International Journal of Business Anthropology, Volume 6 (2)

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Edited by

Gang Chen

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

STATEMENT OF INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF BUSINESS ANTHROPOLOGY

The International Journal of Business Anthropology (IJBA), is a double blinded peer reviewed journal, focusing upon business anthropology supported by the College of Sociology and Anthropology, Sun Yat-Sen University; School of History and Culture, Jishou University; the Institute of Business Anthropology, Shantou University; Center for Social and Economic Behavior Studies, Yunnan University of Finance and Economics, China, which was originally published by the North American Business Press (NABP) biannually and is currently published by Cambridge Scholars Publishing starting from Vol. 6 (1).

Given the rapid growth of business anthropology，a journal dedicated to the field is much needed. Business anthropology uses qualitative and ethnographic methods as an alternative to more formal methodologies. Specific tools include participant observation, informal and structured interviews, and other "naturalistic", informal, and face-to-face methods of investigation. Business anthropologists play a key role in developing culturally sensitive policies and strategies in a world increasingly typified by cross-cultural contacts.

The journal seeks articles by anthropologically-oriented scholars and practitioners. Regionally-focused contributions are welcome, especially when their findings can be generalized. We encourage the dialogues between the findings or theories generated from the field of business anthropology and the theories of general anthropology. Topics of interest include, but are not limited to, general business anthropology theories and methods, management, marketing, consumer behavior, product design and development, knowledge management and competitive intelligence, human resources management, international business, etc.

The objectives of IJBA are:

- Generate an exchange of ideas between scholars, practitioners and industry specialists in the field of applied and business anthropology
- Encourage bridge-building between the practitioner and the academic world

- Provide a vehicle of communication for anthropologists working within the practitioner world
- Provide a forum for work concerned with qualitative business analysis inspired by anthropological theory and methods

Call for Papers

We are always looking for good manuscripts! We encourage practitioners, students, community members, and faculty from all disciplines to submit articles. The editors and one or more anonymous peer reviewers will review the manuscript prior to its acceptance for publication. In addition to research and academic articles, we feature case studies, commentaries and reviews. Please send manuscripts, news notes and correspondence to: Dr. Gang Chen, Executive Editor, via e-mail at jamesgchen1963@yahoo.com; jamesgchen@qq.com, or to Dr. Robert Guang Tian, Editor-in-Chief, at rtian@stu.cn, or ijba@cambridge scholars.com.

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Anthropology and Business Management-Tool to Attain Competitive Advantage

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The recent past has witnessed a trajectory in terms of growth of anthropology as a discipline along with its application in various fields. One of the most talked about fields of applied anthropology is anthropology in business or business anthropology. The world has recognised that business is not just an economic activity but an activity which has a human angle hence neo-classical principles have replaced the classical thought. More and more organizations are embracing research to understand the people side of business. For this, anthropologists are being hired to investigate vital processes such as organization policies, design, culture, leadership, consumer behavior, and so on. The present article discusses the concept and meaning of this newly-arrived discipline of anthropology, followed by its contribution to business in the present century. Further, it also elaborates the relevance of business anthropology, the practical issues faced in its implementation, and its emerging fields.

Keywords: business anthropology**,** culture, research methods, observations, ethnography, management

Introduction

Business anthropology refers to the implementation of ideas and techniques from the field of applied anthropology to attain the objectives of primarily those businesses that are run for profit and attain competitive advantage. The present business world is not just characterized by profitability but also sustainability. Anthropological principles not only help businesses achieve higher profits but also sustain them in the long run. Business anthropology is further defined as a practically-oriented scholastic field in which anthropological theories and methods are applied to identify and solve real business problems. In other words, the foremost objective of anthropology is to resolve operational and organizational glitches. The term became popular in the late nineteenth century, when it was applied to areas such as consumer behavior and marketing. The past three decades have witnessed a spurt in the growth of the field and its application to a plethora of contexts in business. Hence, the term "business anthropology" is used generically to refer to any application of anthropology to business management. Changes in the global business, such as technological advances and integration, have not only altered the way business is steered but also modified the way people perceive business and business activities. All these have led to tremendous competition, hence business leaders today need to re-examine the various offerings, such as products and services, how they are offered, who are the new collaborators to deliver new products and services, and so on. To cater to the multifaceted, ever-changing customer requirements and to attract new customer groups, there is a dire need to diversify the product line and that, too, at a fast pace. Many companies, such as Proctor and Gamble and Hindustan Unilever, have increased their product offerings by diversifying in varied product categories and anticipating future customer demand.

More specifically, business anthropology entails helping organizations manage demographic disparities like cultural and ethnic uniqueness. In some cases, business anthropologists act as an interface between the management and the workforce (Reice, 1993). Anthropology as a discipline can also contribute towards promoting *best practices* which are ethical and are framed keeping in mind the interest of the consumer and society at large.

The significance of anthropology has increased manifold as it is being used in varied fields, such as business consulting, organizational behavior, human resources management, competitive intelligence, globalization, product design and development, marketing, and consumer behavior studies (Baba, 2006; Jordan, 2010; Tian, Van Marrewjik and Lillis, 2013). Jordan (2010) proposed that business anthropology is of three types, namely: 1)

organizational anthropology (the analysis of multifaceted organizations including their cultures, work processes, and change directives); 2) anthropology of marketing and consumer behavior; and 3) design anthropology (product and services design). There have been two other fields added recently, namely anthropology of competitive intelligence and knowledge management and international and cross-cultural business (Tian and Lillis, 2009; Ferraro, 1998). Although business anthropology is like any other applied field of anthropology, there is a fundamental difference based on the methods used. Gwynne (2003) advocated that the distinction between business anthropology and the other subfields is based on the techniques and procedures used. This is because the investigations made by the business anthropologists basically revolve around attempts to help organizations derive profits. All this leads to openness of results, publishing of actual findings, and ethical considerations. There are innumerable contributions that anthropology can make to business and its role in the present century is even more noteworthy.

Business Anthropology in the 21st Century

The functions and roles of business anthropology are highly extensive and have expanded with time. Anthropological interventions are not only into traditional, macro-management functions such as marketing, human resource, operations, etc., but also into specialized or micro-functions such as advertising, consumer behavior, sales promotion, product design, and so on. Business anthropologists study all the business arenas such as marketing, operations, organizational culture, human resource management, international business, and so on (Tian, Van Marrewjik and Lillis, 2013). At some places, it solves multifarious business problems such as acceptance of new technical tools, methods, and processes by reluctant workers, creating an organizational culture incorporating people from distinctive ethnic, educational, religious, and cultural backgrounds (Schwartz, 1991). In other instances, it contributes to the business in an inimitable way (Jordan, 2010). The primary role of the business anthropologists is thus to investigate the causes of these real-life problems and suggest feasible solutions for the same. The primary distinction between business anthropology and the other sub-fields of anthropology is that business anthropology looks at organizations not only as economic entities but also congregations of people similar in certain aspects. The area of concern for the business anthropologists is the formal face of corporate culture along with the informal one (Garza, 1991). In other

words, they look at not just what meets the naked eye, but also at what goes on behind the scenes.

The methods used for research in business anthropology incorporate qualitative and ethnographic methods to inspect organizational phenomena, unlike the more formal methodologies. Other tools which are specific to anthropology in organizations include participant observation, informal and structured interviews, and other "realistic", informal, and face-to-face methods of inquiry. The contribution of anthropologists is immense, but more specifically, the business anthropologists help the corporations by developing methods of doing business which are culture appropriate.

The business arena is an amalgamation of various real life-problems and the anthropologists examine the human side of business. Hence, they attempt to answer questions connected to human resources, such as: Why do people do what they do? What is their intent while doing so? Some other generic issues which business anthropologists look at are: Who are the leaders and who are the followers in the business? How many diverse clusters of people exist in the business? What are the commonalities in terms of value systems, beliefs, and attitudes inside the business? How does the political hierarchy work? How do the dynamics of authority and responsibility work? How is information disseminated among the group members? What is the flow of information and communication among the members of the group? What are the reasons for clashes among group members and among groups, and how are these fixed?

Business anthropology thus helps the organizations evolve culturally sensitive policies and strategies in a business realm which is characterized by cross-cultural contacts (Jordan, 2003; Ybema et al., 2009). Aguilera (1996) says that although the field is expanding rapidly, there is still a high degree of resistance in embracing the anthropological theories as it is difficult to comprehend the direct effect and implication of the anthropological investigations on the business function.

Significance of Business Anthropology in Contemporary Business

Business anthropology has been used increasingly in different industries to investigate a wide variety of real-time business problems. For example, anthropology has been used in the consumer goods industry where technological advancement has stimulated rapid growth. The changing business scenario puts across many challenges, such as integrating the fragmented consumer markets to fit them to the emerging business models.

This in turn requires novelty in the existing products and services to satisfy the ever-changing customer requirements. The scenario requires increased interaction between the producers and the end consumer—anthropologists have a major role to play in such situations (Tian, 2005; Tian and Walle, 2009).

Another example of the application of business anthropology is a quantitative survey that was conducted by Robert Tian, Dan Trotter, and Linlin Zhang (2014) through anthropological techniques (such as participant observation and in-depth interviews) to investigate the quality of food service operations at a Chinese university. According to the researchers, the utility of anthropological investigation in such a case is because the quality of food service has a great impact on the satisfaction level of the students, who are the customers. Hence, they recommended the inclusion of this parameter in the overall evaluation of the universities to in turn enhance the quality of food services rendered. The anthropological intervention therefore helped gauge the importance of consumer behavior and what factors affect the level of consumer satisfaction.

Business giants such as Google and Proctor and Gamble have realized the importance of anthropology to promote their products and services in new markets and capture new customers. Google uses the ethnographic method to cognize the needs of the consumers, which includes capturing video of people searching on the web. An example of this in the Chinese context is of people of China who were having a tough time searching and getting optimum results owing to the language barrier. This led Google to make "Google Suggest", which would initiate pop-up search suggestions so that users could take a cue while typing. The "Did You Mean?" service is an example of this. As a result of their offerings, they got appreciation from their users. These innovations were a result of Google's consumer observation, understanding, and insight gathering methods, which are nothing but anthropological techniques.

Proctor and Gamble used similar techniques to counter many product failures in the 1980s. The detergent it launched for the lower income group was a failure. So it started the "Living It" program, also known as "Immersion Research", to understand the aspirations, desires, and needs of the particular customer segment. This led to gathering of the consumer or partner insight into the not-so-evident but crucial needs of consumers. The executives realized that customers, who mainly comprised manual labor, were very sensitive to perspiration odors, and obtained satisfaction in cleaning their clothes by seeing their detergent foam—the feature which the new detergents lacked. Hence, customer observation through live-in

immersion or video observation is a vital tool used by organizations these days.

Julian Orr (1995) applied anthropology in a business setting when he tried to understand culturally constructed meanings and their associations with work practices among the repair technicians at Xerox. The researcher wanted to study how they were able to repair models of copiers without having the formal training or expertise to do so. He was exposed to the fact that the technicians circulated technical repair information by trading work "war stories". They resolved tricky issues by connecting the stories they had learnt of their colleagues' procedures to progress in their own circumstances. The researcher suggested to the company it capitalize the source of knowledge and the company equipped all the technicians with radio-phones to make communication between them easier. Orr also found out that customers were the source of knowledge about the working of the machines, and the technicians were the source of knowledge on customers, in addition to their core area. Hence, the employee was a knowledge worker.

Bennett (1996) rightly points out that applied forms of anthropology, in this case business anthropology, "translate cultural relativism into conservation of local ways and adaptations to make sure that change is not overly punishing or that any induced change has a beneficial effect". Although business anthropology has an application in a plethora of areas of business, there are still many practical issues to be resolved, which one encounters only when actual research is conducted. The following section details the contingencies faced by the anthropologists while implementing the anthropological principles to business problems.

Emerging Issues in Business Anthropology Research

Since anthropology aims to solve human issues, there are many areas of concern during actual implementation when using anthropological methodology and tools of research and data retrieval. The anthropologists also work as professional consultants to solve actual world glitches and matters. This incorporates the application of the study of human culture, behavior, language, and biology. The basic tools used for any business anthropology research are observation, ethnography, in-depth interviews, and so on. These aid the organizations or businesses in understanding the "other", which could be an individual or a group of people different from the observer. Further, they help to accrue comparisons, differences, and evolutionary facts to gain an all-inclusive outlook on a diverse way of human life.

One of the most important practical issues faced in any kind of business anthropology research is related to the depth of involvement of the anthropologists in the issue. Anthropological data is susceptible to contagion by probable integration of the social scientists into the culture they are studying, which might dilute the actual data collected from the field. Another potential issue a business anthropologist is likely to face is that the focus of the research often revolves around the desired outcome, which can make the data undependable. This happens because of client pressure to prove the effect of a product or service on a group of people. To ensure the validity of data, the anthropologist should learn the art of harmonizing the interests of the client and the group under study, which may be conflicting at times. A very evident example of such a situation of conflicting interests of the client and the group needs was Japanese internment camps (in the US) during World War II. Here the anthropologists' research was not conducted very scientifically and was done more for the government's security demands. This resulted in many Japanese Americans losing their homes, propriety, and dignity through the applied anthropologists' advice on how best to help the country protect itself from Japanese spies during the war. The government and American society's stigmatizing of the enemy caused a lack of cultural understanding to be applied that might have otherwise helped all the parties involved and prevented the establishment of the Japanese internment. Such acts reflected poorly on the field and on the credibility of the reports (Embree, 1945).

Yet another practical issue concerning the field arises because of lack of a theoretical foundation of its own as a discipline. This poses a threat to the field as an academic discipline. This issue has also led to less attention being given to business anthropology. Ethics is one of the issues which business anthropology struggles to address. The client-subject interaction and responsibility often place a business anthropologist in an ethical dilemma. This ethical contradiction is left to the anthropologist to sort out. As a consequence, the business anthropologists avoid taking up any kind of assignment which places them in situations of ethical quandary. The responsibility of the employer of an anthropologist is to provide considerable independence, allowing the anthropologist to criticize a boss or the company and to defend study groups against negative consequences (Bennett 1996).

Recommendations

The field of anthropology has been expanding at a great pace, and more and more organizations have started accepting anthropological principles as possible remedies for many of their hurdles. But at the same time, it is important to take into consideration certain aspects which accompany any kind of implementation of anthropological concepts to real business issues. While anthropology is applicable to many issues and contexts, it cannot provide a solution to the entire range of business problems. Hence, researchers and implementers need to gauge the relevance of an anthropological principle to the business context and then expend it. If applied otherwise, the results derived could be misleading and distorted. Moreover, it is important to customise according to the requirements of the customers or clients (Sigamani and Malhotra, 2013). If the organization fails to customize the methodology to suit the requirement of the consumer, the intervention could be a complete waste.

Secondly, since this is an evolving field of study and operation, the best practices need to be documented so that they can be used in similar business situations. This would help in conserving a lot of time which goes into undertaking full-fledged research. Thirdly, the role of anthropology in business has multiplied much faster than estimated. These developments need to be considered in business management courses. Gremler et. al., 2000, say that business management courses are generally designed to be quantitative in nature, with qualitative methods accorded much less importance. But, currently, anthropological methods such as participated observation, ethnography, etc., have been applied to many sub-disciplines of management, such as consumer behavior, marketing, human resource management studies, advertisement management, and so on.

More research should be conducted in the area so that it benefits the businesses and community as a whole. The major benefit of anthropology is that it answers the questions about consumers and consumption behaviour to make products and services more suitable. Further, it also helps gain understanding of the social groups in the society, and the employee behavior, perception, attitude, and values in organizations. This helps to enhance the quality of life in society and the performance and efficiency in organizations. Finally, academia and practitioners need to integrate their efforts in this direction to accrue the benefits of anthropological research and findings and help benefit all the players of the global society.

Summary and Conclusion

The increasing complexity of the global economy has led to the unification of diverse cultures of the world, and the business practices which were locale specific are global in nature today. This has given rise to an incessant need to understand people better in the context of business. Anthropology studies society as a unit of individuals and as groups of individuals, and answers questions of societal concern often left unanswered by other disciplines. Business anthropology appears to be one tool which has come to the rescue of the organizations to help them come to terms with human beings and their intricacies. Applying anthropological principles to business is bound to help organizations achieve sustained competence and efficacy. Application of anthropological principles to real life contexts, in this case business, may not have been completely recognized by academia, but applying them would definitely lead them to more chances of success. The present article looks at the issues involved in the anthropological research in the business arena. It discusses the contribution of anthropology to the different areas of management and illustrates how it helps in solving the different issues of business.

Business anthropology has been expanding, and research is being conducted in numerous countries with several organizations. It can be used for different business needs and can contribute a lot to the real business scenario. Anthropologists have been working outside academia in organizations, consulting firms, design studios, and marketing agencies. Some of the areas that business anthropologists have forged into are corporate cultures, knowledge management, cultural audit, organizational change, product design and development, marketing, consumer behavior, and international business studies, and these are ever-increasing. Business anthropologists can also offer their support to areas such as competitive intelligence, international business, human resources management, and operations. Many countries such as China, Japan, Australia, Central America, and those in Europe are sponsoring anthropologists to work on issues in the organizations, in the designs, and in consumer behaviors. Business anthropology is a global field and associations with researchers around the world can fortify this area of research and practice. There has been rising international interest in business anthropology through research, student training, and consulting. To summarise, business anthropologists have the potential to make instrumental contributions to the existing business world, and it would be realistic to anticipate business anthropology as one of the most demanded disciplines in the world in the near future.

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Business Anthropology, Anomie, and Dysfunction: Transcending the Tyranny of the Majority

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The impact of economic development upon ethnic and cultural diversity is discussed with reference to the concept of anomie in which socially acceptable goals can no longer be achieved in socially acceptable ways. Specific responses to anomie are explored with reference to the "tyranny of the majority", in which people's needs are denied after being outvoted. Strategies such as the "concurrent majority" can help the ethnic minorities protect their rights and heritage. Business anthropologists have an important role in this regard.

Introduction

Many business leaders embrace the simplistic view that worldwide cultural uniformity is inevitable. In reality, of course, great diversity exists, and this variation is a positive asset. Nevertheless, rapid social and economic changes (some of them encouraged by business and/or fuelled by the pressures associated with it) challenge and stress the ethnic and minority groups.

Facing such circumstances, social equity and self-determinism is often sought. Opponents of such initiatives, in contrast, advocate some sort of universal standards: this is the popular "global" orientation so influential in business today. Others find this universal/global paradigm to be hurtful and wrongheaded. The discussion here contributes to a dialogue regarding how disagreements such as these can be resolved.

Change, Stress, and Pain

Cultural enclaves are often adversely affected by cultural, social, economic, and/or technological changes. Being asked to adhere to alien traditions can be especially painful. In other words, "minorities" (envisioned broadly as those lacking power and control) often suffer due to contact with powerful forces that seek compliance to their standards. Subjected to such conditions, people often exhibit hurtful dysfunction.

Discussing these pressures on an individual basis from within the mainstream world, Appelberg, Romanov, Honkasalo, and Koskenvuo (1996) report that people who experienced a significant conflict at work during the previous 5 years were more likely to be diagnosed with a psychiatric problem than those who did not. Apparently, significant stress in dealings with other people can result in detrimental and hurtful ramifications.

The average person who experiences difficulties at work, however, is still a member of a viable and intact culture or society. Presumably, the cultural and social support available to these individuals continues and, in the process, provides comfort and balance even when these people experience hardships on the job. When away from work, furthermore, such sufferers enjoy a respite from their adverse vocational experiences by participating in the larger community, but even when this comfort is available, there is an increase in mental illness and its pain. This situation promotes dysfunction.

The relative comfort provided by cultural stability can be juxtaposed with the opposite situation where the entire culture, heritage, and traditions of a people are attacked, weakened, rendered passé, or even destroyed. These people are likely to be more vulnerable to adverse psychological responses than those who merely suffer from "on the job" pressures.

For many years, advocates for ethnic groups have understood that change has hurtful potential that need to be proactively addressed. The necessity to do so is particularly important when a people's way of life has been quickly transformed, weakened, or destroyed by some unanticipated, uncontrolled, and/or unmitigated onslaught. The agendas or actions of some "majority" (however defined) are typical catalysts for maladies of this sort.

Consider the case of Ishi, the lone survivor of a California (USA) tribe, who was dubbed the "Last Savage" by the media and became a tourist attraction as well as the subject of anthropological research in the early twentieth century (Kroeber, 1964). Many Native American thinkers point to the treatment of Ishi as a classic example of oppressive exploitation in

which outsiders first destroyed the man's way of life and then turned him into a commodity for tourists to gawk at. Although such conclusions are understandable, the story and message of Ishi is much more complex than that. It is chronicled by Theodora Krober in her book *Ishi*: *The Last of his Tribe* (1964), which explores the relationship between her husband (anthropologist Alfred Louis Kroeber) and Ishi as each comforted the other.

Theodora observes that around the time that Ishi stumbled into the modern world, starving and alone, Kroeber had suffered his own grievous loss. His first wife had died before her time and, as a result, Kroeber was thrown into a profound and disabling depression. Possessing great knowledge of the indigenous people of California, however, Kroeber was asked to help calm this unruly "wild man" who had unexpectedly appeared. Kroeber found a grief-stricken soul who had lost everything, not just a wife. Ishi's world was completely gone and everyone and everything that was important to him was dead. Nothing remained. Ultimately, Kroeber realized that suffering over a lost wife was relatively insignificant when compared to the agony of a victim whose entire social universe had quickly and irreversibly become extinct. In the process of helping Ishi adjust and cope, the grieving widower learned to deal with his own pain. Both men found salvation by helping each other.

The point of these observations is that Kroeber came to recognize the profound suffering people feel when their heritage is stripped away. Although Ishi provides an extreme example of such anguish, this type of cultural and social loss is very common among ethnic groups who are confronted by the mainstream world or other powerful forces beyond their control. The business community needs to recognize this pain as well as the potential for dysfunction that stems from it. Business anthropologists can be more effective by being aware of the ramifications of cultural decline or destruction. Our profession can also develop methods and perspectives that help preserve the cultures that are experiencing economic transitions as well as mitigate the negative aspects of change and loss.

A classic discussion regarding the discomfort triggered by change is presented by G.N. Appell, who observes that a strong and robust cultural heritage can help people cope with the impacts of traumatic change. Appell reminds us that "A society undergoing change...has a right to access its cultural traditions, its language and its social history" (Appell, 1977:14), because these cultural assets can help temper the pain and disorientation caused by what he calls the social separation syndrome, which "involves role conflict and ambiguity, threat to one's self esteem, and an impaired social identity".

Discussing this social and psychological threat, Appell (1977:14) continues, "Social bereavement arising from social change seems to follow a developmental sequence similar to personal bereavement...There is first a period of denial as numbness accompanied by anxiety, fear, and feelings of threat to one's identity. This is succeeded by a phase of frustrated searching for the lost world or individual, hoping for a reversal and then bitter pining and unrelieved sense of pain…Following this is a period of depression and apathy...Finally there is the phase of reorganization when the bereaved begins to build new plans and assumptions about the world."

Some of the details of Appell's vintage observations might be dated or metaphoric, but the gist of his message continues to resonate clearly. Cultures are powerful coping devices that provide grounding, practical tools, comfort, and a sense of identity. They offer solutions to the problems that people face as well as present suggestions regarding how to think, act, and respond. If these tools are undercut, rendered passé, or destroyed, a void can emerge causing people to lack the ability to live in a socially and psychologically healthy fashion. These perspectives are useful to business anthropologists who seek to help cultural enclaves respond to changes wrought by economic activities.

Although this vulnerability is real, it does not inevitably lead to cultural extinction. In a classic observation, for example, David Maybury-Lewis (1977:58) reminds us that "There is no natural or historic law that militates against small societies. There are only political choices." Thus, business anthropologists need to remember that the demise of ethnic groups is avoidable even if popular paradigms of cultural evolution and extinction reflect the world view (and perhaps the priorities) of many advocates of economic development, change, or conformity.

Anomie: the Disruption of Chang

Social scientists recognize that change can lead to pain that triggers hurtful dysfunction. In the late nineteenth century, Emil Durkheim, for example, demonstrated how unhappiness and despair that is correlated with social displacements can lead to a growing suicide rate (Durkheim, 1893). Durkheim explained this relationship with reference to what he called "anomie", which refers to tensions and alienation triggered by significant disruptions or alterations in the daily life that people experience. Durkheim clearly recognized that unmitigated social change can produce dysfunctional, harmful, and counterproductive behavior.

Durkheim envisioned anomie as an inconsistency between (1) the prevailing social standards and/or acceptable behavior, and (2) the realities

that actually exist. When the inconsistency between the two is great, the rules of society begin to deteriorate or break down, creating a chaotic and unpredictable environment capable of launching alienation, sorrow, a feeling of hopelessness, and hurtful responses.

In the 1940s and 1950s, Robert Merton (1957) expanded Durkheim's concept of anomie, arguing that the norms of society provide individuals with (1) goals to which they should aspire, on the one hand, and (2) conventional methods for achieving these objectives, on the other. Merton understood that over time the social structure (or the socio-economic milieu in which a community exists) may change to such a degree that its members are no longer able to attain sanctioned and honored achievements in the traditionally acceptable manner. Under such conditions, the predisposition for deviant and/or dysfunctional behavior tends to increase.

Social and economic development projects or initiatives involving ethnic groups can easily create conditions that give rise to anomie. The ways in which people respond under these conditions, however, vary with some alternatives being more productive and positive than others. Merton provides a typology of responses to anomie that includes (1) conformity, (2) innovation, (3) ritualization, (4) retreatism, and (5) rebellion (Merton, 1957). They can be described as:

Conformity: A situation in which people continue to embrace the goals of their society and seek to achieve them in traditional socially acceptable ways. Conformers continue to respond in the manner they did before the pressures causing anomie were present. Conformity is a conservative response and it preserves the traditional relationships between people. Conformity, however, can inhibit the ability to adjust to new conditions.

Innovation: A situation where people embrace the goals of the society but attempt to achieve them using new methods that might not be socially acceptable. Mainstream sociologists often characterize these methods as illegal and antisocial. Among ethnic groups, however, innovation might include responses that, while violating traditional norms or expectations, result in productive and moral adaptation. If so, embracing productive, but taboo behaviors as legitimate methods for achieving socially acceptable goals might be a positive response that benefits the society.

Ritualization: A situation where people act according to the norms of the society but lose track of the goals to be achieved. In this case, people begin to act in a rote manner using tradition as a guide with little focus on the costs versus the benefits of doing so. This type of response is not

strategic and is not likely to be productive. When people follow the old way merely as an end in itself, the ability to respond in a productive and beneficial manner is reduced.

*Retreatism***:** A situation where people reject both the cultural goals and the institutionalized methods for achieving them. Although people might reject the status quo, they do not necessarily embrace any positive or beneficial alternative. The potential for dysfunctional responses, such as alcohol abuse, increases. While under the influence of alcohol or drugs, for example, the victim might be temporarily distracted from the plight faced but will fail to respond in an effective manner.

*Rebellion***:** A situation where people (1) reject both the goals that the society provides and the traditional means of achieving them while (2) simultaneously embracing substitutes that take their place. Under such circumstances, the break with the old ways is profound and complete. Massive changes in thoughts and attitudes take place when the old ways are discarded and new alternatives embraced. This might result in chaos. Different factions might arise in conflict with one another. The situation, created by widespread rebellion, can be particularly painful to those who hold on to tradition and/or fear change.

Anomie, therefore, can spawn a range of responses that are related to how individuals and the community deal with the pressures faced. These alternatives are compared in Table 1.

In conclusion, the concept of anomie deals with the tensions caused by social change. Business anthropologists can use this model to better understand the variety of ways in which people cope with the disruptive pressures facing them. In recent decades, various refinements, such as strain theory, have been developed that focus upon how and why people respond to stress. Although such theories are often used to depict criminal and antisocial behavior and its causes, the same approach can be used to examine any significant change in behavior, good or bad, that people exhibit. On many occasions, reactions to anomie are disruptive and painful. Other responses may be positive. By understanding this range of reactions, business anthropologists, strategists, and policy makers can recognize significant side effects of cultural contact and change as well as realize how to most effectively deal with them.

Table 1: *Responses to Anomie*

RESPONSE	DESCRIPTION	ANALYSIS
Conformity	The traditions of the culture are preserved. People and the community continue to be motivated and act as in the past.	The community along with its culture is stable, but strategically responding to circumstances is minimal. Little positive adaptation.
Innovation	Although the goals of the society remain intact, people embrace new methods of achieving them.	Although the goals of the community are maintained, the means of achieving them evolve to reflect the new circumstances.
Ritualization	People continue to act according to the old conventions of behavior, although doing so has little ad hoc value.	Although the ways of the past continue to be embraced, strategically responding to the new conditions is insignificant.
Retreatism	People withdraw and abandon the old ways, but do not embrace a new alternative.	Psychologically, people are cut off from their heritage. Dysfunctional responses are likely.
Rebellion	New goals and new codes of behavior are embraced.	People replace both the traditional goals and the strategies used to achieve them.
DISCUSSION When people experience change and anomie, a number of different responses are possible. By being aware of this variety, business anthropologists can more effectively understand the impacts and implications of specific examples of economic development as well as how to effectively deal with them.		

Representative Examples of Dysfunction

On some occasions, unmitigated change and stress can cause people to exhibit rather bizarre beliefs and actions. Three such examples are the Ghost Dance (Mooney, 1896; Kehoe, 1989), the cargo cult (Harris, 1974; Inglis, 1957; Worsley, 1957), and the Cultural Revolution in China. Each is a case study of the problems that can arise when cultures adapt.

The Ghost Dance was an influential late nineteenth-century religious movement among Native Americans. Its most prominent leader was a visionary named Wovoka who intertwined the aspects of local traditions with a new religion. Some of Wovoka's recommendations asked the people to live in a more productive, moral, and harmonious manner. These suggestions were positive and productive aspects of the movement.

Others beliefs, however, were counterproductive and hurtful. Wovoka, for example, taught that if a certain dance was properly performed, the dead ancestors would come back to life, herds of buffalo would return, the white intruders would go away, and the old way of life would be restored. None of these projections, unfortunately, reflected reality. Acting according to them proved to be tragically counterproductive.

Some devotees were even convinced that if they wore "ghost shirts", they could not be killed by the guns of the white man and, therefore, victory was assured. The emerging Ghost Dance and the hope it provided appealed to many indigenous people who had suffered grievously due to reservation life, sickness, cultural decline, and governmental policies that sought to undercut the local Native American heritage. Sadly, the Ghost Dance activities led to the massacre at Wounded Knee, the last major bloodbath of the Indian Wars.

Viewed from the perspective of anomie, the Ghost Dance can be viewed as an example of conformity in which the traditions of the culture were largely preserved and embraced, albeit in an unproductive manner. People were encouraged to look to the past, ignore the reality, reject the new order of things, and act accordingly. Unfortunately, by doing so, the actual circumstances being faced were not addressed in any meaningful manner. The result was disastrous.

The cargo cult, usually associated with Melanesia, involved people whose lives were hurtfully transformed and disrupted by social and economic change associated with outside businesses during the early twentieth century. Apparently, these reactions to the circumstances were attempts by indigenous people to reassert control over their lives in a world that was being irrevocably changed in ways that undermined the old economic system and way of life, leaving the local people in a precarious and bewildering situation.

The responses to these hurtful circumstances are well known. When the outside businesses began to gain a foothold in Melanesia, members of the indigenous community noticed that these powerful outsiders built airports and harbors and then waited for airplanes and ships to arrive with great wealth. Apparently, the local people, becoming desperate and jealous, wanted their share of the cargo. One ploy they used was to build

phony airports in the misguided belief that by doing so they could magically attract their own supernatural airplanes and gain affluence as a result.

Although such responses are typically associated with some charismatic leader, a common explanation is that these cargo cults were responses to sorrow, fear, and anxiety caused by rapid and uncontrolled change. Although such strategies might be associated with ignorance and superstition coupled with a lack of familiarity with modern economics and technology, the most important catalysts seem to have been desperation, hopelessness, and disappointment.

Viewed from the perspective of anomie, the cargo cults appear as innovative and/or rebellious responses to anomie. Devotees of the cult, for example, embraced new ways to achieve goals (luring cargo carrying planes by building bogus airports) even though other aspects of their society probably remained intact. This behavior might also be reflective of rebellion in which new goals (a desire for western goods) were accompanied with new economic strategies (luring cargo planes). In any event, a major adjustment (although counterproductive) took place. It was precipitated by profound tensions in the culture and economy caused by rapid outside contact.

Such reactions do not just occur among small-scale cultures made up of undereducated people. Consider the Cultural Revolution in China during the 1960s and 1970s when militants, encouraged by Chairman Mao, rejected and attempted to destroy the rich cultural heritage of the Orient. This movement (Lee, 1978; King, 2010) sought to eliminate the remnants of Western business practices as well as the aspects of Chinese civilization that were considered to be old fashioned and holding China back from progress. This reaction appears to have been triggered by the social and economic troubles that China was experiencing during that era.

As a political movement, various purges eliminated the leaders who were considered to be too connected with the bourgeois. Culturally, many Chinese, especially the young, lashed out against China's rich heritage. Millions of people were harassed, shamed, and punished because they were identified with the Chinese civilization or its traditions and knowledge. Intellectuals, teachers, writers, and cultural leaders found themselves under attack.

Innumerable relics from China's impressive historic legacy were destroyed or mutilated. Thus, when I visited the tomb of Confucius a few years ago, I discovered that his grave marker had been badly damaged during the excesses of that era. Today, of course, repairs have been made and the Chinese people (and the rest of the world) hold Confucius in the

highest of esteem. During that period, however, anyone who was identified with the past, even world famous philosophers, became vulnerable.

Archaeological remains, archives, art works, and artifacts were destroyed in a massive wave of devastation. The Cultural Revolution is thus an example of people strongly rejecting their culture and all it stood for. According to the theory of anomie, this can be viewed as an example of how people reacted when they could not achieve socially acceptable goals in a socially acceptable manner. It took the form of rebellion in which the old ways were rejected and replaced with alternatives that were distinctive and dissimilar from the past. Although this movement was the work of overenthusiastic zealots (and not actually officially condoned by the government), the destruction was profound and seemed to be a spontaneous reaction, similar in some ways to the Ghost Dance and the cargo cults. All three were encouraged by charismatic leaders but rooted in a feeling of hopelessness and a grassroots demand for profound change triggered by troubled times.

The Chinese Cultural Revolution is now recognized as a disaster by the Chinese as well as the rest of the world. Today in the Middle East, unfortunately, some forces have begun to attack the rich cultural legacy of the region by destroying archaeological ruins, monuments, and the artistic achievements of the past. Although these events are unique and distinctive in some ways, they also seem to be emotional responses triggered by the heat of the moment and not careful thought. Like the Chinese Cultural Revolution, they are tragic examples of the wanton destruction of an irreplaceable heritage. Business anthropologists need to be aware of the possibility that reactions and responses of this type can occur in many different settings.

These examples demonstrate that a strong potential exists for people to make poor decisions when they are faced with hurtful disruptions in their way of life. The theory of anomie can be used to model these changes. With this in mind, the Ghost Dance, the cargo cult, and the Cultural Revolution are compared in Table 2.

The Ghost Dance, the cargo cult, and the Chinese Cultural Revolution point to the damaging and ineffective methods of addressing social and economic change. They demonstrate that when people are not prepared for the conditions they face, dysfunction is likely to occur. The opposite, however, is also true: some cultures and the people within them respond to the pressures faced in positive and constructive ways while simultaneously maintaining their unique cultural character and distinctiveness. The Iroquois Indians of New York State (USA) and Ontario (Canada) and the Yup'ik of Alaska (USA) are such examples.