

*Applied Anthropology: Domains of Application*¹

Edited by Satish Kedia² and John van Willigen³

Reviewed by Emilia Gonzalez-Clements⁴

I was pleased to find *Applied Anthropology: Domains of Application*, edited by one of the preeminent scholars of the discipline of applied anthropology, John van Willigen, who was my major professor at the University of Kentucky, and by Satish Kedia, who was my classmate there, now a professor and practitioner at the University of Memphis. I was eager to read their book and to evaluate its usefulness in training my applied anthropology interns.

The editors define applied anthropology as “the application of anthropological knowledge, methodology, and theoretical approaches to address societal problems and issues.” Their primary goal is to “discuss important domains of application in anthropology where knowledge, methodologies, and theories relevant to a particular setting for applied work are employed to connect research, policy, and action” (pp.1-2).

The book consists of a table of contents, acknowledgements, eleven chapters with bibliographies, an index and short biographical sketches of the editors and contributors in its 370 pages. An introductory chapter lists some of the many domains (settings) of application and summarizes the historical context, typical settings and roles, methodological approaches, and ethical issues of applied anthropology. The chapter introduces the nine domains described in the book, which include development, agriculture, environment, health and medicine, nutrition, involuntary resettlement, business and industry, education and aging. These were selected as the currently dominant sub-disciplines in applied anthropology.

All nine chapters, written by applied anthropologists prominent in their fields, follow a similar pattern: introduction, origins and history, anthropological contributions, theory and methods, project or career case studies, models, future directions and conclusions relevant to their particular domain. The past-present-and-future overview presents a thorough picture of each domain. The authors also include personal

experiences from their careers in the field.

A concluding chapter by the editors discusses emerging trends in applied anthropology, including demographic changes and resulting employment opportunities, adaptation to new work contexts, multidisciplinary collaboration, new alignments with study populations, and applied anthropology contributions to anthropology.

A major theme of the book is that applied anthropology has a long history of usefulness in helping understand how the cultures of the world see themselves, and helping solve societal problems. The book also demonstrates that the discipline learns and adapts, and that its value will only increase in a changing, complex world with persistent problems, such as poverty and inequality.

While I am familiar with applied anthropology in general, and my primary domain of application is *development*, I learned much from the nine discussions. I found the content both comprehensive and concise, and very useful as background information for a current initiative I am designing for sustainable mountain development in a group of small rural Mexican villages. Of particular interest to me were the chapters on development, agriculture, environment, and nutrition. I am largely unfamiliar with the latter three, but I will be supervising team members with expertise in those areas. The chapters gave me a good foundation for identifying the kind of training and experience needed by the practitioners I must find for the multidisciplinary team I am creating, as well as an understanding of their domains.

Practitioners whose work may involve them in domains outside their main areas of expertise will benefit from the book's chapters. I especially appreciate how each author gave the definitions of concepts mentioned in their writings. Students will find that the histories of the development of the sub-disciplines with case studies provide a good foundation for their own career-defining decisions. They will also find many

examples of commitment to respect, participation, and advocacy for the study of populations. This viewpoint is one of the main reasons my own students are drawn to a career in applied anthropology.

Although one author specifically describes the work of a non-academic applied anthropologist, most of the contributors work primarily in academic settings. Perhaps a non-academic would not want to readily write about the origins and theories of a domain, but it would be interesting to hear from applied anthropologists who are employed full-time outside the academy.

This well-organized book is straightforward and up-to-the minute. The similar pattern of content in the chapters made it easier to compare the chapter contents. Including the origin and history of each sub-discipline clearly showed how applied anthropology has changed over time. I was struck by the relatively short history of some of the domains, and by the range of activities and results in gathering information, carrying out actions, and influencing the policy process.

Applied Anthropology: Domains of Applications more than meets its goal of showing how practitioners and academics can use their anthropological knowledge, skills, and methods. I will use this book in my own practice and in the training of my staff and interns. I will recommend it for anyone interested in learning about the critical role applied anthropology plays in benefiting the persons with whom we work through traditional and newer methodologies, in more complex settings, and collaboratively helping to solve contemporary human problems.

The book's future directions and conclusions send the message that traditional anthropological methods and continuing commitment to ameliorate the lives of the people whom we study are central to applied anthropology. But global changes and the increasing complexity of persistent problems require us to work collaboratively with and learn from other disciplines, and to include in advocacy as much participation of individuals and communities as possible. This includes the challenge to communicate our findings to other disciplines and to reach wider audiences.

Notes

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*Applied Anthropology: Domains of Application*¹

Edited by Satish Kedia² and John van Willigen³

Reviewed by Edward C. Knop⁴

Satish Kedia's and John van Willigen's edited volume, titled *Applied Anthropology: Domains of Application*, impresses me as a carefully-conceived, well-crafted, interesting, and valuable examination of anthropological knowledge. The scope involves anthropological skills being applied in various topical contexts. Examples of the topics are aging, agriculture, business, medicine, and nutrition. There are nine in all that constitute, not an exhaustive list, but a nice, diverse sampling. The book emphasizes issues with definite examples of simultaneously *ethical and effective* socio-cultural intervention. Applied topics are approached as analysis of the developmental state of the domain more than as a how-to-do-it-there manual. Thus, it has both an academic and a practical appeal, with extensive, current literature overviews and references to both types of concerns. Too often, edited volumes are uneven in chapter style and quality; in this case, the consistency is good, presumably because the editors have done their work well, and the authors are major, experienced leaders in the respective domains, usually both as academicians and as field practitioners.

That I have much appreciation for the topics included, organization, approaches, emphases, and presentation style is to say that I share some biases with the editors and chapter authors. Some academics and practitioners will not share so, who are more traditional fans of *modernization*, or of technical-social *manipulation* of people and conditions, or of *macro-policy administration*. They will likely be less appreciative than I am. But they, especially, have much to learn from the assessments, and they have become fewer in contemporary applied social science, especially anthropology. Some specific biases or preferences that I brought to the reading include the following. I appreciate that the topics are framed in socio-historic context. The entire book is so framed. Indeed each chapter is framed like that. The emphasis is on the developments and events in the domains of anthropology since World War

II. I like the fact that substantive considerations are accompanied by attention to issues and implications for theory. That includes study methods. I appreciate the fact that the book's prevailing themes include client emancipation, empowerment, organization, and mobilization in pursuit of relevant goals and values. I appreciate the quest for social justice and environmental care. I appreciate the book's treatment of anthropological advocacy and its bridging of support roles. I appreciate the relevance of liberationist and dependency theory and at times of post-modern theory. I value the writing formula of identifying and introducing basic points, justifying them, putting them in context with examples, and reflecting back as they are woven into a gestalt-like fabric of intertwined domain and discipline efforts.

The introductory and concluding chapters by the authors serve well to orient the reader first to what is coming and why, and then to recap common concerns and to anticipate implications, issues and challenges for applied anthropology in the future. More specifically regarding the introduction, the pattern of treatment in the book's domain chapters is set up and explained first in a summary of the historic development of applied anthropology. Then an overview follows of the settings and roles in application. Subsequently there is a review of theoretical and methodological approaches with an exploration of ethical issues in applied intervention in the context of a preview of the highlights of each domain chapter.

Throughout, the book introduces and capitalizes on important applied anthropology concepts and illustrates them in domain context such as culture brokers, local indigenous knowledge, co-management, the ecological model, globalization and global restructuring, social capital, and common property. The domain chapters not only show how anthropology is being applied and further developed, but also each domain chapter serves to provide a general

summary of the current state of the domain. I found this very informative with domains with which I have had limited prior experience. Examples are health and medicine, nutrition, aging, and business and industry. For the domains I know better, I found them to be perceptively reviewed. And I still always learned some new things from each treatment. Cross-cutting topical domains are various settings and styles of applied work. These range from encouragement and support of indigenous grass-roots initiatives and movements through applied fieldwork on university projects and those of non-governmental (NGO) organizations as well as government and corporate service initiatives and programs, along with government and international agency strategic planning, policy formulation, and implementation activities. All of these get some attention in the book, and most get at least some mention in most domain discussions.

I assume the volume under review is intended in part as a complement to John van Willigen's 2002 (third edition) *Applied Anthropology: An Introduction*, which it does well by detailing and illustrating the themes, concepts and main points offered there. But the book also stands well by itself, and would complement any basic applied anthropology text. I judge the book's level of conceptual sophistication and presentation style to be appropriate for upper-division, junior or senior year undergraduates. It could also serve graduate students at the master-of-arts level. And it could be useful to established application-oriented professionals with limited background in anthropology. As the editors note, there is much overlap these days among the social sciences in addressing applied topics. Thus, the appreciative audience is likely to be far greater than only students and practitioners of anthropology. All of these people, and others more interested in particular domains, should find much of value in the book and its domain chapters. Undoubtedly, the *Domains of Application* is a welcome, overdue contribution to applied anthropology and to general social science. As a text in applied anthropology, it has no peer.

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*Applied Anthropology: Domains of Application*¹

Edited by Satish Kedia² and John van Willigen³

Reviewed by Peter W. Van Arsdale⁴

Given the reputations of the authors represented in this volume, I expected it to be a well-researched and useful compendium. It is. However, what I did not expect is the remarkable depth and breadth most of the authors provide. The book is more than a practitioners' guide to applied anthropology. It is an anthropologist's guide to the history of our discipline, reflected through the development of its myriad sub-disciplines or domains. The intersections of theory and practice are covered exceptionally well.

Each chapter in *Applied Anthropology: Domains of Application* is authored by a leading figure or figures in the field. Peter Little covers the topic of *anthropology and development*. Robert Rhoades employs the little-used phrase *agricultural anthropology* discussing the intersection of environment, technology, and culture in agricultural work. Thomas McGuire addresses *environmental and ecological issues*, several of which overlap with those covered by Rhoades. Linda Whiteford and Linda Bennett discuss *health* in the context of medical anthropology. Immediately following is a complementary chapter on *nutritional issues* authored by David Himmelgreen and Deborah Crooks. The domain's leading proponent, Anthony Oliver-Smith, deals with issues associated with *development-induced displacement and resettlement*. Marietta (Meta) Baba treats applied anthropology's impacts on *business and industry*. One of the most well-established domains is that of *anthropology and education*, and Nancy Greenman authors the chapter here summarizing relevant accomplishments. A topic dealt with too infrequently among practicing anthropologists is that of *anthropology and the aged*. I admittedly am biased, since some of my earliest applied work was in this field (Van Arsdale 1981). Robert Harman fortunately provides chapter coverage in this volume.

The book's editors, Satish Kedia and John van Willigen, author the introductory and concluding chapters. These are tightly written and

well worth reading two or three times each. The history of applied anthropology is covered thoroughly. Although some of this history repeats material previously presented by van Willigen (2002), it serves as a needed reminder that while our roots date to the pre-World War II era, our best achievements date to the post-World War II era. Applied anthropology has become, in a very real sense, about much more than just anthropology, that is, about more than participant observation, ethnographic interviewing, and cultural interpretation.

Of particular importance in the editors' introductory chapter is the discussion of ethics. Issues involving the proper treatment of persons selected as research subjects were first discussed as early as 1919. However, the first professional code of ethics for applied anthropologists did not emerge explicitly until 30 years later. Full-fledged presentations of issues involving confidentiality, privacy, and data security only emerged another 30 years after that. The observations of Kedia and van Willigen can, and should, be cross-referenced with key observations regarding ethics from other of the book's contributors. That is to say, Linda Whiteford and Linda Bennett discuss the moral-medical model of alcoholism. Robert Harman writes about the obligation to serve others in humane fashion. Anthony Oliver-Smith describes and analyzes differential power relations affecting the displaced. And Meta Baba analyzes adverse transnational corporate impacts on Third World residents. Illustrative are the vital issues involving the lack of informed consent among the Yanomami of Venezuela that caused an uproar upon publication in 2000 of *Darkness in El Dorado* by Patrick Tierney, as Kedia and van Willigen emphasize. My "Darkness in Anthropology" complements *Darkness in El Dorado* (Van Arsdale 2001).

Of particular importance in the concluding chapter is the section on changing relationships with study subjects. From *person-to-be studied* to

person-to-be-assisted to person-in-collaborative-relationship-with-researcher, over the past half-century greater sensitivities to the importance of such relationships have emerged. The notion of reflexivity covers part of this, as researcher shapes subject and subject shapes researcher. The notion of collaboration covers another part, as researcher and subject gain equal status, the latter even taking the lead on occasion. This practice is presented powerfully in a highly recommended forthcoming volume edited by Les Field and Richard Fox titled *Anthropology Put to Work* (Field and Fox 2007).

All of the chapters are well crafted, thoroughly researched, and informative. Jargon blessedly is kept to a minimum. It is not possible here to go into detail on each contribution. Although I comment on other chapters in this review, I have selected two that stand out for depth and breadth of coverage and that clearly illustrate the links between theory and practice. My first selection is Thomas McGuire's exceptional overview of what he terms *environmental anthropology*. He uses the writings of Julian Steward and Eric Wolf in point/counterpoint fashion to remind us of foundations traceable to cultural ecology for the former and political economy for the latter. Stressing the production of goods, class structure, market relations, and state policy, Wolf's approach led to *political ecology*. McGuire unfortunately does not mention Marvin Harris, but to hark back to *The Rise of Anthropological Theory* (Harris 1968), he does emphasize the role of ideology. The field of maritime anthropology provides the examples of practice that McGuire uses.

Peter Little also makes an exceptional contribution to this volume. Little reminds the reader of how work in development has been central to our discipline. For the past 50 years, much anthropological theory has been appropriately borrowed from other fields such as socio-economics. He stresses that development anthropology continues to open professional doors to indigenous practitioners. Indeed, some of the most influential non-Western applied anthropologists, such as Arturo Escobar (1995), Arjun Appadurai (1997), and Walter Lusigi (1984), have "cut their teeth" on development anthropology, as Little references. Little says that co-manage-

ment of projects, such as those involving national parks in East Africa, and participatory collaboration in applied research, such as that involving eco-tourism, should continue to be advocated strongly. Both processes, by definition, involve Western and non-Western colleagues working in partnership.

One pleasure of having been in the field of applied anthropology for over 30 years is that I get to read about the accomplishments of people I have been privileged to know. Among these valued colleagues is Abdel Ghaffar Ahmed, whom I first met in Khartoum in 1979. As I began a multidisciplinary project on water resource development in Sudan's western provinces, he was the first to brief me on the political pressures between Darfur's sedentary and migratory peoples. These exploded, as he had predicted, some 25 years later. In his chapter on development, Peter Little appropriately recognizes Ahmed as "one of Africa's best-known anthropologists" (p. 42).

Another colleague with interests bridging applied anthropology and development is Pennie Magee. We first met through the High Plains Society for Applied Anthropology (HPSfAA) and most recently are working together through its Publications Policy Committee, which she chairs. In Chapter 7, Anthony Oliver-Smith analyzes development-induced displacement of indigenous peoples, and he features (pp. 194-197) Magee's innovative work in Brazil (1989). He discusses the importance her 1980s research played in understanding the adverse impacts on riverine peasants the Tucurui Dam had after it was constructed. Oliver-Smith quotes her (p. 196): "If peasants above the dam suffered the loss of their land, peasants below the dam suffered the loss of their water" (Magee 1989:6-7).

Another valued colleague is Chris Fry, who has proven to be a networker of the highest caliber. Coincidentally, I met her about the same time as Abdel Ghaffar Ahmed, but under very different circumstances. In the late 1970s, she was pioneering cross-cultural studies in aging and organized a conference at Loyola University of Chicago in which I had the opportunity to participate. As Robert Harman notes in his chapter on applied anthropology and aging, Fry edited some of the earliest books integrating

cross-cultural aging studies and co-founded the Association of Anthropology and Gerontology (AAGE). Harman cites several of her most important publications. *Dimensions: Aging, Culture, and Health* (Fry 1981) and the book she co-edited with Jennie Keith, *New Methods for Old-Age Research: Strategies for Studying Diversity* (Fry and Keith 1986) influenced me directly.

Robert Harman again notes the importance of applied work in aging when he recounts the efforts of Madelyn (Micki) Iris. I first met Iris in the early 1980s, through our mutual involvement in the National Association for the Practice of Anthropology (NAPA) of which she has recently served as president. She was just initiating an evaluation of the Guardianship Project in Chicago, the city where she makes her home. As Harman says, her evaluation efforts therein eventually benefited elders, the agency, guardianship workers, and program administrators. She went on to share her findings with policy makers and program planners nationwide (Iris and Berman 1998).

This volume also is important in that, scattered throughout, are references to several of the classic cases involving applied anthropologists. Kedia and van Willigen remind us of the Fox Project of the 1940s in Iowa, the Vicos Project of the 1950s in Peru, and Project Camelot of the 1960s in Latin American countries. More recently, with reverberations extending to the present, is the case of the Tucuruí Dam in Brazil, mentioned earlier. In the book, Oliver-Smith says that poor planning and inadequate government follow-up, which at times was inhumane, resulted in a cascade of what I term first-, second-, and third-order negative impacts. These, respectively, manifested themselves in the form of an inadequate resettlement policy, followed by ill-timed relocations, followed by unexpected disease impacts. In a cruel twist, the indigenous people themselves were initially blamed for the diseases afflicting them.

Another more recent case with reverberations extending to the present is that of Ecuador's El Tor cholera pandemic. Linda Whiteford and Linda Bennett report in the book that over a two-year period in the early 1990s some 85,000 people became ill, with nearly 1000 dying (p. 139). With better cholera abatement, such as

targeted medical intervention, seen early on in urban more than rural areas of the country, a team that included an applied medical anthropologist was brought in to assess *disease behaviors*. Through this approach, what came to be called the Community Participatory Intervention (CPI) model was developed, and its implementation eventually led to significant cholera reduction in Ecuador's rural areas as well.

Reading this book carefully is a must. It provides *action templates* for students and seasoned professionals alike. Ultimately, as Robert Harman (p. 335) so aptly states, the "strategies for getting one's work utilized by policymakers are associated with factors pertaining to collaboration, agency, community and politics, research process, communication, time, advocacy, and [attention to] ethical issues." All these factors are covered herein.

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*Applied Anthropology: Domains of Application*¹

Edited by Satish Kedia² and John van Willigen³

Reviews counterpointed by Satish Kedia and John van Willigen

We appreciate the thoughtful reviews of our edited volume, *Applied Anthropology: Domains of Application*, by Emilia Gonzalez-Clements,

Edward Knop, and Peter Van Arsdale, and we are gratified they all felt that the collection successfully accomplished its goals. We especially value the personal reflections and perspectives the reviewers incorporated. It is our pleasure to comment on some of the common themes that emerged across the three reviews.

Each of the reviewers offers interesting thoughts on the need for anthropology to be interdisciplinary. There is no doubt that the work of applied anthropologists requires collaboration with other areas and a working knowledge of cognate disciplines. This approach is reflected in the emergence of a series of rapidly developing *neo-disciplines* beyond those discussed in our volume, such as nursing anthropology, design anthropology, and maritime anthropology to name but a few. These innovative *neo-disciplines* challenge the traditional barriers among distinct fields. It is clear that the relative impact of anthropology on these *neo-disciplines* varies greatly from domain to domain; in some, anthropology's influence is dominant and even initiated the field, while in others the influence is only peripheral.

Concerning these domains of anthropology, Emilia Gonzalez-Clements rightly suggests that it would be interesting to hear from practicing anthropologists who are employed full-time outside of academia. As she acknowledges, however, there is some difficulty in asking a nonacademic to "write about the origins and theories of a domain." Since the chapters in this volume set out to trace the intellectual histories and methodologies in each of these realms, those employed in nonacademic settings might find it cumbersome to develop such narratives, as it may fall outside their usual commitments. While we agree with the reviewer on this point, all contributors in this volume have significant

experiences as practitioners in their respective domain, either as a part of their research agenda or as consultants. We were pleased to learn that Gonzales-Clements found the volume to be very informative regarding areas in which she had little prior experience and that she plans to use our book in training her staff and interns. The volume is indeed intended to serve, in part, as a resource for helping anthropologists navigate the various domains and train students and new practitioners.

A number of years ago, co-editor John van Willigen (1991) prepared a short note for publication in *Anthropology News* titled "Intellectual Migrants." He asserts that the demography of employment and job incentives led to the "migration" of as much as fifty percent of new anthropology Ph.D.s to find meaningful roles in practical domains of application. Although these practitioners often do not publish for academic audiences, many develop careers that involve substantial amounts of writing in the very domains of application we refer to as *neo-disciplines*. These so-called *intellectual migrants* have colleagues in diverse fields, and they report their work not in the *American Ethnologist*, per se, but in venues associated with their specific domains. Publication in these realms is motivated by the need to influence consequences, including program and policy outcomes whose impact is greatly enhanced through certain kinds of applied writing as opposed to journal articles. In addition, of course, there are professional gains; while clients and communities benefit, the researchers generate more opportunities as the impact of their work becomes broadly known.

Edward Knop described the book's selection of domains as "not an exhaustive list, but a nice, diverse sampling." We find this description to be apt and agree that the list of topics could certainly be expanded. We identified chapters in terms of content specialization areas, but many of these might be subdivided, particularly medical, development, and environment. Another

approach could be thematic, addressing various research or action practices in separate chapter topics. For example, we could imagine chapters focusing on evaluation, social impact assessment, cultural resource assessment, rapid assessment procedure, and the participatory practices that applied anthropologists routinely use. Other relevant areas include cultural resources, historic preservation, urban development, planning, and fishery management. It is conceivable to do a compendium to our current volume and expand the scope of various domains covered.

Peter Van Arsdale highlights the book's attention to ethical practice. It is noteworthy that the concern over ethics has a rather problematic historical context, both in academic and non-academic realms. The review of all proposed research by Institutional Review Boards (IRB) is a relatively new phenomenon for anthropologists. The IRB places more stringent guidelines for the protection of subjects and ensures their participation in research only after their informed consent and knowledge of potential adverse implications have been secured. We agree with Van Arsdale that applied anthropologists are well suited to observing not just immediate impacts but "second- and third-order negative impacts" of policies and proposed research as well.

As Van Arsdale implies, it would be fascinating to develop an alternative history of anthropology, suggested in part by our volume. There is a tendency among anthropologists to overlook the impact of application and practice when documenting the history of the discipline. Although theoretical contributions constitute the core of any discipline's history, one must acknowledge that the historiographic enterprise is far more complex and should ideally strive to reflect "everything that everybody does" not just "some things that some people do." What would a new version of Marvin Harris's *Rise of Anthropological Theory* (1968) be like, given that about half of all professional anthropologists are applied anthropologists or practitioners? The basic history of anthropology starting in, let us say, 1970, is essentially the changing nature of the relationship between anthropologists and the communities in which they work. As Van Arsdale notes, the central theme in the recent history of

anthropology is the emergence of collaboration and reflexivity. Yet, writing about this would be a daunting task as many of the following questions would need to be addressed. First, what theories and methods have applied anthropologists actually used? What are their sources? What has been the influence of anthropology on other disciplines? How synchronized are the procedures of applied anthropology and traditional academic anthropology? We think that the authors in our collection come quite close to addressing many of these questions and articulating the balance between applied and traditional anthropology.

To sum up, we liked Van Arsdale's statement that the volume "provides *action templates* for students and seasoned professionals alike." As applied scholars, we are excited about the fact that the book inspires as much *action* as *intellectual discourse*. Our vision for this collection is indeed to provide readers with a comprehensive overview of many prominent domains of applied anthropology and the future directions of these domains. We wish to express our appreciation again of each of the reviewers' perceptive and complimentary commentaries, and we hope that the current generation and new generations of students and practitioners alike will benefit from our collection.

Notes

1. Westport, Connecticut and London: Praeger Publishers, an imprint of the Greenwood Publishing Group, 2005. 378 pages, acknowledgments, 11 chapters, references cited at the end of each chapter, index, about the editors and contributors, no illustrations. Cloth \$149.95 U.S.; paperback \$34.95 U.S.
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