

# Introduction

## *An Ethnography and Anthropology of Anthropologists*

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- Why do so many anthropologists say that they are not real/true anthropologists?
- Why are anthropologists so preoccupied with their moral commitments?
- Why do so many anthropologists want to save the world?
- Why do so many anthropologists emphasize complexity?
- Why do so many anthropologists hesitate to explicate anthropological practice?
- Why do so many anthropologists disown power?

The above questions arose as a result of the initial analysis of material from research carried out in Denmark from 2015 to 2019 on the practice of anthropology. This book is an attempt to answer these questions.

The humanities are presently being pushed to justify their relevance and existence. Yet there is at the same time an increasing demand for the humanities to respond to an ever-widening range of scientific questions and societal problems. In recent years there has also been an increasing demand for anthropologists and anthropological knowledge both inside and outside of academia. It was against this background that the research project originally set out to ethnographically explore what anthropologists actually do when at work in these professional arenas and communities.

The ethnographic fieldwork on which the book is based has primarily been carried out among anthropologists and their collaborators in Denmark. There are, however, some exceptions to this: one study was conducted in a consultancy firm abroad, some anthropologists were trained abroad but working in Denmark, and the researchers' participation in various networks and international conferences on anthropology and its application are also drawn upon as ethnography. Nonetheless, the bulk of our ethnographic material on how anthropology is practised originates from a Danish context.

As our research progressed, one specific issue emerged that seemed to matter a great deal within each of the communities of anthropological practice under investigation, namely that of 'morality'. Accordingly, the contributions to this collection address the ways in which anthropologists at work seek to do what they consider right or good. In other words, what is the kind of morality that is performed by anthropologists at work and what are the effects of this morality both on the anthropologists themselves and the people with whom they work and collaborate? The book addresses these questions through ethnographic studies of anthropologists at work in four professional arenas: healthcare, business, management and interdisciplinary research. More specifically, it demonstrates the ways in which anthropologists, whether doing research, selling insights, managing newspapers or caring for patients, perform particular moral values, striving to become certain kinds of virtuous subjects. We study anthropology as a social practice inside and outside academia, which in both sites may involve research as well as non-research tasks, but all of which, it is argued, are undergirded by a particular kind of morality.

The book is situated at the intersection of two prominent anthropological subfields, namely 'applied or public anthropology' and 'the anthropology of ethics and morality'. Below we will discuss these in turn. But first a bit more about the study.

## The Study

Our four arenas of research can all be seen as good examples of some of those interdisciplinary and non-academic engagements and collaborations from which it has been argued that anthropology has drawn its vitality since the crisis of representation in the 1980s (Marcus 2008: 1,3) as will also be discussed below. But the choice of arenas was also shaped by the experience of the researchers involved and activities

taking place at the Department of Anthropology in Copenhagen where the research project was based.

Medical anthropology and business and organizational anthropology have for a long period been prominent fields of research and teaching at the department in Copenhagen (as also testified by the fact that master's programmes in 'business and organizational anthropology' and 'the anthropology of health' have been offered there for the past fifteen years). Adding to this, Danish anthropologists have become increasingly involved in interdisciplinary projects, and the Danish departments of anthropology have played an active role in several interdisciplinary degrees and research centres. Another factor that informed our delimitation and design of the project was our realization that an increasing number of anthropology graduates were being employed in managerial and leadership positions outside of academia. While this development could no doubt partly be explained simply by the general academic qualifications obtained by these graduates, several people with whom we discussed this also suggested that anthropological skills set these anthropologically trained managers apart from other managers, and so we decided to include management as our fourth arena of research. Other arenas could have been included. Many graduates end up in public administration, which could also have been a field of study in itself. It is to some extent included in the study on medical anthropologists, since some of these end up in the administration of the health and welfare system. Global development is another important field at the department in Copenhagen, both in terms of teaching, research and employment of graduates, and probably the first field which saw anthropologists and anthropological concepts move in and out of academia. However, it no longer makes up as large a proportion of the national anthropological labour market as it did earlier.<sup>1</sup>

The sub-projects differed in terms of length and set-up and in terms of the background of the researcher. Two (and at the time of the research, three) of the authors are tenured staff at the Copenhagen department. Accordingly, they had less time for doing fieldwork than did the postdoc and PhD student involved in the project; however, they all have extensive working experience with the field they write about. Mogensen has carried out research in medical anthropology (primarily in Africa) throughout her academic career, and did consultancy work in relation to international health for different development organizations before embarking upon her academic career. M.A. Pedersen has originally carried out long-term fieldwork in Mongolia,

but has since 2014 been involved in the development of an interdisciplinary research, education and outreach centre known as the Copenhagen Centre of Social Data Science (SODAS) at the Faculty of Social Sciences in Copenhagen. Jöhncke was the head of the so-called Anthropological Analysis Unit at the department for ten years, and was in this capacity responsible for collaborative research and teaching projects with private corporations, public institutions and civil society organizations. Chapters by these authors are largely based on short bursts of fieldworks spread out over the course of two to three years, as well as on their previous long-term experience with the fields they write about. The postdoc and the PhD student did longer periods of fieldwork. Cullen worked in different organizations and as a consultant in private companies before returning to academia to do a PhD on business anthropology, and Gorm Hansen came from a background in psychology and science and technology studies, and did her PhD on research managers before embarking upon a postdoc on anthropologists-cum-managers. L.R. Pedersen has done fieldwork on anthropologists as consultants and has co-written a chapter with Gorm Hansen on the process of studying anthropologists ethnographically and the moral concerns it involves for the researcher.

All researchers carried out biographical interviews within their field with particular attention being paid to cases of collaboration and key competences of their anthropological interlocutors, but some researchers (Cullen and Gorm Hansen) were also present for longer periods in the work settings they studied. They have, however, both chosen a writing style where they focus on one or a few interlocutors. M.A Pedersen's chapter relies heavily on auto-ethnographic data and insights from his work at SODAS. In sum, the studies were different in length and shape, but all of the researchers had previous experience with the fields they studied.

The researchers have all worked at the department of Anthropology at Copenhagen University for longer or shorter periods in their career. With one exception (Gorm Hansen who is trained as a social psychologist), they all received some (or all) of their education at one of the two university departments of anthropology in Denmark. However, the joint discussions of material across different sub-projects benefited from a diversity in prior fieldwork, and theoretical interests of the researchers, some of which included the phenomenological tradition, science and technology studies, economic anthropology and the ontological turn in anthropology. The moral project of anthropologists stood out as a cross-cutting issue of significance, which we therefore decided to devote attention to.

More information about the individual studies is found in the chapters. We will now turn to the two subfields of anthropology: ‘applied’ or ‘public’ anthropology and ‘the anthropology of ethics and morality’, at the intersection of which the book is situated.

### **‘Academic’ versus ‘Applied’ Anthropology, and Beyond**

The theme of the 116th Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association (AAA) in 2017 was ‘Anthropology Matters’! As was stated in the call for papers: ‘The Anthropocene, packed with meaning and crisis, needs anthropologists with critical skills in empowering subaltern voices and practices’. The conference itself opened with words of concern about worldwide threats to fundamental principles of fairness, equity, open mindedness, respect, compassion, caring and love, but also with the reassurance that anthropologists are taking action and are working towards what is right, and what is just. The opening ceremony continued with a keynote by Paul Farmer, the co-founder and chief strategist of ‘Partners in Health’, an NGO providing community-based care to impoverished communities around the world, and Jim Yong Kim, the President of the World Bank (2012–2019). The President of the American Anthropological Association, Alisse Waterston, introduced them with the words: ‘I cannot think of a better way to get our week going than have Jim and Paul reflect with us about their work, the role of engaged and applied anthropology, and what they think it will take to make a more just and sustainable world’.

The message that was delivered at this opening ceremony – the biggest annual event for anthropologists, not only from the US, but from all over the world – was unequivocal: the justification for anthropology is its ability to make the world a better place, and it is the responsibility of anthropologists to do so through applied and engaged work. Decades of debates over the relation between academic and applied anthropology were not brought up. Questions about what was meant by ‘a more just world’ were not raised. These are however exactly the questions we intend to look at in this book. We will do so by first turning to the history of the relation between academic and applied anthropology, and what David Mills refers to as the history of a discipline denying its own utility while also being dependent on it (2006: 56). Afterwards we will move on to the question of what anthropologists mean by ‘a more just world’.

For Radcliffe-Brown, one of the founding fathers of the discipline, there was no opposition between research and its application. On

the contrary. His ambition was to develop a natural science of society (Radcliffe-Brown and Eggan 1957) which, just like (other) natural sciences, could be used to manipulate natural (social) phenomena (Campbell 2014). Malinowski also advocated for the role of anthropologists as policy advisers to African colonial administrators, and Radcliffe-Brown and Malinowski were both involved in the debate over segregation policies in South Africa in the 1920s and 1930s. Malinowski argued for the need to segregate black and white populations in order to protect indigenous cultures, whereas Radcliffe-Brown argued for the impossibility of doing so, considering that the different groups were already deeply integrated and mutually dependent on each other, and that they were each contributing to the functioning of the overall social structure of the South African society (Niehaus 2018). Ethical and political questions deriving from theoretical positions and societal engagement were thus inherent to the discipline from the very beginning.

The first part of the twentieth century saw repeated attempts by anthropologists at the Royal Anthropological Institute in the UK to convince the Imperial government that anthropology served a useful purpose and deserved funding (Wright 2006: 56). However, after the Second World War, attempts were made to distance anthropology from the 'tainted' work of policy and applied involvement. During a debate in the Association of Social Anthropologists (ASA) in the UK in 1946 on whether members should address issues of applied anthropology and provide scope for discussing colonial problems, Max Gluckman, among others, strongly argued against that kind of involvement, fearing that the demands of colonial governments would lead to the defilement of basic research (Mills 2003). Anthropology's association with colonial administration had brought an unease to the discipline, which became one of the major contributing factors behind the efforts to clearly separate 'pure' and 'impure', or academic and applied anthropology. Anthropology's attitude towards its application can be characterized as one of serial ambivalence according to Wright (2006: 56), and as Shore and Wright note, the usefulness of anthropological knowledge has been held hostage by the culture of the discipline itself and a preoccupation with the purity of academic boundaries, applied work being seen not only as 'un-theoretical', but also impure and polluting (1997: 142).

In spite of this ambivalence and unease, anthropology has been applied outside of academia all along. After the Second World War, the concept of development became one of the dominant ideas of the twentieth century, embodying a set of aspirations and techniques

aimed at bringing about 'positive changes' or 'progress' in former colonies now referred to as the less-developed South or Third World. Relations between anthropologists and the world of development ideas and practices date from the early days of the 'development industry' (the 1950s) and have continued, in various forms, up to today. The relation between the two parallels the one between academic and applied anthropology more generally speaking; that is, it encompasses positions from sympathetic involvement to stances of disengaged critique or even outright hostility and arguments that the idea of development is in direct opposition to the cultural relativist project of anthropology (Lewis 2012: 469–70).

Anthropologists studying businesses and working for private enterprises are not a new phenomenon either, as shown by a number of scholars (Baba 2006, 2014; Mills 2006; Cefkin 2009; Jordan 2003). An insightful overview of intersections between anthropology and business over time is given by L.R. Pedersen (2018: 47–76). Here it suffices to say that there were examples of early collaborations between anthropology and the corporate world (e.g. the Hawthorn studies in the 1920s and 1930s; see also Schwartzman 1993: 6), but also that after the Second World War (in the 1950s) there was a period in which resistance towards anthropology's involvement with business grew in the established anthropological community. This resistance was linked to the general unease with 'impure' applied anthropology, the insistence upon anthropology as a theoretical and inherently critical project, and the resistance to studying 'modern' societies, to 'studying up', and to working for the capitalist system (L.R. Pedersen 2018: 53). It was therefore not until the 1990s that business anthropology became established as a sub-discipline within anthropology.

With postmodernism, the crisis of representation and the reflexive turn of the 1980s (Clifford and Marcus 1986; Marcus and Fischer 1986), there was, on the one hand, a return to concerns with power and discourse and a heightened critique from within the discipline of its own relation with power and hence application of knowledge outside of academia. On the other hand, the reflexive turn in anthropology in the 1980s pushed anthropologists to identify their subject beyond the study of the 'primitive' and 'exotic'. Anthropology's area of enquiry is now often found in modern institutions and amongst national and transnational agents of governance and finance (Matsutake Worlds Research Group 2009: 398; Marcus 2005, 2008). It is exactly from these diverse interdisciplinary and non-academic engagements and collaborations that the discipline draws its present vitality (Marcus 2008: 1, 3). Anthropological knowledge is more than ever contingent on the pro-

duction of other forms of knowledge, outside of academic institutions, and anthropologists at work are no longer simply ‘apprentices’ of a new ‘exotic’ culture. They are, rather, ‘collaborators’ of their subjects with whom they share interests, concerns, ideas and projects. Reflecting these developments, influential voices talk about a ‘collaborative turn’ within anthropology, to capture the fact that anthropologists are now beginning to systematically study and theorize the wide range of collaborations that they and their colleagues are part of (Lassiter 2005).

It was also in the 1980s that ethnography – primarily perceived as a method – became widely used beyond academic anthropology, for example as a tool for innovation, product development and corporate growth (L.R. Pedersen 2018: 54), and in the development world, where decentralization, participation and bottom-up approaches became key concepts, and ethnographic methods – in ways that have often been referred to as ‘quick and dirty’ – moved beyond academia and into the development industry (Lewis 2012; Mosse 2013). In the 1980s and 1990s, a renewed interest arose in the application of anthropology outside of academia, and there have been attempts since then to steer away from the academic-applied dichotomy and talk instead about ‘practice’ (Wright 2006). Still, a distinction is often made between ‘applied anthropology’, understood as research on topics deemed to be of practical relevance, and ‘practicing anthropologists’ working outside of academia and carrying out non-research tasks, that is, operating in contexts where they may not even work as anthropologists but still apply anthropological approaches (Nolan 2003). Academia has been reluctant to accept that knowledge generated from work in policy and practice could constitute a legitimate basis for constructing theory (Shore and Wright 1997: 143) and that conceptualizing is also a kind of practice (Holbraad and Pedersen 2017); even when it is argued that basic research and so-called applied anthropology are not mutually exclusive endeavours as applied work always draws on theories and methods from academia (Pink 2006: 8), they are still referred to as two separate domains. An implicit distinction thus continues to be made between ‘academic theory and knowledge’ on the one hand, and its ‘application in practice’ on the other.

Numerous publications deal with the ‘application’ or ‘practice’ of anthropology (e.g. Jordan 1994, 2003; Hill and Baba 1997; Nolan 2003, 2013, 2017; Pink 2006; Strang 2009) as do several journals based in both the US and the UK: *Anthropology in Action*; *Journal for Applied Anthropology in Policy and Action*, a journal of the ASA network of Applied Anthropologists; *Human Organization and Practicing Anthropology*, a journal of the Society for Applied Anthropology; and *Annals of Anthro-*

*polological Practice* (known as the *NAPA Bulletin* until 2011), published by NAPA (National Association for the Practice of Anthropology), the section of the American Anthropological Association (AAA) that represents practicing anthropologists. Other scholars discuss ‘engaged anthropology’, that is, an anthropology speaking about crucial issues in contemporary society or becoming engaged as activists on behalf of the people they study (e.g. Low and Merry 2010; Benson 2014; Beck and Maida 2015).

A series of books deals with anthropologists working outside of academia, such as *Theoretical Scholarship and Applied Practice* by Pink, Fors and O’Dell (2017), discussing ways in which theoretical research has been incorporated into the practices of anthropologists outside of academia. Pink (2006) focuses on anthropologists employed as consultants or in salaried posts to actually provide anthropological research, insights or expertise to companies or organizations. Mosse (2011) discusses anthropologists working in international development and, more specifically, knowledge practices in the realm of international development, the object of this review article thus being international development rather than anthropology as such. Cefkin (2009) focuses on research by anthropologists on and in the corporate world, and again the object is the corporate world rather than anthropology as such. MacClancy (2017) discusses the experience of anthropologists working in government. In his book, *Anthropology and Public Service*, he outlines examples of the multiple trails that anthropological careers may move along, but discusses to a much smaller extent what it is that characterizes the practices of the anthropologists in question. In this book we intend to direct our gaze to anthropology and anthropologists themselves.

The self-reflective turn of the 1980s and the renewed interest in the practice of anthropology has spurred a debate on when and with what credentials one might call oneself an anthropologist. Is it defined by academic qualifications or by a particular anthropological way of thinking? It is clear by now that anthropologists do not wish to be defined simply by their methods. Anthropology, Pink states, is also a particular type of approach, a set of ideas that informs anthropologists’ understanding of the world, a particular way of constructing and analysing problems (2006: 10). But Pink does not specify what these are and instead she notes that there are many different ways in which one can be an anthropologist and that there is no reason to try to essentialize anthropology as a discipline. As we will return to in later chapters, this reluctance to explicate, this fear of essentializing anthropological competences, is paradoxically one of the notable characteristics of anthropology.

In our project we asked not how to define anthropology, but what characterizes the practices of those who were trained as anthropologists, whether they work inside or outside of academia, carrying out anthropological research for a company or an organization or doing other tasks with an anthropological approach. Whether we are dealing with anthropologists' participation in the provision of healthcare or interdisciplinary research on science and technology, business or management, we stipulated that we were dealing with social practices of collaboration and that through ethnographic immersion into these collaborations we could move beyond the distinction between the abstract knowledge of basic research and its application and make explicit hitherto tacit dimensions of anthropological knowledge and competences. It became clear, as we started analysing our material from the four sub-studies, that what characterized the social practices of anthropologists across the different fields was not so much a particular set of competences, but rather a particular preoccupation with moral questions. We did not at the outset of the project have a specific interest in questions of ethics and morality, but ongoing comparisons of material from the different professional arenas that we studied have made it clear to us that there is a noteworthy consistency in the way in which anthropologists pose moral questions in relation to themselves and their work.

Questions of ethics and responsibility have, as noted above, been inherent to anthropologists' work since the time of Radcliffe-Brown and Malinowski, but as Pink reminds us, new working contexts, methodologies and research sponsors that anthropologists face today have new kinds of implications for ethics in anthropological research and representation (2006). When one does applied work one is confronted with a series of ethical choices, she further says, but some types of applied work are perhaps more universally morally justified; for example, acting as an expert in the asylum courts is easy to justify morally (Good in Pink 2006: 11), whereas some anthropologists would feel uncomfortable working for the Ministry of Defence, for multinational companies that are integral to global capitalism or for organizations involved with fox hunting (Pink 2006: 12). Ethical questions apply not only to the choice of whom to work with or for. During their work, anthropologists become tied up in complex series of loyalties and moral responsibilities and should ask themselves to whom and under what circumstances anthropologists are responsible: to their interlocutors, to the consumers, the institutions, the production company, the university, the client paying for results (ibid.)? Pink ends this discussion of ethics in the introduction to *Applications of Anthropology: Professional*

*Anthropology in the Twenty-first Century* by stating that what NAPA and SFAA (Society for Applied Anthropology) ethical guidelines do is to construct applied anthropology as an ethical project with a mission: it should contribute anthropological insights to society and might serve as a *moral corrective* (Pink 2006: 13, our italics).

What is clear from this is that Pink – like the organizers of the annual conference of the American Anthropological Association in 2017 and the interlocutors in our study – takes it for granted that anthropology has a ‘mission’ and should serve as a ‘moral corrective’ in society. What we intend to do in this book is to try to unpack this ‘mission’ or ambition to serve as a ‘moral corrective’. We will argue that what seems to define anthropologists, not just the so-called applied or practicing anthropologist, but anthropologists both within and outside of academia, in Denmark (where most of our interlocutors’ work) or elsewhere, is exactly this idea of a particular ‘mission’ and the ability of anthropologists to serve as a ‘moral corrective’ in society. Anthropology is not the only discipline or profession with a mission, but anthropologists are remarkably unreflective about their own moral project, especially considering the discipline’s preoccupation in recent years with the moral projects of others. Therefore we ask: what is the kind of world that a training in anthropology makes us feel morally obliged to work towards?

In order to address this question, let us first look at the ways in which anthropologists have studied the moral worlds of people other than themselves.

## The Anthropology of Anthropological Ethics

Over the last decade or so, the ‘anthropology of ethics’ (Faubion 2011) or ‘moral anthropology’ (Kapferer and Gold 2018) has emerged as an important and fast-growing subfield within anthropology. Following Mattingly and Throop (2018: 267), we use the two terms ‘ethics’ and ‘morality’ interchangeably. While the point here is not to make a comprehensive review of this literature, a quick gloss over some of its most influential scholars and ‘schools’ will serve as a useful point of departure for an explication of our own specific concerns. Broadly speaking, we can distinguish between three approaches to the study of ethics and morality in anthropology, namely, what might for present purposes be called ‘virtue ethics’, ‘ordinary ethics’ and ‘experience ethics’. In a recent review article Mattingly and Throop distinguish between ‘three philosophical frameworks [that] have been most influential thus

far in the ethical turn: (a) ordinary language philosophy and a focus on ordinary ethics, (b) phenomenology and an emphasis on moral experience, (c) Foucauldian and neo-Aristotelian traditions of virtue ethics' (2018: 475).

Inspired by ordinary language philosophers like Wittgenstein and Cavell, prominent everyday ethics anthropologists such as Veena Das (2012) and Michael Lambek (2010) maintain that the locus of moral agency is to be found in the human subject's everyday relations and/or acts of care and responsibility for others. Largely unarticulated, these ordinary ethics can only be unearthed via long-term fieldwork with its unique possibilities (and obligations) for participation and involvement in the suffering and hardships of key interlocutors. This focus on the ordinary and the everyday to some extent overlaps with that of experience ethical scholars like Jarrett Zigon (2007) and Jason Throop (2014) for whom the moral dimension of human existence is part of a broader backdrop of embodied experiences and tacit knowledge, which forms the everyday practical doxa against which reflexive thinking and normative moral rules are the exceptions. But what distinguishes at least some of these phenomenological scholars from the ordinary language ones is the emphasis they place on situations of crisis. Indeed, for Jarrett Zigon, it is only during moments of 'moral breakdown' that otherwise tacit ethical questions and behaviours are made explicit as the extraordinary situation forces people to make difficult moral choices and propels them to potentially reorient their moral compasses. Finally, the virtue ethical approach places emphasis on the conscious and reflective dimension of moral life. Drawing on Foucault's later work and other philosophical work on virtue ethics (e.g. Macintyre 1981), anthropologists like James Laidlaw (2014) and Joel Robbins (2004) have published influential analyses of the moral work that people do on themselves in order to become specific kinds of virtuous subjects.

Due to the increasing popularity and influence of these approaches and various combinations between them, the discipline of anthropology has seen 'an astonishing efflorescence of theoretical and ethnographic efforts to describe, recognize, locate, and analytically delimit moral dimensions of human existence' (Mattingly and Throop 2018: 476). Nonetheless, as Mattingly and Throop then go on to say, 'there is something still nascent and unfinished about the whole enterprise. Certainly, no clear consensus has coalesced about what its most important questions are, what is most crucial to foreground, why it needs its own "turn", or what terminology one should use when speaking

of or analysing ethical life' (2018: 476). We entirely concur with this observation, but would here also like to qualify or add to it. For it seems to us that one of the key issues that have not hitherto been foregrounded enough is the ethical values and moral worlds of the anthropologists themselves. It is true that there is an extensive literature on ethnographic research ethics including, most recently, Josephides and Grønseth (2017; see also American Anthropological Association 2012; Iphofen 2013). Little or none of this work, however, has been based on systematic empirical research of the ethical ideas and practices of different anthropological individuals and communities, with a view to comparing, conceptualizing and theorizing them. In other words, whereas there has been both a great deal of work within the anthropology of ethics and also many books written that are concerned with how to practice anthropology ethically, very little attention has been given to an important yet overlooked field of inquiry that can be said to crisscross and potentially transcend these two literatures – namely, what might be called the 'anthropology of anthropological ethics'.

So how does one go about opening up this largely unexplored field of enquiry? How, to paraphrase Mattingly and Throop (2018: 476), are we to identify the right terminology one should use when speaking of or analysing [this distinct] ethical life? In the section that follows below, we shall suggest that a possible answer to this question can be found in the literature about and concept of 'moral economies'. But before doing so, let us reflect a little more on the interesting question as to why it might be that so few anthropologists have shown any ethnographic interest in anthropology's own ethical values.

In the introduction to the edited volume *Moral Anthropology: A Critique*, Kapferer and Gold criticize the anthropology of ethics and morality for 'reducing the radical critical potential of anthropology' (2018: 3) and for 'manifest[ing] a moralism underneath, a repressed or suppressed moralism despite declarations against it, that extends from the Western imperialism of the past' (2018: 11). While we do not necessarily agree with this rather harsh verdict, it seems to us that its two editors are getting at something important in suggesting that this anthropological subfield 'does not sufficiently acknowledge the extent to which it is a product of its own situation' (2018: 18). More precisely, Kapferer and Gold argue, anthropologists are insufficiently aware of their own positioning within a broader intellectual economy and disciplinary politics, which to an increasing degree has pushed anthropology towards occupying a marginal and labile identity position. In that sense, as they put it, the anthropology of ethics and morality

is a reaction (perhaps unconscious) to structural changes in the discipline that have dissipated or fractured a sense of a coherent and relatively distinct project. This is an effect both of the great expansion in the number of practicing anthropologists combined with the growth of sub disciplinary areas within anthropology. As a result . . . anthropology has been emptied of much of its erstwhile distinction, becoming more a subbranch of other disciplines in the sense of being defined by their perspectives and paradigms . . . Being an anthropologist has value as a statement of identity, but it has lost much of the methodological and theoretical worth it had begun to achieve in the course of establishing itself as an academic discipline . . . The moral turn in anthropology can be seen as a return to the concerns and methodological issues that gave anthropology a relatively distinct coherence. (2018: 10–11)

What Kapferer and Gold are suggesting, then, is that the expansion of anthropology since its establishment has brought about a shift in anthropological identity. Having originally found its professional pride and purpose in the (purportedly) unique questions, methods and concepts associated with the discipline's modernist heyday, anthropology's 'value as a statement of identity' has over recent decades become tied, to an increasing degree, to questions of ethics and morality. We entirely agree with this, which is also in tune with discussions (and critics) of the more general turn away from the 'grand narratives' of mid-twentieth-century social science and humanities to the more particularistic, individualistic and 'critical' (including self-critical) approaches that took off from the 1980s and onwards (Marcus and Fisher 1986; Friedman 1994). Certainly, Kapferer and Gold make a strong case for the view that the rise of moral anthropology represents a (subconscious) return to the 'coherence' and 'distinction' of the past, but with the key difference that the 'grand narratives' of then have now been exchanged for the 'moral narratives' of today.

### **The Case of Denmark**

Before specifying the conceptual framework through which we shall analyse the ethical idea(l)s of anthropology, let us now return to the question of when and why anthropology began branching out from academia, focusing on Denmark as the critical case of some international trends that changed anthropology from an academic discipline, critical about its own application, to a professional practice being carried out in many arenas of society.

In Denmark, anthropology has remained a highly competitive option for choice of university education for more than four decades and has attracted some of the brightest students. After graduating anthropologists are employed in a broad range of positions in the public as well as the private sector (Capacent 2009; Hansen and Jöhncke 2013). Anthropologists graduating from one of the two major universities in Denmark (Copenhagen and Aarhus) complete a five-year specialized degree in anthropology and emerge with a very strong identity as anthropologists. Their 'anthropological identity' does weaken over time as they gain different kinds of work experience and obtain other kinds of professional identity alongside their anthropological identity, but what our study has shown is that the same moral questions continue to guide many of them in their working life in a remarkably persistent way.

Anthropology has become a relatively large discipline in Danish universities compared to many other countries. The two large and original departments in Copenhagen and Aarhus have in the last two decades been supplemented by studies in other universities within subfields such as the anthropology of education, of technology and of marketing and management. Outside of academia, anthropologists have long been part of various kinds of professional collaborations and these have in many ways contributed to shaping the discipline and the way in which anthropology is currently being taught in universities in Denmark. Different kinds of initiatives have been taken by the major university departments in an attempt to build bridges between academia and the labour market. The students are taught compulsory courses in applied anthropology and anthropology as a profession and are encouraged to carry out fieldwork in collaboration with external partners.

At the heart of the research vision of the Department Anthropology at the University in Copenhagen, where the authors of this book were affiliated while carrying out their research, lies a commitment to *engaged* anthropology, which seeks to combine, in different and often *experimental* ways, a critical attention to pressing social problems and their potential solutions with a strong desire to formulate cutting-edge anthropological theories based on solid bodies of *ethnography*, also referred to by the department as 'The Triple E'. A unit has been established within the Department at the University of Copenhagen for the development and conduct of collaborative research and teaching projects with private corporations and public institutions as well as civil society organizations. The general purpose of this unit, referred to as

‘AnthroAnalysis, Center for Applied Anthropology’, is to contribute to the development and use of anthropological perspectives in practice, and to help inspire anthropologists and collaborative partners alike to take the use of the discipline still further into new areas and forms of application. As is stated on the homepage of this unit: ‘It is part of an ongoing effort to build stronger links between university research and knowledge needs in different sectors of society – challenging and transforming both sides in the process’.

Researchers at the university departments also still carry out long ethnographic fieldwork in far-away places, and the academic community of anthropologists in Denmark has a high level of internationalization, including many international scholars, and most anthropological publications are in English. But anthropology in Denmark is at the same time a discipline that has put great effort into adapting to political and economic reforms in Denmark and new working conditions, both inside and outside of academia.

The humanities and the social sciences are presently being pushed to justify their relevance and existence in Denmark, as is also the case in many other countries, but there has also been a noteworthy increase in the demand for anthropologists on the Danish labour market. This paradox, as well as the attempts made by the Department of Anthropology in Copenhagen to bridge the divide between basic and applied research, need to be understood in the context of the growth of the Danish welfare state in the second half of the twentieth century and neo-liberal reforms in Denmark since the 1980s.

In Denmark, where all universities are state universities, there is a direct link between national research and education policy and changes in research and teaching at universities. Universities in Denmark have always educated people for a labour market, defined by the political project of the state, as discussed by O.K. Pedersen (2011) in his book *Konkurrencestaten* (The Competition State) which has had a considerable influence on the debate in Denmark since its publication. He refers to three different phases in the history of political culture in Denmark, from 1850 to 2010: 1) the formation of the nation state (1850–1950); 2) the development of the welfare state (1950–1990); and 3) the development of what he refers to as the ‘competition state’.

The development of the nation state depended on tools such as a national language, a shared understanding of the culture and history of the nation, and the shaping of the individual through educational institutions. Therefore, during the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century, the humanities, especially those contributing to this nationalist project, became solidified in Danish universities (ibid).

169–77). During the next phase (1950–1990), democracy and participation in the welfare state took centre stage, through the promotion of values like community, equality and equal opportunity, and through the building of public institutions that could counter social inequalities. The social sciences (economy, political science, sociology) grew vastly at the university during this period, educational institutions now being expected to educate professionals for the fast-growing state bureaucracy and the increasing number of welfare institutions (ibid. 177–86). During this period, anthropology in Copenhagen was moved from the humanities, from being based at the National Museum of Denmark, to the faculty of social sciences.<sup>2</sup> The third phase, the ‘competition phase’, O.K. Pedersen argues, started around the 1990s. In the 1970s and 1980s a critique of the growing welfare state developed, and a transition to a new ideology was heralded at the time of financial crisis in the 1970s (ibid.: 187; O.K. Pedersen 2013). The result was a wave of neoliberal reforms and financial cuts, and the introduction of new public management tools in the public sector in the 1980s and 1990s (Kaspersen and Nørgaard 2015: 74–86), and the expectation that universities now educate people not only for the public but also the private sector.

While public employees’ time and resources for each child, pupil, client, citizen, patient or student decreased in the 1980s and 1990s, anthropology as a discipline focusing on culture, and on the people’s/patients’/users’ perspective and experience, grew. In the 1980s the anthropology of development and medical anthropology became established subfields at the university departments in both Copenhagen and Aarhus, accompanied by a renewed interest in the application of anthropology. The Danish Development Agency (within the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs) has been a generous sponsor of anthropological research since the 1980s and 1990s and has therefore played a significant role in shaping – and making possible – research in those parts of the world where the development agency worked, in particular with regard to themes of particular interest to the agency (e.g. health in Africa and Asia). Alongside anthropologists’ increasing involvement in development, requests were made from the Danish healthcare system and patient organizations in Denmark that anthropologists contribute to studying patients’ experience of sickness and treatment, and medical anthropology became a significant subfield in the 1980s in Denmark, as it also did internationally.

The 1990s involved continued organizational rationalizations and an entry of market principles into the public sector, but during this decade a new market also opened for anthropologists in terms of col-

laboration with a whole range of professionals: corporate consultants, designers, IT specialists and others. Medical anthropology continued to grow, design anthropology and business and organizational anthropology became established as subfields, and the political demand for interdisciplinary research pushed anthropologists into a large range of collaborative projects, where they were often expected to explain culture and uncover the needs and perspectives of people. Ethnography was seen as a promising new means for mapping human behaviour (L.R. Pedersen 2018: 56).

After the turn of the century, the government launched a mission for Denmark to become a leading 'knowledge economy', as a way to counter the threat of globalization. In a strategy document issued by the Danish Government in 2006 the agenda is clear: 'We need to ensure that Denmark has the power to compete so we will remain among the richest countries in the world . . . The knowledge, ideas and work of people are the key to using the possibilities given to us by globalization. Therefore, Denmark needs to have a world-class educational system. We need to be a leading knowledge-society with research on the highest international level' (Government of Denmark 2006: 4–5). The concepts of a knowledge society or knowledge-based economy have been used interchangeably in a European context and date back to the mid-1990s. The specific concepts relating to a knowledge-based economy coalesced into a general policy, in no small part due to the OECD, which systematically developed indicators to measure the success rate of economies in terms of how knowledge was produced, disseminated and integrated in national economies (Godin 2006; Wright and Ørberg 2011). Like many other European countries, Denmark has taken up the OECD focus on knowledge production as a path to growth and value creation as a way to strengthen a traditional industrial production system. At a time when Denmark was actually doing rather well, not just financially but also in terms of international assessments of the quality of research and higher education, there was nevertheless a growing concern that an increasingly globalized market would become a threat to the nation (Gorm Hansen 2011: 29).

In a report published by the Danish Government in 2003, 'New Paths between Research and Industry from Insights to Invoice', the Danish Government stated: 'It is the goal of the government that Denmark be able to measure itself against the best in the world when it comes to interaction between industry and knowledge institutions . . . We are not good enough [yet] at ensuring that industry, knowledge and perspectives are mirrored in research and education' (Government of Denmark 2003: 5). Even though Denmark did well in terms

of knowledge production, the new indicators developed by the OECD brought issues of knowledge dissemination to the forefront (Gorm Hansen 2011: 31).

This agenda echoed international trends where OECD countries in particular leaned heavily on the idea that knowledge production was going through necessary historical shift: the so-called leap from 'mode 1' to 'mode 2' knowledge production. This idea was first suggested by the now highly impactful book: *The New Production of Knowledge: The Dynamics of Science and Research in Contemporary Societies* (Gibbons et al. 1994),<sup>3</sup> which was later followed up in the writings of one of the authors, Helga Nowotny (Nowotny et al. 2001, Nowotny 2003). The 1994 book describes knowledge production mode 1 as a homogenous practice characterized as 'disciplinary', 'hierarchical', 'conservative' and carried out in the context of a purely academic community. By contrast, mode 2 of knowledge production is claimed to arise from rapid changes in Western societies, one of which is globalization, and is characterized by being 'transdisciplinary', 'heterogeneous', 'heterarchical', 'transient' and carried out in the context of application (Gibbons et al. 1994: 3). The narrative is one of progress. Mode 2 is identified as a new way of doing science and research, where the so-called producers of knowledge work more closely with the so-called consumers of knowledge, making knowledge production more 'socially accountable', 'reflexive' (Gibbons et al. 1994) or 'robust' (Nowotny et al. 2011, Nowotny 2003). *The New Production of Knowledge* received critique for showing a notable lack of empirical evidence for its claims (Shinn 2002), and for contradicting the history of science which shows little or no documentation for the existence of a past where the pure mode 1 university had a monopoly on knowledge production (Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff 2000, Shapin 2008). Despite this, the step1/step2 narrative which forms the core claim of the book has shown strong argumentative powers not just in terms of its solidifying and historicizing effects but also for its effectiveness as a political strategy (Gorm Hansen 2011, Wright and Ørberg 2011). This idea of a progressive shift away from an outdated academic mode 1 university to towards a more agile and competitive mode 2 university also had an enormous impact on research policy in Europe, Asia and North America, and played an important role in how academic universities were governed, funded and managed from the end of the 1990s and onwards (Godin 1998, Hessels and Van Lente 2008, Shinn 2002). To some Danish research policy makers in the late 1990s and early 2000s, the purported change to mode 2 knowledge production was referred to as an actual historical event with almost the same level of facticity as the fall of the Berlin wall

(Gorm Hansen 2011). It seems the hope invested in replacing the mode 1 university with a more competitive, interactive and institutionally distributed knowledge production rested on the assumption that it would also make academic science more agile and capable of competing on a global market (Government of Denmark 2003, 2006). In Denmark, policy makers readily adopted one of the core arguments from *The New Production of Knowledge*, resulting in a performative ‘looping effect’ where the step1/step2 narrative, rather than describing a development in the university sector, became a predictor of its reform (Gorm Hansen 2011). Echoing both the OECD and *The New Production of Knowledge*, a series of reforms in how Danish universities were governed, funded and managed were slowly initiated from the end of the 1990s and continued well beyond the next decade (Andersen 2006).

These changes were often announced precisely as a response to a perceived need to move Denmark out of an outdated era of the isolated, mono-disciplinary ivory tower research and into a new era in which university and society were imagined as separate spheres of reality in acute need of bridging or ‘interacting’ by way of commercialization, interdisciplinarity and restructuring (Government of Denmark 2003, Gorm Hansen 2011, Wright and Ørberg 2011).<sup>4</sup>

In 2006 this intensification of the interaction-agenda in Danish research policy resulted in new strategies to give Denmark a more competitive edge on the global market. A ‘programme for user driven innovation’ was initiated with the purpose of making Danish companies and public institutions more innovative and ultimately able to compete more effectively in a global economy (L.R. Pedersen 2018: 61; The Danish Business and Construction Authority 2007). Danish anthropologists responded: a specialized master’s programme in Business and Organizational Anthropology was launched at the Department of Anthropology in Copenhagen in 2009, partly funded by a special scheme from the Ministry of Education and Research.

Consequently, on the one hand anthropologists felt that their research integrity and future existence was being threatened by the mantra of ‘insight to invoice’, and had difficulty seeing themselves as producers of research results that could feed directly into the design of commercial products. On the other hand, the rise of neoliberalism led to the widespread marketization of cultural and human domains, with regard to which anthropology was increasingly valued as an instrument for growth (L.R. Pedersen 2018: 60). While anthropologists thus felt politically threatened by the ‘knowledge economy’, neoliberal reforms also created new possibilities and contributed to a growth of the discipline.

The political culture of the welfare state, with its notions of community, participation and equality (cf. O.K. Pedersen 2011: 177–86), has persisted alongside these waves of neoliberal reforms, the intention of which were never to do away with the welfare state, but simply to render it more cost-efficient. The welfare state and its neoliberal reforms therefore provide an important context for the development of anthropology as a discipline in Denmark, in particular the rise of medical anthropology, design anthropology and business anthropology, as well as an increased focus upon interdisciplinary research in Danish universities, since the 1990s. They also provide part of the explanation behind anthropology's move from academia to the labour market outside of academia in the course of the 1980s and 1990s. Other reasons for this have to do with anthropology being a relatively large discipline in a small country, and the fact that several generations of highly competent students have found their way into the labour market and made anthropology known in Denmark.

The moral economy of anthropology that we discuss in the following chapters does indeed seem to resonate with that of anthropology in other countries, as illustrated by our reference to the opening ceremony of the AAA in 2017. It also resonates with the overall change of focus in anthropology from grand narratives of the mid-twentieth century, as discussed earlier. Still, as we have now shown, the growth of the discipline in Denmark since the 1980s, the recognition of its contributions by various societal actors, and the ways in which the moral economy of anthropology is played out in Denmark, that is, the 'mission' of anthropologists in Denmark, are also a result of political projects that have been set in motion in Denmark in the past decades – political projects that again are specific instances of more general, and at times international, trends.

We will now move on to the analytical framework that allows us to unpack the 'mission' of anthropology and the desire to be a 'moral corrective', namely the concept of moral economy.

## Anthropology as a Moral Economy

We know all about the delicate tissue of social norms and reciprocities which regulates the life of Trobriand islanders, and the psychic energies involved in the cargo cults of Melanesia; but at some point this infinitely-complex social creature, Melanesian man, becomes . . . the eighteenth-century English collier who claps his hand spasmodically upon his stomach, and responds to elementary economic stimuli . . . [In] my view, these men and women in

the crowd were informed by the belief that they were defending traditional rights or customs; and, in general, that they were supported by the wider consensus of the community . . . [a] consistent traditional view of social norms and obligations, of the proper economic functions of several parties within the community, which, taken together, can be said to constitute the moral economy of the poor. (Thompson 1971: 78, 188)

Thus goes one snippet from the British historian E.P. Thompson's diatribe against his colleagues from economic history and sociology, who from his humanist-Marxist perspective were scandalously ignorant and presupposed about the lifeways of their countrymen [*sic*] from working class and peasant backgrounds. His now famous concept of 'moral economy' was an attempt to mitigate this lack by homing in on the distinct social, economic and ethical values, which – in his view – were shared by groups and communities belonging to lower socioeconomic strata in Britain and elsewhere. In the decade following the publication of Thompson's essay, a number of leftist historians, sociologists and anthropologists began using the concept, including Raymond Williams (of whose work Thompson was very critical), Eric Hobsbawm and, above all, James Scott, whose *The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia* became a modern classic among political theorists and anthropologists. Following Thompson, Scott used the concept of moral economies to assess and analyse the motivation and the potential for societal uprisings: 'If we understand the indignation and rage which prompted [Burmese peasants] to risk everything, we can grasp what I have chosen to call their moral economy: their notion of economic justice and their working definition of exploitation' (1977: 4). As such, the concept provided radical/activist students and scholars of politically and economically marginal groups with a new conceptual language for theorizing ideas, values and practices that would otherwise be deemed as backward, primitive or irrational from the vantage of neoclassical economy and modernization theory. Thus, as Fassin (2009) explains, the 'concept of moral economy . . . refers to two very distinct levels of analysis. . . First, the moral economy corresponds to a system of exchange of goods and services and characterizes pre-market societies . . . Secondly, the moral economy also corresponds to a system of norms and obligations . . . More than a set of economic rules, these norms are principles of good character, justice, dignity, and respect' (2009: 11). What is more, as Fassin also points out, the concept of moral economy can be applied to two scales of investigation: 'On the one hand, we can consider the moral economies of a society (or group of societies) in a given histor-

ical moment. On the other hand, we can focus more specifically on moral economies of certain social realms or segments of society . . . at the global, national, or local level' (2009: 47).

Now, the question that we would like to ask here is: might (Danish) anthropology itself also be described as a moral economy in the sense theorized by Thompson and other Marxists? And if so, what might be the analytical purpose of making this move, both in relation to the specific purposes of this volume, and with respect to the wider discussion concerning anthropology's role in the world? At first glance, the community of (mostly middle-class, white) Danish anthropologists hardly meets the criteria of a moral economy in the most common anthropological understanding of this term. As one of our colleagues objected when we presented an early version of these thoughts at a seminar, the community of Danish anthropology and anthropologists are part and parcel of a broader neoliberal political economy, whose hegemonic logic of self-control and optimization permeates virtually all professional (and personal) relationships in the Danish private and public sector, including universities. Clearly, to assert that the members of this community partake in a 'system of exchange of goods and services [that] characterizes pre-market societies' (cf. Fassin 2009: 47) would not just be imprecise if not inaccurate, but also frivolous and privilege-blind.

However, there are versions of the concept of moral economy that offer a better match with the case of anthropology and anthropologists. Let us briefly consider two of these in turn. In 1995, Chicago historian of science, Lorraine Daston, published a now classic paper, which both extended the empirical scope of the moral economy concept to a community of (natural) scientists, but also represented a theoretical break from the version discussed above. A 'moral economy', Daston writes,

is a web of affect-saturated values that stand and function in well-defined relationship to one another. In this usage, 'moral' . . . refers at once to the psychological and to the normative . . . Although it is a contingent, malleable thing of no necessity, a moral economy has a certain logic to its composition and operations . . . Although moral economies are about mental states, these are the mental states of collectives, in this case collectives of scientists, not of lone individuals . . . [It is] a gradual shaping of a collective personality akin (and . . . sometimes identical) to Norbert Elias's 'civilizing process'. (1995: 4–5)

As Fassin points out in his critical remarks on Daston's work (Fassin 2009: 28–35), this definition is old-school Durkheimian (and, as Daston herself also implies, classic Weberian). Gone is Thompson's historical-

materialist focus on exploitation, resistance and revolution, and in comes instead a socially constituted and morally sanctioned subculture of shared meanings, symbols and values of the sort so well-known from the anthropological canon. And much like in the case of Scott's extension of Thompson's concept of moral economy to non-Western peasant contexts, it is not difficult to see why Daston's widening of the concept of moral economies gained traction, at least among historians and sociologists of science, who have generally tended to study communities (viz. Western natural scientists) who are not as socially and economically marginal as Thompson's 'workman' [*sic*] or Scott's peasants, but who nevertheless often harbour moral ideals which are in direct opposition to dominant economic logics. Indeed, Daston asserts,

[m]oral economies . . . are integral to science: to its sources of inspiration, its choice of subject matter and procedures, its sifting of evidence, and its standards of explanation . . . Insofar as the study of moral economies in science is about power, it is power of the microscopic, internalized Foucaultian sort, rather than of the political (or martial), externalized kind. In other words, the moral economy of science is more about self-discipline than coercion. (1995: 6)

Evidently, it would seem to make a good deal of sense to conceive of anthropology as a scientific moral economy in Daston's Durkheimian/Weberian sense. To be sure, one would be hard pressed to identify 'quantification, empiricism and objectivity' (1995: xx) as the dominant values in the moral economy of anthropology, but then again, anthropologists hardly consider themselves to be 'scientists' in Daston's narrow sense. Nevertheless, it seems to us that Daston's generic definition of the moral economy of science as a 'web of affect-saturated values that stand and function in well-defined relationship to one another' applies well to anthropology, including her observation that this involves the shaping of a 'collective personality akin to . . . [a] civilizing process'. Indeed, this emphasis on the cultivation of a particular scientific disciplinary self, and indeed a certain self-disciplining, might be said to apply particularly well to the modern Danish context, where students and scholars of anthropology tend to identify very strongly with their discipline and to spend considerable time and energy on maintaining and patrolling boundaries towards other professions inside and outside the academy.

Still, it is hard to disagree with critics of Daston, like Fassin, that her notion of moral economies as (sub)cultures is too watered down and too generic (as well as overly culturalist and bourgeois, in a critical theory sense). Ideally, we are looking for a version of the concept that

is not as empirically restricted as Thompson's, and to a lesser extent Scott's and Fassin's, but one that is still sufficiently narrow and analytically precise to capture what could be thought to be characteristic of self-acclaimed and aggrandized 'moral' academic groupings like anthropologists. And fortunately, we have stumbled across a good candidate for just such a concept in our oftentimes meandering and sometimes desperate sifting through multiple partly overlapping anthropological literatures:

The moral economy of capitalism is based on the separation of two spheres, the market and home, which represent ideally impersonal and personal social life. The payment of money for labour marks the first and unpaid, especially female labour the second. People are expected to divide themselves daily between public production and private consumption, to submit to impersonal rules outside the home and to express themselves as persons within it. This division has never been actually achieved, but a huge cultural effort goes into generating it. (Hart 2011)

The subtlety and the sharpness of this definition from the noted economic anthropologist Keith Hart is significant. Notwithstanding its merits for the anthropological study of capitalism (a question that is beyond the scope of this discussion), Hart's notion of capitalism as moral economy provides us with what we have been looking for: a reconceptualization of this concept that significantly widens its analytical purchase to ethnographic contexts beyond 'workers' and 'peasants' and other economically and culturally marginalized groups, while retaining the original concept's degree of sharpness.

In fact, we would go so far as to suggest that the passage above contains the potential to pin down the content as well as the form of the moral economy of anthropology with almost surgical precision. All that we need to do is to substitute 'capitalism' with 'anthropology'. Before we make this attempt, let us have a look at what kinds of divisions we have seen anthropologists make when it comes to making sense of their own practice. Accordingly, in what follows, we return to some of our key findings from the joint research project on which most chapters in this book are based.

## **The Moral Economy of Danish Anthropologists**

During our fieldwork we all independently discovered that a large part of the conversations we had with anthropologists, as well as a large part of the decisions they made at work, revolved around an on-

going concern for the moral value as well as the authenticity of their work. For many of our interlocutors, it seemed like their identification with the discipline of anthropology came with implicit moral imperatives. Sentences starting with ‘as an anthropologist I must’, ‘as an anthropologist I will have to’ or ‘as an anthropologist I could never’ frequently appeared in our material. Reading our fieldwork material together, we started to wonder why our interlocutors were so concerned with assessing whether or not their work would be helpful in creating a ‘better world’, while their concrete vision of this world differed so enormously between them. Most of our interlocutors were concerned with not compromising on their own moral standards, and others saw themselves as defending a set of moral values against all odds, sometimes to the point of seeing themselves in opposition to the very organizations they work for or with.

Our collective fieldwork experience shows anthropologists putting much effort into thinking critically about the moral landscape they work in and expressing a need to change things for the better, often in opposition to the logic of the systems they work within, and with a great deal of ambivalence towards occupying a formal position of power or becoming part of the establishment. Medical anthropologists divide their world up into two spheres. On one side is a world of real, embodied people whose experience, suffering, everyday life and practices they feel obliged to faithfully represent. On the other side is a world of abstract and calculative logic created by medical or natural scientists, managers and state bureaucrats, whom they feel obliged to critically challenge in order to be helpful in the long run (Chapter 1). In the three other fields we cover in this book we saw similar ambitions: anthropologists working in the (profit-led) field of business distanced themselves from the logic of capitalism and did not see profit accumulation as a morally justifiable goal (Chapter 2). Anthropologists in leadership positions seemed to distance themselves from their formal roles as managers, or at least attempted to become another kind of manager, one who understands the organization as a complex set of human social practices rather than in terms of bottom line numbers, budgets or business fads (Chapter 3). Academic anthropologists working in interdisciplinary projects often distanced themselves from the logics they encountered in other disciplines and found it morally questionable to compromise their affiliation to anthropological epistemology, methods and ethics when engaging in cross-disciplinary collaborations, as this in itself felt reductionist and immoral to them (Chapter 4).

It seems that providing results in management, interdisciplinary research, healthcare or business consulting was more a means to an end

than a goal in itself for our interlocutors. Key Performance Indicators or core tasks in their job had to provide the world with something more, something better. Looking at our materials across field sites, it seems that interlocutors assessed this 'more' or 'better' by plotting their own work in relationship to morally charged spheres that were often put in opposition to one another. Thus, we found it fruitful to try to understand our interlocutors' incessant moral self-assessment by thinking of it as a moral economy. An absolute division of spheres was never actually achieved but, as Hart says in relation to the moral economy of capitalism, a huge cultural effort went into generating it.

Many of the anthropologists we worked with told us they did not feel that they were 'real' or 'true' anthropologists and we often heard them say that compromising with the demands of 'real anthropology' was a moral challenge to them. Is there something inherently moral about being a real anthropologist? Do anthropologists share a common code for what constitutes moral integrity?

The answer is a resounding no! Our individual interlocutors' moral values themselves seem rather fluid and dependent on context. In fact, our interlocutors show very little coherence when it comes to the specific content of their individual moral values and visions for a better world. One anthropologist's moral high ground may be another anthropologist's moral defeat, and moral values can, moreover, change in the course of a career.

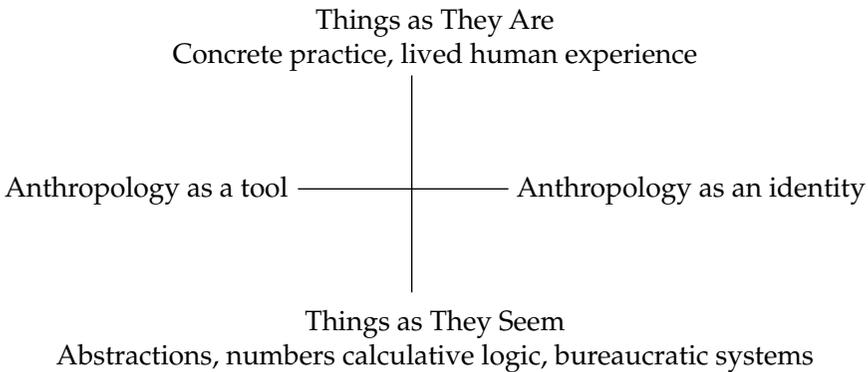
What we do see across fields, however, is the ongoing preoccupation with juxtaposing one's work with a more or less specific moral ideal as well as juxtaposing it with the work of others in relationship to this ideal. Across fields, our interlocutors were engaged in a process of plotting their work within what we have chosen to call a moral economy, the world being constantly divided into spheres that the anthropologist will find more or less aligned with what they find just, good or right.

Allow us to stress here, that we do not see the moral economy of anthropology as a description of some pre-existing and fixed entity, such as a common set of moral guidelines that apply to all anthropologists. Our use of the concept is analytical and in that sense predominantly heuristic. The concept of moral economy helps us to ask questions about what kinds of spheres anthropologists divide their world into and how these spheres are given different moral values in relation to each other. It makes us interested in the way in which interlocutors position their work and that of others in an economy of moral value assessment.

What we refer to here as a moral economy of anthropology, then, may be conceived of as a sort of coordinate system within which a

given anthropologist positions him- or herself in relation to two axes or scales of moral value.

We have identified two overall axes that seem to govern the way in which anthropologists assess the moral value of their work. The vertical axis makes a distinction between what our interlocutors see as ‘things as they are’ versus ‘things as they seem’. The horizontal axis makes a distinction between what we choose to call ‘anthropology as an identity’ and ‘anthropology as a tool’. Together, the two axes form a matrix that can be loaded with moral value and used in a process of assessment of one’s own work – and that of colleagues or co-workers inside and outside the discipline.



**Figure 0.1** The horizontal and vertical axes of the moral economy of anthropology

### **The Vertical Axis: Metaphysics**

The vertical axis is metaphysical in nature, in that it divides the world into two poles – or spheres – that we could pragmatically call ‘things as they are’ and ‘things as they seem’. The highest value of this axis points towards what the anthropologist perceives to be a real world of concrete, lived human experience, a world whose richness and complexity testifies to its reality. The lowest value points towards a world of abstraction where numbers, concepts, graphic representations, calculative logic and bureaucratic systems reign. The lower part of the scale on this axis points to a world that is merely an abstraction of the real (things as they seem) rather than being the real itself (things as they are). Dividing the world up according to these two spheres is in no way unique to anthropologists. Most professional groups can be

said to subscribe to metaphysical assumptions about what constitutes the real and what does not. In fact, we can hardly think of a human society that does not divide up the world in terms of different levels of reality. What seems unique to the anthropologists we meet in this book is not the poles of this metaphysical axis but rather the way in which this axis is moralized.

According to our interlocutors, anthropological practice and the kind of knowledge it generates cannot be presented in abstract and simple terms such as graphs, numbers, Excel sheets or bullet-point executive summaries without some kind of moral compromise. Something more is going on, something thicker and richer and less explicable that eschews abstract or numerical representation. Functioning as a spokesperson for this 'more', however it is defined, seems to be vital to the anthropologists' sense of moral high ground.

It became interesting to us, that while anthropologists associated the lower part of this scale with things as they seem, their colleagues from other professional groups would almost certainly express the opposite view. Whereas mathematicians and economists (Barany and MacKenzie 2014), physicists (Knorr-Cetina 1999), engineers (Latour 1996), accountants (Boll 2014) or biologists (Gorm Hansen 2011) base many of their decisions on abstract representations and strongly believe in their own ability to speak for reality by way of these, our interlocutors tend to have it precisely the other way around. They seemed to attribute not only a higher level of reality but also a higher level of moral value to a concrete, lived human practice, which they claim cannot be explicated in abstract, graphical or numerical representations without making/causing a dangerous slippage from representing 'things as they are' to merely representing them 'as they seem'. Thus, the higher we go on this axis towards things as they are, the closer the anthropologist is to positioning him- or herself as a spokesperson for the concrete, real, embodied and lived experience of people whose practice they manage, represent in academic publications, or develop healthcare or provide other assistance for by way of consultancy services or design. In contrast, the lower we go on the scale of this axis, the further away we move from representing the real, and thus the more likely anthropologists are to assess their own work (and that of others) as superficial, reductionist or simply misguided. Consequently, the anthropologist becomes less trustworthy as a spokesperson for what is 'real' and 'true' and, more importantly, therefore less morally justified in the work they do.

Again, our interlocutors may differ greatly when it comes to their view of what constitutes reality, their ontology, so to speak. But across

fields we see a shared metaphysics: an attempt to divide the world into these two spheres. The moralization of this axis makes our interlocutors align with whatever they individually perceive to be most concrete, real and empirically grounded, striving for the high end of the scale on this axis. At the same time, we see, across fields, an ongoing attempt by our interlocutors to negatively define the lower scale on this axis and to self-represent in a way that clearly disassociates their professional identity from the negative pole of this axis. The two end points of this axis will, however, be defined very differently depending on the context in which the interlocutor is doing their work, as well as the current expression of their personal moral values.

### **The Horizontal Axis: Identity**

Shifting position in our coordinate system, the horizontal axis is stretched out between a position at one end of the axis in which there is a conflation between personal identity and academic discipline, and a position at the other end where anthropology is used as a tool to obtain a different goal than the one of doing ‘real anthropology’. Like the moralization of the vertical axis, the identity/tool axis is at times also loaded with moral value in the sense that anthropological knowledge often stands for authenticity when anthropologists talk about their contributions to a workplace. Perhaps that is part of the context for the concern many of our interlocutors’ express about being ‘real anthropologists’ and their striving towards (or idealization of) high value positions on the horizontal axis. Anthropological authenticity, many of our interlocutors imagine, will strengthen their sense of being entitled to speak on behalf of a human reality and make them less doubtful about their own ability to do so. In fact, when studying anthropologists ethnographically, we would at times find ourselves negotiating (and in some cases competing) for anthropological authenticity with our interlocutors in a way that gave rise to a subtle pecking order revolving around who gets to turn the other into ‘data’ (Chapter 5). In other cases, our interlocutors would be primarily invested in a different project, the one of the organization that they worked for, and only be concerned about their position on the vertical axis, feeling that the higher they were on the vertical axis, the better they could contribute to their goals of their organization (Chapter 1). Again, the values themselves are fluid and context-dependent. There is no agreement between interlocutors about what constitutes ‘real anthropology’, and the high end of this axis is almost exclusively negatively defined. It

seems that across fields, a real anthropologist is defined by their distance to the non-anthropological. Our interlocutors are quite clear in labelling work in their field as non-anthropological, but their specific reasons for doing so may vary greatly across fields. For some, being a real anthropologist would require them to have spent a year doing fieldwork in a specific setting (which the majority of our interlocutors lament not having done). Others seem to subscribe to the idea that being a real anthropologist is determined by one's proximity to university life and academic research. Others, still, define real anthropology as taking place outside university 'ivory towers' where anthropologists can use anthropology as a tool in ways that directly address the key issue for their employer, client or customer.

Taken together, these two axes form the basis for a moral economy of anthropology. In this moral economy, some anthropologist will be called to strive for a position in the upper right 'magic quadrant' of our coordinate system (Barany and MacKenzie 2014). Others will be more interested in positioning themselves in the upper left corner. However, none of our interlocutors identify with the two quadrants below the horizontal line in our coordinate system. As the division between a real human reality and its opposite as well as the division between real anthropology and its opposite remain fluid and context-dependent, the magic quadrant is often negatively defined in terms of what one is not really achieving. Thus, there is an immanent sense of needing to enquire into whether one's work is in fact in danger of slipping into the wrong side of these divisions. Thus, in the words of Hart, a 'huge cultural effort' goes into generating these divisions again and again and positioning oneself correctly in relationship to them in every new work relationship. In sum, we will argue in this book that the moral values of anthropologists are in no way absolute. Indeed, they are relative and negotiable. What we will show in chapters 1–5 is not where in the coordinate system particular anthropologists are positioned. Rather, we will show the ongoing re-enactment of the above distinctions and the constant effort to position themselves and the people they work with in relation to these spheres, marked by their two axes. This continuous effort we will call the moral work of anthropology.

So, to paraphrase Hart's definition of the moral economy of capitalism by substituting 'capitalism' with 'anthropology':

The moral economy of anthropology is based on the separation of two spheres, things as they seem and things as they are, which represent, ideally, abstraction into dead numbers and concrete and lived everyday life, respectively. Explications of all kinds, especially for bureaucratic, commercial or otherwise hegemonic (capitalist, hetero-normative and patriarchal)

purposes, mark the former, and long-term (or permanent!) fieldwork, especially of an inter-subjective, caring sort, aspiring to gain access to otherwise tacit norms undergirding peoples' experiences, marks the latter. Anthropologists are expected to divide their work between meaningless labour that reduces complexity by representing and reproducing things as they seem on the one hand, and meaningful work that retains complexity and reduces suffering on the other hand, and to express themselves amorally by reductionist explicitness outside the sphere of anthropological integrity and express themselves as moral embodiment inside it. This division has never been actually achieved, but a huge cultural effort goes into generating it.

In the chapters that follow we will present the studies and collaborations from which we generated the above analytical framework. The chapters in the book explore anthropologists at different points in their career and in different kinds of working conditions. Some added anthropological training to their skills after years on the labour market; some majored in anthropology at the university but had many years of work experience in non-academic organizations like the health-care system when we met them, and had less difficulty realizing their moral project while at the same time identifying with their workplace and job function (Chapter 1). Others have been at their workplace for many years but continue to identify strongly with anthropology, and feel called to do things differently due to this identification. We also encountered anthropologists who were at the beginning of their career and still struggled to dissociate themselves from anthropology as an identity project and/ or work with the production and selling of anthropological methods and knowledge, and who thus continuously faced dilemmas and questions concerning the authenticity of the way in which they did anthropology (Chapter 2 and Chapter 5). Finally, we have encountered anthropologists who work in interdisciplinary settings within academia where the personal and the disciplinary identity remain indistinguishable (Chapter 4). In the conclusion of the book we tie the chapters together through a return to the framework presented here in the Introduction.

We hope that the book will contribute to an awareness and debate of what happens to anthropology as it moves in and out of academia and into new arenas, and that future research will explore yet other arenas in Denmark as well as in other countries, and follow up on how the moral project of anthropology evolves over time and space.

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## NOTES

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1. It would indeed have been relevant to include global development in the discussion of anthropology’s moral project, but morality was not the object of the study from the outset of the project.
2. In Aarhus, the other major Department of Anthropology in Denmark, it is still based at the Faculty of Humanities.
3. In 2007 the book had received over 1000 citations in academic journals and the number still increases (Hessels and Van Lente 2008). Shinn (2002) investigates the impressive impact of *The New Production of Knowledge* from its publication in 1994 and detects a marked increase in citations around the end of the 1990s: ‘For the period of 1995 to June 1999 a total of 98 references were made to the book . . . The number of references for the first six months of 1999 already equals those for 1998; the total (not including self-citations) from 1995 to July 2002 is 266 citations’ (Shinn 2002: 601). Education reviews in particular are abundant in citations but citations are also found in the field of science policy, sociology of science and technology, psychology, sociology and social psychology. Citations are mainly found in Western Europe but also in the United States and Canada. The concept of mode 2 knowledge production has been found in policy documents in Europe, Canada and the United States (Hessels

and van Lente 2008; Godin 1998). Interestingly, a very steep increase in citations occurs around 1999 and rapidly climbing upwards from there to 2011, coinciding with the period in which the push for a radical reform of Danish university management and the need to embrace industrial interests began to pick up speed (Andersen, 2006). Today a general Google search on the full title of the book will give 34,00,000 results while keywords like 'mode 2 knowledge' will give 1,370,000 hits.

4. See Jensen (2010) and Godin (1998) for similar performative readings of the mode 2 concept.

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