pessimistic but scientifically astute thought was true. The only kind of advertising that reliably increased sales was price advertising. If you advertised the same product at a slightly lower price you would get all the sales, and it would happen almost immediately. No other form of advertising had such conclusive positive results. But that knowledge was useless. Because all you could do with it was lower the price and then everyone else would do the same thing and nothing would have been accomplished other than lowering your gross sales figures. More generally, Schudson's review showed that advertising never does much good of any kind. The example of Milton Hershey, who never spent a penny advertising his chocolate bars (which people in the ad business tried to hush up or ignore) showed the essential worthlessness of the whole enterprise.

What's more likely to be involved in buying research results from anthropologists (as from psychologists before them) is a search for ideas, no matter how goofy they are and without any concern for the kind of science they're based on. If a completely specious study gives me an idea for a new product or a new advertising slogan or marketing gimmick, I can take it from there, and test it out in my own way.

And that might be the opening for business anthropology, not providing scientific results business people can use the way they might use the results of chemical or biological research, but as a source of new ideas, most of which won't work. Still, maybe one will and that will be enough to make it all worthwhile.

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Dominic Boyer (Rice University)

I have two dominant associations with "business anthropology" as a field of knowledge. The first is a narrower definition: the mobilization of anthropological research techniques within and for the benefit of private sector companies. As Marietta Baba notes in a definitive historical overview of business anthropology (2006), anthropologists have worked with the private sector for as long as anthropology has existed as a professional field. And, anthropologists have performed "applied," organization-oriented research within businesses at least since Lloyd Warner's work with Western Electric in the 1930s. However, during the Cold War, anthropology's extra-academic engagements moved more in the direction of service to state or non-governmental development projects. As Baba notes, the 1971 AAA ethics code's prohibition of proprietary research symbolized how marginal applied private sector research had become (2006:13). The concept of "business anthropology"

an sich, then took shape in the 1980s as part of a reinvigorated engagement of anthropology with the private sector (see Jordan 2010:19).

There seem to have been both push and pull factors involved in anthropology's return to business. On the one hand, the 1980s marked the first phase of the widespread authorization of neoliberal dicta of society-as-market and individual-as-entrepreneur/consumer in various domains of expertise. It would be inaccurate to say that, on this basis, research in business settings (let alone research partnerships with businesses) suddenly gained a positive valuation in anthropology. More fairly, one might say that the mainstreaming of neoliberal attitudes in domains of expert and popular knowledge helped neutralize the negative valuation of business enough to allow for a more lively and legitimate subdisciplinary margin to emerge. The founding of the National Association for the Practice of Anthropology in 1984 to offer business practitioners and academic consultants space within the AAA surely symbolizes this partial re-opening of mainstream professional anthropology to business.

However, business moved toward anthropology as well. In the 1980s, corporations, especially those operating in information, communication and design fields, began to seek out anthropological methodological and conceptual expertise more actively. I cannot explain why this happened with great certainty. But my hunch is that the post-industrialization of northern economies in the 1980s placed a new premium on experimentation with less "tangible" modes of commoditization, such as semiosis (e.g., "branding") and user-experience. Suddenly, anthropological expertise in matters of semiotic and participant-observational analysis seemed plausibly advantageous. The most famous laboratory for such experiments was likely Xerox PARC (Palo Alto Research Center), especially Lucy Suchman's now legendary research on human-machine interfaces (1987). Her projects at PARC directly or indirectly inspired others in the emergent fields of participatory design, user experience and consumer behavior, notably Jeanette Blomberg, Melissa Cefkin, John Sherry and Rick E. Robinson, the last of whom went on to found E Lab LLC, the first "ethnographic design" firm in the early 1990s (see Wasson 2000). I was an occasional tourist to the E Lab offices for personal reasons and had several uncanny encounters with business anthropology in-the-making, for example when I wandered into one meeting room and saw a flow chart based on Bourdieuian practice theory as part of a client presentation or when Clifford Geertz was frequently invoked to backstop the firm's proprietary analytic model. My defensive, somewhat cynical view at the time was that E Lab was attempting to privatize a public good (anthropological theory). But the heart of E Lab's business model was actually more focused on

troubleshooting user-object interfaces. In their consulting, E Lab typically analyzed the epistemic, experiential and environmental factors determining user behavior and then advised how interfacing could be optimized. Indeed, although E Lab had already closed its doors by the time that the actants of Actor Network Theory started to make landfall in anthropology in the early 2000s, "ethnographic design" had, in many ways, a similar interest in exploring the interstices of agency and actancy (and indeed this perhaps explains the current resurgence of interest in Suchman's work as anthropological science and technology studies has mainstreamed). Although there is no doubt that many anthropologists still view business anthropology as ethically problematic, in its best moments it is capable of providing excellent reflexively attentive organizational ethnography. In an era when there have likely never been so many of us studying "cultures of expertise" inside and outside organizational environments, business anthropology appears to be an increasingly fertile area of research at the juncture of academic and corporate interests.

This brings me at last to my second, more open-ended association with "business anthropology," the one that is perhaps ultimately more in the spirit of Brian Moeran and Christina Garsten's vision for this journal. What I hope this journal will encourage is more anthropological exploration of the rise of "business" as a prominent form of life and imagination across the planet. I would distinguish that project from an analysis, for example, of the origins and consequences of neoliberal policy consensus and from the study of "neoliberalism" as an epistemic and cultural force in various parts of the world. "Business" certainly has done well in the neoliberal era but it existed before neoliberalism and will in all probability survive it. "Business," in my view of things, involves a field of linguistic registers in which Business English features prominently; it involves certain styles of dress and hexis, certain aesthetics of work, leisure and environments; it involves preferred modes of conviviality, relationality and sexuality; it involves certain experiences of time and space and always more motion; it involves media messages and an entire knowledge industry whose artifacts are featured prominently in spaces (airports, for example) designed to enable business; it involves, above all, intuitions, worldviews and principles of judgment. "Business" offers rich terrain for anthropological reflection and I find such reflection incredibly important since the global samenesses and variations of business exert profound influence on conditions of life and processes of social imagination across the world. Business recruits and organizes desires, promises futures, incites imitation and action. Regardless of the future of neoliberalism – I, for one, hope we are witnessing the decline of its monopoly on truth – the codes of "business," I feel confident, will continue to mutate and endure. "Business anthropology" will thus offer us

excellent red threads to the future and means for engaging the cultures of power.

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Ulf Hannerz (Stockholm University)

One of my early publications was perhaps an instance of business anthropology – an article on "Marginal Entrepreneurship and Economic Change in the Cayman Islands" (Hannerz 1973). It was a fairly serendipitous by-product of research on local politics, focusing on tourism and inspired, like so much of Scandinavian anthropology at the time, by Fredrik Barth and the "Bergen School" – its slim volume on *The Role of the Entrepreneur in Social Change in Northern Norway* (1963) was a sort of local classic, although its mode of publication probably meant that it did not reach a more dispersed anthropological public. Anyway, since then I cannot claim to have been actively involved in business anthropology, so what follows draws on what may be described as a view from afar. And is perhaps quite banal.

I think business anthropology should be an important part of anthropology – I see anthropology as a study of all human life, and business is in these times a central part of that. (There is an unfortunate tendency in some contemporary anthropology, I think, to retreat to quite marginal and/or trivial topics.) I also believe that in mapping its field of activity, one can perhaps learn something from earlier debates over emergent sub-disciplines in anthropology. One question may be about the direction of the flow of ideas and knowledge. When urban anthropology developed on a significant scale, in the 1970s or so, it seemed that the