Toward an Understanding of Contemporary Professional Culture

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Bio:

Michael Giulietti, a student of anthropology at the University of North Texas, has completed fieldwork in both archaeology and cultural anthropology. After receiving funding from the McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program, he embarked on his first academic inquiry into the professional culture of shoe repair. Michael has presented material at the 2011 Society for Applied Anthropology annual meeting and numerous other venues. Future plans for the research include adding to the academic literature on the anthropology of consumption or applying new perspectives to cultural materialism. Exiting UNT in 2011 and matriculating into Oregon State University’s Masters of Applied Anthropology Program, Michael hopes to apply future work with craftsmen to assist businesses adapting to changing consumer economies.
Abstract:

In the summer of 2010, the author embarked on an applied anthropology project to study the American professional culture of shoe repair. The project was funded by UNT’s McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program with guidance by Dr. Ann Jordan of UNT’s Department of Anthropology. This qualitative study used the anthropological methods to investigate this rapidly diminishing group and the reasons for its precipitous decline. Participants were recruited either through in-store encounters or from participants in the Shoe Service Institute of America’s 2010 convention in Oklahoma City, OK. Twenty-one participants were gathered from shoe repair establishments in DFW and 28 from the convention. The research uncovered the adaptive strategies employed by the shoe repair industry to remain a viable business in a consumption-driven market economy. In a future guaranteed to have fewer resources, shoe repair may see a resurgence as the public begins to value their services once more.
Introduction

Professional cultures, as a type of organizational culture, have the capacity to offer insights in many fields of anthropology. A professional culture can be defined as a group of people who are linked by a specific profession. Brazilian prostitutes and fishers of the Torres Strait are examples that have been studied by anthropologists (Bird, 2007; Kulick, 1997). Occasionally, studies of professional cultures that are “closer to home” have been conducted. Kaprow’s firemen have helped us learn what drives people to be passionate about their work (Kaprow, 1999), Haas’ high steel iron-workers have helped redefine our educational paradigms (Haas, 1972), and Day’s sex workers have illuminated the lives of a highly stigmatized professional culture in London, (Day, 2007) for example. Problems may arise when studying cultures such as these while using the method of participant observation. First, the anthropologist may lose the advantage of total “culture shock” because the same “response mechanisms” for the primary culture often work in the subculture being studied (B. G. Anderson, 1971). Second, individuals can be part of many professional cultures so it can be difficult to tell where one ends and the other begins. Two case studies will serve as a brief introduction to the concept of professional culture and how to characterize them as units of analysis. Keller and Keller’s investigation of cognition in modern American blacksmiths (Keller & Keller, 2008) and Kidder’s recent work on self-identity in New York bike messengers (Kidder, 2006) will first be examined to introduce the characteristics of professional cultures. The author’s own work on the professional culture of shoe repair will then be examined in the same fashion. In the conclusion the future of shoe repair will be discussed as well as avenues for future research.

Blacksmiths as a Professional Culture
Keller and Keller’s work stands not only as a great example of professional culture, but also as an example of how cultures that are “in your backyard” can generate new theories that can be used to advance subfields of anthropology. For example, the focus lies less on blacksmiths and more on cognition and situated learning. Keller and Keller’s work asserts that we categorize our tools by function and not by their similarity to other tools. An application of this would be for a supermarket to position bread next to the jam because we associate bread and jam more so than bread and dinner rolls for example.

Charles Keller’s ethnography is derived from a six month period in 1976 in which he spent as an apprentice to a blacksmith in Santa Fe, New Mexico and from the contacts he kept from there when he resumed teaching at the University of Illinois. After 10 years working out of his home on the trade, Keller began to share workspace with other blacksmiths and continued to write on the subject.

**Bike Messengers as a Professional Culture**

Kidder’s research on New York bike messengers began during the summer of 2002 and continued until the summer of 2003. Bike messengers deliver packages across large cities and take advantage of the mobile nature of bicycles and their “ambiguous legal position with regard to traffic laws” (p. 10) to speed packages through the city. A centralized authority gathers the packages and uses these messengers to get the packages to their destination. The bike messenger’s job is one that is stigmatized, dangerous, and low paying, but most messengers love their job according to Kidder and consider it a “lifestyle” that spills over into their personal lives.

**Trait Aspects of Culture**

Culture is found in learning processes, shared patterns, symbols, and adaptations (Jordan, 2002). Each aspect will be explained in depth over the following paragraphs.
Learned Characteristics of Culture

A professional culture should have a common learning process for neophytes. This process serves as the enculturation aspect of the culture. For American blacksmiths, apprentices learn from the expertise of the master over a period of time. Apprentices will typically be employed handing tools to the more experienced smith then returning the tools to their storage location or cleaning the work area. Only after they are familiar with the tools and how/when they are used can they begin to forge for themselves. This is an example of learning from the periphery to the center of the activity and is common in other apprentice situations (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Singleton, 1998).

The informal social structure of the New York bike messengers helps new hires learn the danger and stigma of their line of work. Most quit the job before two weeks is up but those who continue for over a year lose their “rookie” status. After several years, they become veterans and gain respect from the rookies who will in turn learn from them. The few who have been riding for decades are known as “original messengers” and are seen as legends of the profession.

Shared Patterns of Cultures

Shared patterns can include goals, ideals, values, religions, as well as behaviors that a group has in common. As for their goals, blacksmiths have ideals that they aspire to when doing their work. The common goal for blacksmithing is to shape metal in such a way that “unite[s] the functional with the aesthetic” (Gerakaris, 1993). That means that if queried, most blacksmiths would agree to that definition of their occupational activities. The definition for the goal of blacksmiths actually comes from The Artist-Blacksmiths’ Association of North America (ABANA), a professional association which facilitates meeting and networking. There are other shared characteristics that bind blacksmiths together. Rarely will a blacksmith attempt to mold
cold metal and will do so only when trying to achieve aesthetic effect. Also, a blacksmith tries to complete a job with a minimum of templates and molds, preferring to do the work by hand and eye. Completing the work in this way makes the job more authentic and helps legitimize them as artist-blacksmiths.

There are many shared traits that help to separate bike messengers from other groups in urban settings. Bike messengers are mainly identified by their united goal to get packages to destinations via bicycle as fast as possible. Bike messengers are paid via commission through the piece rate system. For an in-depth analysis of the piece rate system on worker productivity, see Burawoy, (1982). Bike messengers are thus encouraged to deliver as many packages as they can during their shift. The ideal for the bike messenger is to glide effortlessly in and out of traffic without stopping. Like the blacksmith, sometimes they cannot achieve their ideal due to various situational conflicts, such as weather impediments or large crowds of people.

**Shared Symbols in Culture**

One cannot be a member of a culture if one does not understand the symbols of the group. A person would not last long in our culture if they did not understand the symbolic value we attribute to dollar bills. In professional cultures, an anthropologist should identify how the group comes to understand how certain items or events are symbolic of other items or events. Taken liberally, a symbol “is anything and everything that transmits culture, including language and jargon, myths and ceremonies, dress, furniture, and spatial arrangements, all artifacts and behavior patterns” (Jordan, 2002, p. 46). Common symbols among blacksmiths include material artifacts such as forges, anvils, vices, pokers, clinker spoons, and tongs. These tools could be expected in any blacksmith’s work area.
Modern blacksmiths are often separated geographically. Thus, it has been necessary to create channels through which information can pass about learned techniques of the trade. *The Anvil’s Ring* and *The Blacksmith’s Journal* exist as quarterly magazines for the trade along with the ABANA. These communication networks are known by most blacksmiths and serve to unite the culture and help them reach their goals. The publications are often filled with detailed images that teach them how to accomplish various tasks.

Common material artifacts of the bike messenger are very simple, a bike and a package. Without these, one could hardly be considered a bike messenger. A bike messenger’s clothes act as symbols to communicate loudly to others that they are a member of the subculture. Their clothing is often patched and filthy with sweat and New York pollution; they rarely wear helmets. Beyond their cities, connections with other bike messengers can be made through desktop zines sponsored by organizations like the New York Bike Messengers Association (NYBMA, 2011) which groups storylines and news that is relevant to people who identify as bike messengers. Refer to the website at NYBMA.com/news/ for examples. In their communications, specific language is used which has symbolic meaning in the subculture. For example, “Let’s play!” is a request to another messenger to follow them through a particularly dangerous intersection. They understand the denotative meaning of “let’s play,” but such phrases take on new meaning inside the culture.

A bike messenger can participate in “alleycats” or illegal bike street races to reify their culture outside the paid aspect of the job and to gain credibility as a member of the group. While alleycats are usually local, occasionally races are held at a larger scale both in the United States and internationally. These races bring together bike messengers and serve as a networking source between independent messenger groups.
Common Adaptations of Culture

Professional cultures, like any culture, are “dynamic” and exist in an ever changing state (Kottak, 1977). Cultures must also adapt to their environment which is always in flux (Orlove, 1980). As systems of production during the American industrial age shifted to make mass production as the norm, blacksmithing suffered terribly and many blacksmiths left the industry to work for the very factories that put them out of business (Allen, 2008). Some began exclusively shoeing horses to provide an income and moved to areas that could support their business. These smiths are known as farriers and are not considered part of the artist-blacksmith culture (Keller & Keller, 2008). This is because they use different tools, must know horse anatomy and buy, rather than make, their own shoes. The blacksmiths who did not defect to being farriers settled in a niche that provides handcrafted ornamental work for clients. Gates, door parts, buckles, chests, spiral staircases, and art are all possible crafts for the modern artist-blacksmith. They are united by this adaptation to a commercialized economy with mass produced goods.

Bike messengers were also a result of adaptation. The value of the bicycle for parcel delivery was recognized soon after the invention of the bicycle in the late 1800s and has only grown with the density of our cities. Traffic via automobiles and pedestrians has congested many major American cities and bike messengers can effectively navigate through the traffic. Adaptation to this environment can be seen in their clothing accessories. The messenger bag, though now popular outside the culture, can be worn on the back and opened without removing it. Because their pay depends on how fast they can do an order, this aids them, and its popularity has spread through the culture. The use of bike locks and wearing the bike lock as a belt while riding is another adaptation to urban bike messenger life.
Shoe Repair as a Professional Culture: Introduction and Method

The case studies provide an introduction to the idea of professional cultures and highlight the common characteristics that link them. The author’s own fieldwork can also be examined by these same characteristics. Research on the professional culture of shoe repair began with shops existing in the Dallas/Fort Worth area during the summer of 2010, chosen at random. Participants were gathered by approaching shoe repairmen in their stores, stating the author’s status as a student who is interested in the profession, and asking if they would be interested in participating in the study. The owner of the store was approached first in all cases. Typically, three days were spent in a store at 2-3 hours a session on a time schedule derived by the participant. Eight stores participated with 21 informants. Broad questions such as “Has the industry changed over time and, if so, how has it changed?” and “what do you call yourselves?” were asked. May through August 2010 was spent in the field with a short break July 2010 to attend the Shoe Service Institute of America’s convention in Oklahoma City. The Shoe Service Institute of America, or SSIA, is the largest trade group for the professional culture. Over 100 repairmen attended this convention where 20 interviews were conducted and 28 participants were recruited. Both the in-store interviews and the interviews at the SSIA convention were semi-structured with more structure to the SSIA interviews due to time constraints. The interviews, which numbered over 80, were painstakingly converting from audio to type and were processed using a qualitative data program (AtlasTI). This revealed common themes in and across interviews which helped create a unified vision of the professional culture.

The shop is the workplace of the shoe repairmen (although there is evidence that some work is done from home as well). Not limited to repairing shoes, repairmen will accept any item from a customer that they deem is worth the time and effort to repair. The walls of the customer
area are often adorned with various retail products related to shoe repair that are available for purchase by customers. These include shoe laces, polish, and insoles but some places sell shoes or boots and on one occasion, a motorcycle. The shop houses on average two employees with one owner and one worker (Dun & Bradstreet, 2001). It is a male-dominated industry with very few women who repair. The few women that were observed married into the trade and were often delegated to tasks involving customer service or “rips” (sewing). For the purposes of this paper, “repairmen” will be used to describe the group members because that is the label with which they are most likely to identify. This gendered aspect of shoe repair culture may be the basis of further work but is beyond the scope of this paper. By asserting that this is a culture, the author makes no contention that shoe repair is simple, static, or isolated from other systems (Schiffer, 1992).

**Applying the Framework**

**Learning the Trade**

Traditionally, individuals learned the trade of shoe repair by apprenticing themselves to a master, and after years in the industry, they could effectively open up their own shop or inherit the shop of the master. It seems this pathway still exists as an agreed upon strategy for teaching people the trade. The first step is for the apprentices to observe the methods of the master and familiarize themselves with the tools and machines. This step involves a form of enculturation. Children are commonly seen in their families’ shops and experience the first step of learning the trade simply by growing up surrounded by the tools and mores of the culture. The first tasks an apprentice may perform are nearly identical to Keller and Keller’s blacksmith apprentices and include cleaning the shop, observing, or assisting the master with jobs. The next step is polishing shoes. The method involves applying conditioner and wax to a shoe and using a brush (handheld
or machine rotary) to buff the shoe to a shiny luster. The next steps are removing and replacing the soles and heels of men’s shoes or the heel caps on women’s heels. After this is mastered, the final step is working with the machinery to unstitch, do “build ups” and other technical jobs.

The basic pattern appears to be the more risky the job, the more time it takes before the master is comfortable letting the apprentice attempt the project. This is the same pattern observed in Lave’s Vai Gola tailors (Lave & Wenger, 1991). It may take years before a person can reach this stage but the pace of advancement depends on a variety of factors including the amount of business the shop receives and the repairman’s ability. After the individual has learned enough, he can open up his own shop in another town. This is usually done with the consent of the master because apprentices are considered investments in the industry.

**Shared Characteristics of Shoe Repair**

There are certain values, assumptions, behaviors, and goals that the research revealed to be common across participants. Among these is the unifying goal of returning the product to its original condition or as close to it as possible (Karg, 1975). “It’s all basically the same…everybody has their own method to the end,” said Earl, a repairmen of 30 years, on the goal of shoe repair. The creativity that goes into the work may lead different repairmen down different paths to reach the goal. This goal of the shoe repair specialist is based on the assumption that the customer desires the repaired shoe to look like new. Like any other professional culture, occasionally the goal cannot be met. Special zippers, tassels, or other accessories that are proprietary may be missing which means that the ideal may never be achieved.

There exist values, like ideals, for which every shoe repairmen in the culture strives. Repairmen value quality materials and good service and believe that if they have higher quality
or better service than other shops, they will draw more business. Advertising is mostly by word-of-mouth, so they rely on their work to speak for them. It is common for shoe repairmen to measure other repairmen against such ideals. When discussing other repairmen, especially foreigners who cannot speak English fluently, repairmen would accuse them of using low-grade leather that smelled of urine and overcharging for their services. A video produced for the 100th anniversary of the SSIA partially blames the “shoddy workmanship” and “price cutters” (failures of the ideal) for the decline of the industry (Hicks, 2004).

There are many assumptions about the broader society that are characteristic of shoe repairmen. The phrase “throwaway society” or “throwaway culture” was commonly used to describe broader American culture. It was also commonly assumed that customers wanted their shoes repaired to the standards set by “the goal” (like new) though this was not always the case. One customer returned to a shop angry because the shoe that had just been repaired had been destroyed within a week by the hard farm work that he was used to. The repairman had assumed the customer wanted it to look new, but the customer wanted the shoe to be strengthened. The customer demanded that the repairmen attach a piece of tire rubber to the boot; the repairmen complied, and the customer was satisfied. A similar occurrence at another shop involved a man who had a hole cut in the boot to accommodate a large bunion on his foot. After the bunion subsided, the shoe was patched and the repairman was unable to hide the damage. The customer knew it would not look the same, but to be rid of pain was of higher priority than aesthetics.

Common behaviors include keeping boxes and boxes of stored materials piled on shelves and under tables. These supplies include leather scraps, exotic soles and heels, buckles, straps, and various other items that are out of production. Covered with dust, these boxes may sit for years before a useful part is extracted. These also act as symbols because they are occasionally
passed on from the master to the apprentice if the latter assumes ownership of the shop. There are commonly held understandings of what constitutes proper behavior in shoe repair. While uncommon, an employee might leave the master’s shop to start up his own nearby business to directly compete with the master’s shop. This is considered the fiercest of betrayals in the culture of shoe repair and can result in ostracism from the culture. “In my industry, people help each other… you don’t do that to people!” said Isaac, a third generation repairman, in reference to apprentices competing against their master. Such a slight is not easily forgotten in shoe repair culture. If it is known or discovered that a person betrayed their teacher by directly competing in business with them they are generally ousted from the group and not privy to their gatherings.

Research participants in the study expressed extreme satisfaction with their occupation, yet many did not wish for their children to continue in the business. While this seems contradictory on the surface, it makes sense considering the primary culture of the repairmen in the study. In many western cultures, higher education is seen as a pathway to success and craftsmen in western countries are not immune from this cultural trait. Many shoe repairmen make efforts to offer their children access to higher education. This is in contrast to generations past where it was assumed the son would inherit the family business. Participants believe that the profession is “hard” and “dirty work” that their children should not experience. It is possible that this has contributed to the decline in numbers of shops.

In contrast to the declining numbers of shops and the self-labeling of the occupation as “dirty,” research participants asserted that shoe repair was more stable and overall a more fulfilling work experience. Shoe repairmen enjoy their work and see it as an occupation that not only challenges one mentally but also allows for community connection. Other jobs the repairmen had experienced were less gratifying. Being a “number” meant their jobs could be
outsourced and because of the assembly line process they could never take joy in experiencing
the end product. Many found that, once they were in these situations, they longed for the hands-on craft experience and the autonomy that comes with owning a small business that can be passed down to family. When asked, “What do you like about your job?” the two most common answers were small business autonomy and the ability to be creative on the job. Pink 2009 offers an interesting lens through which to understand why the majority of repairmen are satisfied with their job despite the fact that it is critically threatened. Mastery, self direction, and a sense of purpose appear to play an even larger role than economic security when it comes to job satisfaction and productivity (Pink, 2009). Similarly, shoe repair has not been “proletarianized” like most jobs in America (Kaprow, 1999).

**Symbols of the Industry**

All shops have machines that aid them in doing their work such as finishers or buffers. Refer to Figure 1. These machines can make the environment noisy and may obscure the sound of customers if the worker is not attentive. Other tools of the repairmen are the jack (a shoe anvil), pullers (used for removing heels and soles), adhesives (used to bond materials), the patching machine (a sewing machine that is functional for ornate designs) and various knives and pries (Karg, 1975). Experienced American repairmen would all recognize the use of any of these tools and more than likely use them every day.

The SSIA hosts The Silver Cup, an event that allows shoe repairmen from all over the world to compete against each other. Contestants are judged by a panel of past winners and other recognized masters on their ability to restore a shoe to factory-like condition. This event reaffirms the goal of the industry and is symbolic of the original apprentice/master relationship that every repairman goes through.
Communication between shoe repair shops, like blacksmiths, is sparse and workers rely on magazines, websites, and trade groups like SSIA to disseminate information about new techniques or to discuss the common threats to the industry that they all face. Master Shoe Rebuilder, Shop Talk!, and Shoe Service magazines have connected shoe repairmen and helped solidify the culture for years. When any of these magazines goes out of print, it is symbolic of the decline of the industry and causes worry within the profession. The same applies to the Silver Cup competition. Though it has not been held in recent years, the repairmen of the 2010 convention were excited to gather enough participants to hold the competition. Internet forums for repairmen exist (SSIA has their own) and one research participant reported using Skype (an internet telecommunication service) to communicate with European repairmen and convince them to attend the 2010 SSIA convention. The few books that have been published on shoe repair were written over 50 years ago by repairmen and mainly discuss the basics of repair. Reading communications between repairmen or the technical language employed in the old manuals supports the idea that this professional culture has formed a specialized language rich in symbols that escape those who stand outside it (West, 1923).

**Adaptations of Shoe Repair**

The culture is unified by a common history which has led to similar adaptations to global market forces. There was a time in American history when it was commonplace to repair shoes and only the very wealthy could afford to practice the cycles of consumption that exist today. In early 20th century America, mass produced shoes crafted by mechanical means provided business for the American shoe repair industry. In the 1920s, mass produced automobiles hurt the industry by taking people off their feet for travel. During the 1930s, a series of political and economic changes in the United States led to the idea that ever increasing consumption was good for an
economy. In 1941, the shoe repair industry capitalized on wartime conservation and, by using mass advertising techniques, experienced unprecedented growth culminating in a total of 75,000 shops nationwide by 1946. After this point, shoe repair began a steady decline as the industry tried in vain to convince customers that repaired shoes could look just as new as new shoes did. Since the apex in 1946, shoe repair shops have seen a 93% decrease to settle at around 5,000 shops in 2010 (Mcfarland, 2010). Situated in a culture that is dedicated to consumption-driven economics (Mazur, 1953), it is evident that shoe repair is valued less than shoe retail or even shoe manufacture. If consumers kept buying, producers could keep producing and keep paying workers, who would, in turn, consume goods and complete the cycle. Repair, which had been a common strategy to maintain what were usually rare and necessary material possessions, increasingly became seen as the enemy to this new economics of consumption. By 1960, cheap foreign imports made up 40% of the U.S. shoe market and shoe repair was officially rendered obsolete by the average consumer (Hicks & Durning, 2004).

Seventy-five thousand shops could be considered maladaptive for a world that viewed consumption as an economic imperative; perhaps the current number of 5,000 reflects the modern carrying capacity of the industry. At this new carrying capacity, shops have adapted rather than close their doors. Figure 2 shows a traditional men’s shoe that has long been considered the “bread and butter” of the repairs a shoe repairmen might do. It features a heel and welted leather sole that extends the length of the shoe, both of which can be replaced. For most cases, this “layered” design results in a more repairable shoe. With the popularization in the market of molded sole footwear and other shoes that lack easily separated parts and layers, these traditional standards are becoming rarer by the year. It was overwhelmingly agreed upon that shoe repairmen of the past would not repair the types of shoes that they must repair today. Fixing
traditionally non-repairable shoes (TNS) represents a common adaptation to a universal trend in contemporary footwear construction.

Similarly, changes have been made in the very items they accept for repair. No shop participating relied solely on footwear for income; a shoe repairman may repair jackets, backpacks, belts, luggage, furniture or anything else they feel they can fix. The very first object the author saw repaired and took field notes over was a large boat sail that needed new eyelets. The fieldwork also revealed a shop that repairs roller-skates because of their regional popularity and another that repaired screens for doors and windows because the owner possessed the skills and the equipment. This trend towards generalized repair should not be surprising considering the decrease in repair establishments for furniture and electronics coupled with the loss of home repair knowledge due to the low cost of consumer goods. The shops that were willing to make the proper adaptations are the ones that are still in business today while the “dinosaurs” that refused to adapt to molded footwear have since exited. A smaller size has given the industry increased mobility which has allowed them to more quickly adapt strategies for survival.

Conclusion

As the author has shown, the professional culture of shoe repair is united by common shared, learned, symbolic, and adaptive characteristics. However, there is much more to learn about the profession of shoe repair. The author hopes to continue research in the following areas. First, the author would like to add to the educational anthropology literature via a cognition study among shoe repairmen. A second proposed study would measure job satisfaction among repairmen and reasons why repairmen or their children leave the industry and, if they do, where do they go? Third, repairmen are frugal, saving their scraps, fully aware they are unlikely to find a use for it. Are the customers equally frugal or are they being driven to repair by other reasons?
Finally, the author’s interest in environmental anthropology has led to a fascination with the idea of shoe repair as a “green” option. Several repair establishments have made the connection between shoe repair and ecological friendliness. See Figure 3. During the 1990s, SSIA began a campaign that highlighted “shoe repair as an overlooked form of recycling” (Hicks, 2004). SSIA calculated that in the mid-1990s approximately 62 million shoes were kept from landfills annually in America by the shoe repair industry. In a future that is guaranteed to have limited resources, shoe repair may see a surge of popularity (E. N. Anderson, 2010; Bodley, 2007; Myers & Kent, 2005).

But what do the repairmen believe about the “green” label? Many do want to connect shoe repair to the “green” movement but until an accurate life cycle analysis is done it is unknown if shoe repair is truly more sustainable than our current globalized methods. Another popular opinion in the profession is that cheap imported footwear cannot exist indefinitely. These foreign shoes are often non-repairable and use labor that is among the lowest paid globally. Because of increased global communications, there is a belief that these workers will learn of their situation and demand rights and pay increases. If this happens, will there be less incentive to import poorly made footwear?

In 21st century Anthropology, increasing study of professional cultures is challenging our own perceptions of what constitutes legitimate fieldwork for anthropology and how others outside of our discipline come to understand anthropology. The study of professional cultures, those cultures that are associated with certain occupations, can help anthropology advance its understanding of human behavior. If this essay has met its intended goal, it should inform the anthropologist, beginner or established, in his or her investigation of contemporary professional cultures wherever they occur.
References


Figure 1: (From left to right) Finishers and buffers
Figure 2: A classic repairable shoe. (Image adapted from JTAC Inc © with permission)
Figure 3: Sign outside a popular repair shop in Dallas/Ft. Worth