeth and I work at the Tech Center in Warren.")

- Project description ("I am trying to learn about the plant's culture – how this plant works.")
- Confidentiality ("I won't attach your name to what you tell me.").

Briody's approach was also consistent with AAA Principle 2 (Be Open and Honest Regarding Your Work) both in terms of how she approached study participants, as well as how she addressed the concerns expressed by the newly-assigned plant manager at a nearby plant.

On the other hand, Table 1 shows that AAA Principle 3 (Obtain Informed Consent and Necessary Permissions) was highly problematic because of its insistence on the range of topics to be covered including:

> the research goals, methods, funding sources or sponsors, expected outcomes, anticipated impacts of the research, and the rights and responsibilities of research participants … the possible impacts of participation, and [the fact that] confidentiality may be compromised or outcomes may differ from those anticipated.

The sheer number of plant employees, unrelenting work pace, and accepted plant practice of letting employees know a project was under way made satisfying the numerous formal requirements of informed consent impractical and countercultural. Providing the breadth and depth of information required in the principle would likely have been viewed with suspicion and rejection, thereby compromising the anthropologist's ability to gather valid field data. We also believe it is disingenuous for the wording of the principle to read that it is the "quality of the consent, not its format, which is relevant" when there is a clear expectation to use a lengthy and formal informed consent process. In addition to this principle, AAA Principle 1 (Do No Harm) also came into play. The larger goal behind any applied research project is not to be passive, but rather to engage, to advise, to propose change, and often, to participate in the change process. The internal technical report offered specific recommendations to help address plant cultural issues – not just study these issues.

Project 4: Collaboration as GM's Ideal Plant Culture

GM's automotive industry had lost ground to Asian competitors who first spearheaded quality improvements and then became skilled at reducing waste and cost, reducing lead time to market, and learning effectively from their mistakes. Despite dramatic improvements in product quality over the last few decades, the erosion of GM's customer base persisted, and GM's relationships with the UAW International Union continued to be contentious. The purpose of this project was to identify and implement an ideal work culture in GM's newest plant, and to develop interventions

that would help spread that ideal culture to other GM manufacturing facilities in the U.S.[11]

Anthropological Role: Our six-member anthropological research team was involved in collecting ethnographic data in three assembly plants and one stamping plant. We sought out hourly, salaried, and executive employees and representatives of the UAW employees at their workstations, in their offices, in team/break rooms, in skilled-trades areas, in the plant clinic, in the cafeteria, in training facilities, and at union locals. The "joint" leadership team of GM's newest plant, composed of both GM and local UAW leaders (who were able to work together cooperatively), repeatedly requested help from us, seeking insights, solutions, and best practices that could be put in place in the new plant. Over the course of the project, we held 35 validation sessions during which attendees were asked to challenge, confirm, or expand upon our results. As the project moved into the application phase, GM manufacturing gained both active consultation and proactive action including the development of ten tools (or interventions) to help in the establishment of an ideal plant culture in the new plant.

Cultural Issues: There was a belief that strong, healthy collaborative relationships were the missing ingredient in enabling GM to achieve and exceed its business goals. Employees indicated their hopes for the future by moving from the "old way" in which relationships were divisive and exclusionary and caused by a directive and authoritarian management style, to a new or ideal way that supported and valued employee expertise and problem-solving abilities. The new plant's joint leadership team, local UAW leaders, and senior GM manufacturing executives accepted the findings and recommendations. After the 10 tools had been tested in several plants, senior GM manufacturing leaders approached the UAW International with plans for a formal evaluation of the tools. Problems surfaced when the UAW International, and their representatives in selected plants, argued against adoption of the research results and tools because the work was not carried out under the umbrella of the GM management–UAW International structure.

Outcomes: Ultimately, UAW International leaders did not support the tool dissemination effort across GM's U.S. plants. The project became politicized in that it was perceived as a management-only initiative. Moreover, the GM-UAW negotiations were approaching – a time when positions harden and cooperation can be elusive. However, the tools and the cultural model on which they were based successfully contributed to a "culture of collaboration" at the new GM plant at Lansing Delta Township in Michigan, which has gone on to become the best manufacturing facility in GM. The approach, change model, and tools have since been applied successfully in several projects in the health and medical industry.

[11] For more detail on this project, see Briody, Meerwarth, and Trotter (2013); Briody, Trotter, and Meerwarth (2010).

Ethics: AAA Principle 5 (Make Your Results Accessible) and AAA Principle 2 (Be Open and Honest Regarding Your Work) were helpful in guiding our project (See Table 1). Transparency about project goals occurred alongside rapport-building. We also shared what we were learning as quickly as possible. Our validation sessions served to engage plant and senior manufacturing leaders with us in dialogue about our results, recommendations, and interventions. Indeed, our project followed both a community-based participatory research design and an action anthropology approach to organizational change. Later, we were able to make the tools publicly available and publish the results in our AAA award-winning book Transforming Culture. GM Principle 1 (Personal Integrity – Understanding the Rules) also played a role in our orientation to the project. Part of "Understanding the Rules" for any GM researcher includes the creation of an implementation component. The development, testing, and distribution of the tools fulfilled that purpose.

Two other AAA Principles fell short of our expectations (See Table 1). With respect to AAA Principle 2 (Be Open and Honest Regarding Your Work), all of the stakeholders may not be known a priori such as at project launch or even at a later stage, and some constituency may be powerful enough to derail the work. Despite being transparent throughout the project, our research team, GM plant management, GM senior manufacturing management, and the UAW locals were blind-sighted by the UAW International's reaction. This AAA principle should recognize that situations like this can and do arise – particularly during the application phase of a project. Our criticism of AAA Principle 1 (Do No Harm) as outlined in Project 3 applies to Project 4 as well. Our team was invited to help with the start-up of a new GM plant. Consequently, our role entailed far more than the "promotion of well-being, social critique or advocacy" because it involved active participation and decision making as both organizational insiders and consultants.

New horizons on anthropology's ethics

We now turn our attention to the relevance and usefulness of the AAA code of ethics for anthropological practice. Filling in what practitioners would consider to be weaknesses or gaps in the ethics code would be extraordinarily helpful. As we consider our four projects as a whole and their ethical interfaces, we see three ways in which the 2012 AAA ethics code could expand to accommodate anthropological practice. The three concepts we are proposing are fundamental to those engaged in applied research or anthropological practice generally. They are intricately interwoven with one another. Without their inclusion, the AAA code does not adequately guide the work of the fastest growing segment of the field.[12]

[12] These three key suggestions for revision of the 2012 AAA ethics code largely

Recognize that Practitioners May Adhere to Multiple Ethics Codes

First, practitioners have dual or even multiple identities when it comes to ethics. In our case, we typically tried to use both the GM code of conduct and the AAA ethics code as our guides. While using multiple ethics codes often happens in the field in the "background" of practitioner work, not much has been written about the experience of this integration, its benefits, and challenges.

The specific AAA and GM principles had important value for us as practitioners. Separately, the two codes provided different perspectives on work and emphasized different domains. The AAA code is heavily research-oriented as indicated in the 65 occurrences of the word "research" and its cognates such as "research participants" and "researcher." It is intended to guide the preparation and execution of anthropological research so that it is of high caliber. The AAA code is also intended to be a reference guide for the researcher prior to, during, and after the research has been conducted. The GM code is framed in terms of the concept of integrity regarding all aspects of employee behavior. It is particularly concerned with inappropriate actions of individuals, including those that are illegal, that would have a negative impact on corporate activities and image, as well as adherence to legislative and regulatory mandates.

We were fortunate to have two distinct ethical codes on which to rely. When we viewed them together, we understood them as examples of point–counterpoint. Each code complemented the other with the potential to offer specific guidance that the other code did not have. At the same time, the two codes had the potential for important overlap. When both codes sent the same message, our decisions were relatively easy. When the codes sent different messages, we were able to make comparisons and use the differing aspects to inform our decision. Hardest was when one or both of the codes sent no particular message and we had to sort the issues out without the benefit of formal guidance. This latter issue is an important challenge for both codes.

As practitioners, we became adept at comparing the two ethics codes during our work, discussing any ethical challenge, and reaching a decision. We believe that the AAA principles would be improved significantly by acknowledging that the AAA principles may not stand alone, but rather alongside employer or other codes, and that each contributes to a more mindful practice. This kind of formal acknowledgment is perhaps best suited for the preamble of the AAA ethics code.

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apply to NAPA's "Ethical Guidelines for Practitioners" (http://practicinganthropology.org/about/ethical-guidelines/, accessed February 4, 2014) and to SfAA's "Ethical and Professional Responsibilities" (http://www.sfaa.net/sfaaethic.html, accessed February 4, 2014).

Include Practice Prominently in the AAA Ethics Code

Second, the AAA ethics code only minimally includes practice, and largely in the preamble. One indicator is that there is no mention of the word "application" and but one occurrence of the word "applied" (a reference to the fact that some anthropologists work in "applied settings"). This lack of attention to application is remarkable both because of the demographic shifts to practice work and the ongoing interest expressed by students in practice careers and experiences, and because application can serve as a feedback loop to theory.

The AAA ethics code is not truly practice-friendly, in spite of such statements to the contrary as: "these principles provide anthropologists with tools to engage in developing and maintaining an ethical framework for all stages of anthropological practice – when making decisions prior to beginning projects, when in the field, and when communicating findings and preserving records." The code virtually ignores the kinds of issues with which practitioners grapple on a regular basis. The "stages of anthropological practice" never extend beyond "dissemination of the results." For example, there is no discussion of developing recommendations, working with stakeholders collaboratively, implementing interventions, or evaluating how well the interventions worked. This gap is problematic because during implementation, the focus is no longer on "research participants," but on stakeholders "who have greater impact and control over what is being done in their communities" (Kedia and van Willigen 2005:349). Stakeholder buy-in is essential; without it, the implementation effort will surely fail. The AAA ethics code fails to recognize that application should be addressed as carefully and cogently as basic research.

Moreover, the current AAA code shies away from the change nature of applied projects. There appears to be a reticence to influence or alter the culture of a particular group, organization, or community. Only four occurrences of the word "change" appear in the AAA ethics code and none of them refers to changes in the culture of the group involved. There is no discussion of the notions of "planned change," "organizational-culture change," "cultural transformation," or "community change" that are tied to applied research or practitioner work – despite the fact that applied research and action anthropology have been part of the discipline for many decades. Indeed, change is part of practitioners' cultural model of the work they do. Thus, we conclude that change is not considered a priority within the ethics code, even if it enhances or improves the current state. Similarly, specific interventions to address an issue or improve the effectiveness of an organization or community are neither fully comprehended nor valued within the code.

This omission is surprising to practitioners like us. An "interventionist ethic" is part of many anthropologists' "professional identity and sense of responsibility" (Katz 2012:204). When employed in

the public, private, or non-profit sectors, job performance is largely a function of problem solving to change something such as work practices, processes, or policies. Practitioners are actively engaged in what might become some aspect of the future state. Deadlines are pending on delivering completed assignments and results, which will have an impact on decisions, strategy, direction, and a host of other factors that can make the former cultural processes and practices obsolete. Moreover, new and urgent issues arise that need to be tackled. Practitioners are part of ongoing change processes within an organization or community. They are also professionals whose work is designed to foster change. Practitioners engaged in applied research typically intervene in the culture at hand and work on implementation of agreed-upon changes. (Other practitioners whose job functions do not include research, such as consultants, administrators, or cross-cultural trainers, also operate within a paradigm of change.) Consequently, practitioners are not only in the throes of change, but leading it and leading it away from the status quo. Just as the code provides guidelines for basic research, it should also provide some guidelines for applied research and practice in both the preamble and in each of the individual ethical principles.

Do Some Good

Third, the current ethics code is preoccupied with the concept of harm. We count nine occurrences of the word "harm" or its cognates such as "harmful" in the ethics code. Among them are these statements:

- AAA Principle 1: "Anthropologists should not only avoid causing direct and immediate harm but also should weigh carefully the potential consequences and inadvertent impacts of their work."
- AAA Principle 4: "Anthropologists must often make difficult decisions among competing ethical obligations while recognizing their obligation to do no harm."
- AAA Principle 6: "Ethical decisions regarding the preservation of research materials must balance obligations to maintain data integrity with responsibilities to protect research participants and their communities against future harmful impacts."

This overwhelming emphasis on "harm" without a corresponding emphasis on "help" is unexpectedly imbalanced. We find that the emphasis on harm does not reflect fully what practitioners do and how they approach their work.

We believe that anthropology's new ethical horizon should move beyond the Do No Harm principle to Do Some Good. Practitioners routinely evaluate their options between these two poles as they settle on a course of action. However, their sights are set 180 degrees away from deliberately and intentionally causing any injury or damage. As a matter of fact, much of their inspiration springs from their desire to make a

difference through their work. They are working inside some cultural system – whether as employees, contractors, consultants, or even volunteers – and trying to make it better in some way. While we realize the preference of some anthropologists to "work as outside critic" (Rylko-Bauer, Singer, and van Willigen 2006: 183), practitioners accept the challenge of using their skills and knowledge to implement change and improve conditions for communities and organizations. Rogers (2013) recently came to this conclusion as well in his work for a pharmaceutical company on experimental therapies. The ethics of practice is not well served by being defined in the negative, but rather "requires an active positioning of insights rather than a passive protection and representation of subjects" (Madsen and Hammershoy 2012).

Practical solutions for a divided field

As practitioners, we see anthropology as a divided rather than a united field: in terms of the careers anthropologists follow; in their perceptions of and relationships with anthropologists whose work is different from theirs; and in their assessment of the usefulness and relevance of the current ethics code. Anthropology's identity, relevance, and impact would be better served with greater integration across the ideological boundaries of theory and practice, and with greater cohesion between academics and practitioners. Fortunately, many academic anthropologists engage in applied research, teach their students about the value of practice and alternative models of work, and help bridge the divide between an "external" and "critical" view from the academy, and the "internal" and "instrumental" view from practice (Rogers 2013). These applied academic anthropologists have worked tirelessly with practitioners in their classrooms, on projects, and on association committees to build connections and to expand learning and career possibilities.

We know that there is more to be done to narrow the gap between practice and academia (Bennett and Fiske 2013; Nolan 2013), and to create greater integration and cohesion among anthropologists. Our focus on the intersection of ethics and applied research on four projects exposes some of the difficulties for practitioners with the new AAA code. From our work we propose three solutions. First, the ethics under which practitioners work needs to be incorporated into the AAA Principles of Professional Responsibility. An analysis of our four projects in the form of a "friendly test" of the new principles has yielded some useful findings. Foremost among them is that practitioners are closely tied to problem solving, collaboration, and change. Not only do practitioners engage in problem solving and change efforts with others as a routine part of their work, they foster change in the organizations and communities in which they are involved. Their work goes beyond the dissemination of knowledge. Practitioners are not involved in promoting change for the

sake of promoting change. Instead, they hope to improve current cultural conditions through their knowledge and expertise, and sometime mitigate the consequences of difficult circumstances, like disaster relief, public health issues, or organizational failure. Explicitly recognizing the practitioner role as change agent is an essential addition to the ethics code.

Second, we note that ethics training is not yet a mainstay of anthropological education (Trotter 2009). We believe that the ethics of both research and practice should be part of the graduate and undergraduate curricula, no matter what a student's career path is likely to be. It turns out that applied programs are much more likely to offer ethics training (Trotter 2009). An introduction to ethics through specific classes such as ethnography or pre-internship seminars, and scenario-based learning has become more prevalent. Such classes and the required internship or practicum expose students to multiple ethics codes when working with study participants; they also introduce students to stakeholder groups (who may play a role in implementation) and to the job market generally. Ethical dilemmas from practice can then be brought back into the classroom for discussion. In fact, one ethical problem-solving guide was designed by applied anthropology faculty in response to student requests; it has been used successfully by students and others to sort through complexities and conflicting ethical principles to arrive at an eventual resolution (Whiteford and Trotter 2008; Bohren and Whiteford 2013).

Third, anthropology needs to move beyond the Do No Harm principle. Of course it is important to think through, plan carefully, execute effectively, and evaluate objectively any project or effort in which one is involved. In that sense, the Do No Harm principle continues to be helpful and relevant. However, as a guide it is limiting, because it does not encourage or motivate anthropologists to imagine the ways in which their work might make a positive contribution to organizations and communities. Indeed, the ethics code currently can be interpreted as a justification for studying but not altering the status quo, rather than as a call to address issues of the human condition. Therefore, we recommend a new principle: Do Some Good. When used together, Do No Harm and Do Some Good complement and balance each other. Exposed to both principles, new cohorts of students will learn the value of careful preparation, thereby avoiding "harm to dignity, and to bodily and material well-being." They also will learn the value of thinking and acting innovatively to find and implement solutions to cultural problems.

The new principle could easily serve in an umbrella or overarching role for all of the other principles. Do Some Good should apply broadly to all the AAA principles. In addition, problem solving with the intent to Do Some Good has the potential to inspire *all* anthropologists. It is already the case that academic anthropologists Do Some Good by educating their

students, introducing them to professional conferences, and mentoring them through the grant writing and publication processes. The orientation to Do Some Good can and should be expanded. We ask how might our proposed solution be put into practice? How might anthropology take on more of the attributes of a profession that is outwardly focused without losing sight of its knowledge-generation, testing, and documentation functions?

We suggest increased bridge building between practice and academia, which can take a variety of forms. Certainly practitioner participation in academia via guest lectures or mentoring, and within the AAA through serving on committees and task forces, is a key component. Such participation raises awareness of anthropology's diversity and provides the potential for future contact. Bridge building also can enhance collegiality and understanding, and lead to joint collaborations. Practitioners could consider the following:

- Inviting an academically-based anthropologist to shadow you for a day, assuming various permissions have been satisfied
- Organizing AAA workshops for academics on cutting-edge issues for practitioners
- Seeking an academic partner to participate in a practice-oriented project
- Initiating and co-authoring a journal article with an academic partner.

Academic anthropologists might consider the following:

- Using the classroom to explore ethical issues faced by practitioners with a practitioner present to guide the discussion
- Creating an alumni network to benefit student learning and the job search
- Soliciting funds for practitioners to visit campus, give talks, and advise students.

Such strategies will help reduce the parochialism that continues to exist within the discipline about practitioner work and its value – in itself an ethical problem – as we have described here. Such strategies will help strengthen collaboration between those anthropologists whose primary role is teaching and research, and those anthropologists who are employed as practitioners in the wider world of work. Such strategies have the potential to lead to problem solving on various anthropological initiatives, projects, or cooperative efforts, and therefore to Do Some Good for the broader community. We strongly believe that if these approaches are adopted, anthropology has a chance to adapt to changing circumstances, remain relevant, and unify the field for the greater good.

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