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The development, paradigm and academic values of enterprise anthropology—the "fourth revolution" of anthropology

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Abstract

As an emerging interdisciplinary field in anthropology, enterprise anthropology (EA) has experienced five historical stages of development since its inception in the 1930s. 2008 marked the first year of internationalized enterprise anthropology, thus prompting the "fourth revolution" of anthropology. Since then, the sub-discipline of enterprise anthropology has entered its fifth stage of development. This stage of enterprise anthropology has witnessed new research subjects, concepts, and theories. Breakthroughs have been made in theoretical research and methodological innovation, and a unique paradigm has been established. In terms of discipline and era, the fifth stage is characterized by: innovative transformation and creative development, integration of Chinese and Western channels for anthropology research, building of international academic networks, and the practice of "people-centered" research. As a result, this stage of enterprise anthropology holds profound theoretical and practical significance for interdisciplinary and academic equity, new ideas and methods for studying the transformation of Chinese society, and establishment of an internationalized research paradigm for the Chinese academic community.

Keywords Enterprise anthropology · Anthropology · Paradigm · Interdisciplinary field

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Social scientists have always focused on the study of enterprise, a form of organization that combines people and society. Although disciplines differ in theories and methods of observing organizations, a consensus exists on the close relationship between people, organizations, and culture. Over the past century, scholars have studied different types of organizations, including township enterprises, state-owned enterprises, private enterprises and time-honored-brand enterprises, expanding the research subjects of anthropology and ethnology from simple units in traditional societies to various types and scales of enterprises in modern societies, thus enriching the content, scope, and topics of anthropological and ethnological studies, and developing a new theoretical system and research paradigm based on the transformation of social structures. As an emerging interdisciplinary field intended to explain such social relations, enterprise anthropology not only represents the inevitable choice of history, but also highlights the academic style and Chinese academic characteristics of anthropological theory and its empirical research.

Five historical stages in the development of enterprise anthropology

The emergence of enterprise anthropology can be traced back to the 1930s. Anthropologists from China, the United States, and Japan were the main scholars involved in advancing the development of enterprise anthropology. In the United States, Warner is known as the "Father of Industrial Anthropology" and the "Father of Anthropology of Institutions". In China, Xiaotong Fei was the first to discuss the issue of rural industrialization, representing the germination of enterprise anthropology in China. In Japan, Professor Hirochika Nakamaki is called the "Father of Business Anthropology". Generally speaking, enterprise anthropology has gone through five stages in the course of its development. Its name also covers "industrial anthropology", "anthropology of institutions", "business anthropology", and so on. The development of enterprise anthropology is presented in the following Table 1.

The "Enterprise Anthropology: Empirical and Applied Research" conference held in 2008 represented the first year of developing international enterprise anthropology. In 2009, the 16th international conference of the International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences (IUAES) took place in Kunming, China, and IUAES Commission on Enterprise Anthropology[1] was established as the 29th scientific commission. Since then, enterprise anthropology has integrated different interdisciplinary names such as "industrial anthropology", "anthropology of institutions", and "business anthropology" with "organizations" as the main research subject, and has stepped onto the historical stage with its advantages in research objects, strength, and vision.

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[1] The founder and first chairman of the commission is Jijiao Zhang, a researcher at the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, and the secretary general is Tomoko Hamada (professor at the Department of Anthropology, William & Mary College, USA).

Table 1 Disciplinary development process of enterprise anthropology

	China	United States	Japan
Stage I	1920s-1940s. Investigation and research into rural industrialization. Representative figures and achievements include Jinghan Li's Survey on the Social Condition of Ding County (1933), Suming Liang's Theory of Rural Development (1937), Xiaotong Fei's Jiangcun Economy (1939), Zhiyi Zhang's Yicun Handicraft Industry (1943), etc.	From the 1930s to 1950s, industrial anthropology emerged. For example, the Hawthorne Experiment verified the close relationship between human factors and productivity (Bloombaum 1983). W. Lloyd Warner, an anthropologist who participated in the later stages of the Hawthorne Experiment, is known as the "Father of Industrial Anthropology" and the "Father of Anthropology of Institutions".	Not yet started
Stage II	1950s-70s. Enterprise studies were in stagnation.	In the 1960s, industrial anthropology was in stagnation.	Not yet started
Stage III	From the 1980s to 1990s, research on township enterprises was conducted. For example, in "Small Towns: A Further Exploration" (1983), Xiaotong Fei proposed the "Su'nan Model" and "Wenzhou Model", and developed a new perspective on the development of Chinese enterprises and the structural transformation of the economy and society.	From the 1960s to 1980s, industrial anthropology became diversified, with studies of industrialization in non-Western countries and regions, ethnographies about professional work, and new and old Marxist critiques of industrial studies in the United States and beyond (Zhang 2014a). Representative figures include Wayne, H.A. Applebaum, etc.	The study of business anthropology began in the late 1980s. Motofusa Murayama introduced the concept of "business anthropology" for the first time in "The Theory of Overseas Transfer of Business: The Road to Business Anthropology" (1989) (Murayama 2002).
Stage IV	From the 1990s to the beginning of the twenty-first century, academic achievements became diversified, with the emergence of industrial anthropology, organizational anthropology, business anthropology, and urban anthropology. Objects of research involved various enterprise types, including family, state-owned, time-honored brand, and multinational enterprises. Representative figures include Peilin Li, Rong Ma, Chunguang Wang, Yi Zhang, Houyi Zhang, Guangjin Chen, and Jijiao Zhang.	In the 1980s, the concept of "organizational culture" emerged. In her monograph *The Business Anthropology* (2003), Ann T. Jordan argued that business anthropology began to focus on organizational culture, as organizations have their own cultures and are not merely institutional (Jordan 2010).	In the 1990s, Hirochika Nakamaki and Koichiro Hioki pioneered the innovative research of "business anthropology" or "enterprise/corporate anthropology". For example, "Cultural Anthropology of Enterprises and Wage Earners" (1993-1994) and "Anthropology of Corporate Culture and Museums" (1996-1997).

Table 1 (continued)

	China	United States	Japan
Stage V	From 2008 to present, enterprise anthropology has entered a period of academic development, and a theoretical framework and methodology has been established for it; the international influence of Chinese scholars has been strengthened.	On the one hand, enterprise anthropology advocated by Chinese scholars has been recognized by well-known scholars among their American counterparts; on the other hand, "business anthropology" advocated by American scholars has been influential in both the United States and China (Jordan 2017).	Research on the cultures of complex organizations such as enterprises and groups was conducted, and the results have been disseminated in China, India, the United States, and other countries. Meanwhile, enterprise anthropology advocated by Chinese scholars has been recognized and praised by subject leaders among their Japanese counterparts.

The fourth revolution of anthropology: three "new" periods of enterprise anthropology

According to Jijiao Zhang, director of the IUAES Commission on Enterprise Anthropology, the discipline of anthropology has undergone three revolutions since its emergence. The first revolution was the study of primitive peoples, the second was the study of peasant society, and the third was the study of urban areas. The fourth revolution was enterprise anthropology, which has adopted the theory of "Transformation of Social Structure" as a new foundational theory and achieved an innovative shift in the anthropological research paradigm (Zhang 2016).

From the emergence of enterprise anthropology to its development, we can see that its research objects have shifted from simple to complex societies, and from individual case studies to group and regional studies. This aligns with the trend of anthropological studies from micro to meso, and to macro levels, and reflects the academic mission of anthropological researchers to study complex societies and attach great importance to applied research. On the other hand, enterprise anthropology has realized a change from theoretical dependence to theoretical innovation. It has established a new theoretical framework and research methods, and has taken its place in both domestic and international academic arenas. The academic growth of enterprise anthropology can be summarized into three innovative development stages: new practices, new concepts, and new theories.

New practice period: research rooted in practice (2009-2013)

1. Academic research activities focusing on time-honored brand enterprises have prompted the study of complex society and complex organizations.

With the advantage of their long history, time-honored brand enterprises are key research objects of enterprise anthropology. In 2010, the enterprise anthropology community began a large-scale research activity focused on time-honored brands in China.[2] Through many field surveys, the research group obtained a number of materials on time-honored brand enterprises, and produced fruitful outcomes, including the publication of a volume of the "Time-honored Brands Blue Book" and five volumes of the "Time-honored Brands Green Book", presiding over more than 20 research projects on time-honored brands at the provincial level and beyond, and the production of close to 100 research papers. These surveys and empirical studies lay

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[2] This large-scale research activity was conceived in November 2010, and the survey was launched and implemented in March 2011 and completed in mid-August. More than 30 researchers from all over China, including teachers, business managers and students from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Yunnan Academy of Social Sciences, Liaoning Academy of Social Sciences, Zhejiang University, Southwest University (in Chongqing), Ministry of Commerce, and Time-honored-brand enterprises, participated in the field investigation and research work. The research is the first nationwide research activity on Time-honored Brands in China, covering 12 provinces and municipalities directly under the central government. The author participated in and implemented two questionnaires as a resident researcher in Liaoning Province.

a solid theoretical foundation for reviewing and passing down Chinese traditional business civilization, as well as enriching the base of unique Chinese business culture and cases of business wisdom. They have also laid an important research foundation for the academic development of enterprise anthropology, and progressively brought together a group of researchers from China, Malaysia, and the United States to focus on research of time-honored brands for in-depth and extensive discussions. Centered on time-honored brand enterprises, more empirical studies of complex organizations and groups have been carried out in enterprise anthropology. These studies were conducted on old commercial streets and distinctive towns, and from case studies to group and regional studies, which reflected the development of enterprise anthropology studies from a micro to meso to macro perspective.

2. Driven by academic conferences, enterprise anthropology has become further internationalized.

Research teams take advantage of academic events to promote and develop the discipline of enterprise anthropology, and have organized several academic conferences of representative and landmark significance, including the international symposium on "Migration in China and Asia: Practices and Policies" held in Beijing in 2010; the panel on "Urbanization, Industrialization and Ethnic Cultural Heritage in China" at the IUAES International Interdisciplinary Conference themed around "Issues of Legitimacy: Entrepreneurial Culture, Corporate Responsibility and Urban Development" held in Naples, Italy in 2012; the "International Conference on Enterprises and Urban Development: Not All About Economics" held in Beijing in 2012; and the team participated in the 17th IUAES international conference themed around "Cultivating Humanism and Facing the Real World" held in Manchester, UK, in 2013. All of these academic events have enabled enterprise anthropology to advance in a more extensive and effective manner.

New concept period: the proposal and verification of the "Umbrella Society" and "Beehive Society" (2014-2017)

Through years of research on topics such as time-honored brands, old commercial streets, urban revitalization, and migration, the majority of research teams in enterprise anthropology reached a bottleneck. How to conclude a theory through case studies or empirical research and form a research basis and model that could be promoted and replicated became a question that researchers urgently needed to explore.

Considering the research topic of the driving force and development path of China's economic growth, Jijiao Zhang proposed two new concepts to observe the structural transformation of China's economy and society, these being the "Umbrella Society" and the "Beehive Society". The main idea is that the relationship between local governments and local enterprises is like an umbrella, with the government "sheltering" and enterprises being "sheltered" (Zhang 2014b); while the corresponding folk economic society is "cellular", i.e., a mutually beneficial group or ethnic network (Zhang 2015). While the "Umbrella Society" emphasizes political

guidance, the "Beehive Society" highlights the shared nature of the society. These two concepts explore the functions and characteristics of various organizations in the analysis of changes in China's social structure, and reflect the economic, social, and political nature of the theory of enterprise anthropology. Although these two concepts could help explain some research objects and content, there was still much room for developing the theoretical basis for building an academic system, and for deeper and broader validation. Enterprise anthropology research teams then began to trace and verify theories of the discipline in many ways, starting with the theories of spatial embedding, brand building, cultural memory, and economic anthropology, including memory metaphor and spatial cognition (Li and Huang 2014), brand research (Yan and Zhao 2015); spatial embedding (Gao 2016); cultural memory (Wang 2016); value system (Shu 2017), and so on.

While theoretical perspectives were diverse, enterprise anthropology researchers realized that during the transformation of a social structure, an "invisible hand" existed, this being the "role of culture"; alternatively, it could be said that the "function of universal culture" effectively explained the 15 research areas focused on by enterprise anthropology. As a result, when the theoretical building of enterprise anthropology was attempted from the perspective of transformation of social structure, it was quickly accepted by researchers, and a new research paradigm gradually took shape.

The new theory period: the formation and enhancement of the "neoclassical structure-functionalism" (since 2018)

After nearly a decade of development, the emerging interdisciplinary field of enterprise anthropology has been continuously improved and supplemented in terms of case base, theoretical models, methodology, and academic network development, and research areas have been further expanded and deepened, forming a relatively comprehensive academic knowledge system in an innovative manner.

In 2018, Jijiao Zhang proposed a dynamic, neoclassical "neo-functionalism" perspective, which considers time-honored brands and old commercial streets as cultural heritage and explores the relationship between new functions of cultural heritage and urban revitalization from the perspective of new values (Zhang 2018a). The concept of "Structural Heritage" has been formally introduced into the theoretical discussion of enterprise anthropology. In 2020, the neoclassical "structure-functionalism" trend took shape, and many research outcomes were achieved in fields such as integration of culture and tourism, regional culture, and traditional crafts. According to enterprise anthropology researchers, against the backdrop of transformed economic and social structures, time-honored brands, cultural heritage, and old commercial streets not only demonstrated new functions, but also formed a new "structure-function" that promoted resource allocation and facilitates endogenous development. Meanwhile, through functional transition and structural transformation, time-honored brands, cultural heritage, and old commercial streets have become endogenous elements in advancement of urban revitalization, development of distinctive towns, and rural revitalization, causing cities, towns and

villages to become competitive and strive for sustainable development. From time-honored brands to old commercial streets, distinctive towns, and cultural heritage, the research of enterprise anthropology has applied the three-level analysis method of micro, meso, and macro perspectives, as well as the three-dimensional research method of ontology, external existence, and autopoiesis, to view the "traditional-modern" transformation of culture and heritage from a new perspective.

While time-honored brands, old commercial streets, and distinctive towns constitute the unique research objects for cultural structures in enterprise anthropology, the "Dialogues with Masters" series[3] reflects the vision of enterprise anthropology in focusing on social structures. The series starts from the dualistic social structure theory of the "Umbrella Society" and the "Beehive Society" used to discuss the traditional and modern social changes with China's "industrial revolution" and the centrality of peripheral areas.[4] Different from the concept of "Nation-State", the "State-Nation" relationship series[5] shows the achievements of enterprise anthropology in analyzing the structure of the state by applying a mature theoretical system. For example, the relationship between the existing states and nationalities/ethnicities in the world can be sorted out and analyzed by applying the four-division method, consisting of opposition, convergence, coexistence, and connection, that provides a theoretical basis for dealing with the relationship between the ethnicity and the state and the relationship between ethnicities. For China, the relationship between the state and the ethnic minorities/ethnic minority areas can be described as a top-down, whole-part relationship, which is an "umbrella relationship" discussed in the "umbrella society" theory. The relationship is embodied in the institutional arrangements and the promotion of development in political, economic, social, cultural, and ecological aspects under the concept of "equality and unity of all ethnic groups" and "common prosperity and development". The series of "Heritage Tourism

[3] Including Jijiao Zhang and Lei Dang's "An answer to Joseph Leedham's Puzzles: Has China ever had an 'Industrial Revolution'?" published in *Journal of Hangzhou Normal University (Humanities and Social Sciences)*, No. 5, 2019; Jijiao Zhang and Lei Dang's "Beyond Freedman's Lineage Research Paradigm: from 'Separation Theory' to 'Matching Theory'", published in the *Thinking*, No. 4, 2020; Jijiao Zhang and Yue Wu's "Rediscussion on the Centralization and Marginalization of Frontier Regions: A Dialogue with New Qing History", published in *Guangxi Ethnic Studies*, Vol. 3, 2021.

[4] Refer to Jijiao Zhang and Yue Wu's "Frontier Region: Centralization or Marginalization?", published in *Qinghai Journal of Ethnology*, No. 3, 2019. It is argued that under the dualistic social structure, the emergence, formation and development of ancient education system, driven by both the official umbrella force and the social beehive force, was promoting the centralization of Hainan, rather than to be marginalized.

[5] Including Jijiao Zhang, Jianwen Wei, Peng Yin and Bo Liu's A New Perspective on the Theory and Policies on Nationalities: Transition from "Nation-State" to "State-Nation", published in *Guangxi Ethnic Studies*, Vol. 3, 2015; Jijiao Zhang, Ling Chai, Nan Chen and Peng Yin's "A Further Discussion on the Theory of State-Nation Relations", published in *Guangxi Ethnic Studies*, Vol. 2, 2016; Jijiao Zhang and Jianwen Wei's "A Third Discussion on the Theory of 'State-Nation' Relations: International Perspectives and China's Experience", published in *Journal of Yunnan Minzu University* (Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition), Vol. 5, 2018; Jijiao Zhang and Lei Dang's "The Paradigm of 'Many Ethnic Groups, One Country' Under the Governance System of the Modern State of China on the Relationship Between 'State and Nation'", published in *Journal of United Front Science*, Vol. 6, 2019.

Integration"[6] covers the empirical research and theoretical discussion of enterprise anthropology using "structure-functionalism" to analyze and explain the integration of cultural heritage and tourism.

Research paradigm, disciplinary features and academic significance of enterprise anthropology

Research paradigm: theories and methods of "neoclassical structure-functionalism"

Thomas Kuhn was the first to propose the concept and theory of paradigms, pointing out that a paradigm is a set of recurring and rules-based instances that embody the conceptual and methodological applications of various theories and change the way people observe the world around them (Kuhn 1962). The development of enterprise anthropology has formed a unique research paradigm with theoretical and methodological innovations and practice after refinement, verification, and improvement.

The theory of enterprise anthropology is based on Xiaotong Fei's "Thought on Cultural Development and Utilization", Li Peilin's "Another Invisible Hand", UNESCO's "Endogenous Development" and Porter's "Competitive Advantage". The research interest lies in analyzing why, when, and how cultural heritage changes; as it is structured, cultural heritage can be self-generating or self-expanding, which presents a dynamic research approach (Zhang 2020a). "Transformation of Social Structure", "Umbrella Society", "Beehive Society", and so on have constructed the research framework of "neoclassical structure-functionalism", which integrates international research and puts forward China's development practice, further consolidating the research paradigm of "Transformation of Social Structure".

In terms of methodology, enterprise anthropology has made breakthroughs in three respects. First, the analysis method of "Binary Society" was put forward. By observing China's urbanization, industrialization, and commercialization, and considering the transformation of China's economic and social structure, enterprise anthropology proposes two new approaches: the government-led "Umbrella Society" and the natural "Beehive Society". These two societies coexist in four forms, namely, opposition, convergence, coexistence, and connection (Zhang 2020b). Based on the characteristics of the times, which promote the creative transformation and innovative development of traditional culture, the coexistence/connection of cultural heritage is the major research method in enterprise anthropology.

Second, the "three-level" analysis method is promoted. The transformation of social structure is analyzed through micro (cultural heritage, time-honored brands,

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[6] Including Jijiao Zhang and Da Hou's "Traditional-modern Transformation and Integrative Development of Culture and Tourism of Historical-cultural Towns in Ethnic Areas", Yujun Li's "The Three Major Relationships of "Culture-Tourism" "Government-Market" and "Central-Local" in the Integrated Development of Cultural and Tourism", and Xiaomin Liu, Shiyao Liu and Min Wu's "Endogenous Development: The Practices and Enlightenments of Fenghuang County's Tourism Poverty Alleviation"; all three papers were published in *Guizhou Ethnic Studies*, Vol. 3, 2021.

different types of enterprises and organizations), meso (old commercial streets, distinctive towns, traditional villages) and macro (cities, regions, ethnic groups, countries) levels. Meanwhile, it is proposed that the three-level analysis combine "bottom-up" and "top-down" perspectives, meaning that the research of time-honored brands, old commercial streets, and urban competitiveness requires both perspectives. By switching the analysis perspective of the roles and influence of time-honored brands, old commercial streets, cultural heritage, enterprises and organizations in the urban development landscape, research purposes can be achieved more effectively, thus realizing the research value of scholars in the new era.

The third breakthrough is the "three-dimensional" research approach, i.e., ontology, external existence, and autopoiesis, the three research dimensions of neoclassical "structure-functionalism". At the level of ontology, cultural heritage itself is studied in a holistic manner, combining both tangible and intangible cultural heritage. In terms of analysis of external existence, cultural heritage is placed in a field or structure (such as a country, region, city, town, village, etc.), and analysis is conducted on the new values generated from cultural heritage in a specific socio-economic social field or structure (e.g., in the context of urban revitalization, distinctive towns, and rural revitalization). At the level of autopoiesis, cultural heritage is considered structural, with the structure and function to independently allocate resources; from this perspective, cultural heritage can be divided into three types: material structural heritage, institutional structural heritage, and customary structural heritage.

The academic characteristics and contemporary features of enterprise anthropology

From a holistic perspective of transformation of markets and social structure, enterprise anthropology explores the endogenous motives of enterprise development and its social structural factors, with distinctive academic and contemporary characteristics.

First, it has realized the innovative transformation and creative development of the research paradigm, and established a new theory and academic discourse system with Chinese characteristics. Considering the concepts of "Transformation of Social Structure", "Umbrella Society" and "Beehive Society", "new structure-functionalism" is a local theory based on China's development practice, which can effectively explain the structural factors, endogenous motives, operation mechanism, and other features of "Chinese development". Meanwhile, the theory has a framework with a solid basis and value for international promotion, and research has been carried out in foreign companies, multinational enterprises, foreign distinctive neighborhoods, cultural heritage preservation, and so on (Zhang 2018b).

Second, as a worldwide frontier discipline, enterprise anthropology has opened up the anthropological channel between China and the West, becoming a new growth point and highlight in the global development of anthropology and ethnography. The founder of enterprise anthropology, Jijiao Zhang, conducted a nine-month research trip to Malaysia in 2005 and took the first step towards international

research, establishing the academic characteristics of research on success paradigms of enterprise anthropology by analyzing several key factors influencing the success of Chinese businessmen and managers (Zhang 2009). Since then, researchers have emerged in the international arena by preparing for and participating in international academic conferences such as the IUAES international conference, and by conducting comparative studies with South Korea and Germany, carrying out collaborative projects on Chinese and British cultural heritage, and conducting research and visits abroad, thus building channels for academic joint research at home and abroad, and developing enterprise anthropology into an emerging sub-discipline that is recognized worldwide.

Third, an international academic research network has been built, and a standardized academic exchange mechanism with dual circulation of domestic and foreign academic communities has been established. In 2011, *Enterprise Anthropology: Applied Research and Case Study*, the first English-language book on enterprise anthropology, was published.[7]*Enterprise Anthropology: Analyzing Economic Behaviors from a Social Structure Perspective*[8] was published in 2017, and *Contemporary Anthropology: A Neoclassical "Structure-Functionalism"*[9] was published in 2021, marking the growth and maturity of the discipline of enterprise anthropology. In addition to publications, researchers of enterprise anthropology have published a series of results in international journals. For example, four papers were published in the special column of "Enterprise Anthropology" in the International Journal of Business Anthropology in 2021, which showcased the latest achievements in enterprise anthropology in the international academic arena. In recent years, enterprise anthropology has put in place an international research network with researchers from five continents (Asia, Oceania, Europe, North America, and South America) and research objects involving 26 countries and regions. There have been more than 40 papers in English, French, Japanese, and other foreign languages, as well as nearly 10 books published.

Fourth, by exploring the key factors of success and the functionalities of market entities and their development environments, enterprise anthropology provides different types of enterprises, organizations, and fields with successful experiences

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[7] The book, edited by Jijiao Zhang and Voon Phin Keong (Malaysian), contains 11 papers by authors from seven countries, including the United States, the Netherlands, Finland, Poland, Malaysia, India, and China, with a clear international academic perspective and multidisciplinary research characteristics.

[8] Cited from Jijiao Zhang's *Enterprise Anthropology: Analyzing Economic Behaviors from a Social Structure Perspective*, published by China Social Science Press in 2017, in which the goal of establishing a theory and school that is both indigenous and contributes to the world of anthropology are proposed.

[9] Cited from Jijiao Zhang' *Contemporary Anthropology: A Neoclassical "Structural-Functionalism"*, published by China Social Science Press in 2021. The book is about "one, two, three, four" of neoclassical "Structure-Functionalism", the core theory of enterprise anthropology. "One" is that the book describes the basic principles and research methods of the neoclassical "Structural-Functionalism" as a theory, and the "two" shows the application of the dualistic social analysis on explaining "Chinese Development". The "three" discusses the three types of force analysis and analyzes the uniqueness of the driving forces for economic and social transformation. The "four" is a four-dimensional analysis method and a four-level analysis method.

that can be replicated,[10] puts into practice the "people-centered" principle of subject development, conducts surveys and research that are of use to the people, and serves the interests of enterprises, society, and the government. Jinghan Li once pointed out that sociological research should attach importance to applied research and "solve the problems that the general public is most concerned about" (Li 1981). The academic developers of enterprise anthropology, especially Chinese scholars, have been persistent in applying their studies to practice, making full use of their academic advantages and expertise to study complex social issues, applying their unique research framework and methods to identify and analyze problems, and proposing feasible scientific solutions, with a view to better serving the people and building a discipline that is useful to the them.

The academic and practical implications of enterprise anthropology

The emergence, development and growth of enterprise anthropology holds enlightening and far-reaching significance in the development of China's local academic discourse system. This is reflected in the four aspects of interdisciplinary research, applied research, academic equity, and international development.

First, the origination and development of enterprise anthropology are rooted in the fusion and integration of multiple disciplines, theories, and fields. "I think one must put his expertise into a common understanding, i.e., integrating diversities" (Fei 1997). Mr. Xiaotong Fei's thorough understanding of interdisciplinarity is based on extensive academic research and practice. The emergence and growth of enterprise anthropology as an emerging interdisciplinary field also demonstrates the charm of interdisciplinarity. At present, the enterprise anthropology research teams consist of more than 50 universities, research institutions, social organizations, enterprises, and governmental departments from home and abroad, forming a team of scholars with diverse perspectives in the fields of anthropology, ethnology, sociology, management, economics, political science, Marxist philosophy, and other multidisciplinary research, who have achieved fruitful research outcomes.

Second, the theoretical innovation of enterprise anthropology features Chinese characteristics. As Mr. Xiaotong Fei pointed out, it is also the original aspiration of anthropologists to find answers for the future of China, and to study Chinese society and culture using scientific and empirical methods. It can be claimed that the subject of the times is the real driving force behind theoretical innovation. Against the backdrop of China's urbanization, commercialization, and industrialization, enterprise anthropology has proposed new ideas and methods with which to study China's

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[10] Jijiao Zhang once raised the issue of building China's academic self-confidence on the study of the Time-honored brands. In the past, many non-Western academics only had factual statements, but not their own theories, and all the research was to provide raw materials for the theoretical upgrading of Western academics. Chinese academic research cannot just stay on top of the negative narrative, cannot just react to the problem without solving it, but should think theoretically based on China's local issues, and put forward new local concepts and methods.

social transformation, which precisely reflects the mission of Chinese scholars and shapes the distinctive style of the Chinese school.

Third, enterprise anthropology has always adhered to subject, academic and scholar equity. Since 2008, the discipline has achieved fruitful research results in terms of papers, publications, projects, lectures, training, and policy consultation, and has been highly appraised in society. These facts are inseparable from the guidance of subject leaders, the diligence of the team members, and the fair and just organizational culture. Although team members come from different regions and disciplines, with varying ages, qualifications and academic backgrounds, they are able to share a fair academic stage, without condescension to the study by deeming it "a subject not of anthropological concern", or treating it as a minority or tragedy. With the formation of theory in the discipline and the enrichment of practical experience, the team members have promoted, demonstrated, and explored the discipline through various forms such as academic conferences, lectures, and workshops, as well as different contents of the new era, new demands and new issues, and have attracted an increasing number of young people to join the research family to ensure the sustainable development of the discipline.

Fourth, enterprise anthropology has innovated an international paradigm for Chinese academic research. The discipline has always adhered to the ideas of being based in China and learning from abroad, drawing wisdom from history, facing the present, caring for human beings, and embracing the future. It has focused on building a new system of anthropological research in China, fully achieving academic independence in the guiding ideology, discipline system, academic system, and discourse system, and forming the Chinese local characteristics, style and school. Jijiao Zhang, the founder of the discipline, believes that academic internationalization should include nine aspects, namely, attending or organizing international conferences, conducting international collaborative research, conducting field research abroad, publishing academic results in foreign languages, giving lectures at internationally renowned universities, establishing international academic networks, engaging in dialogues with international academic authorities, organizing research teams to present the latest outcomes on international academic platforms, and serving in the management of international academic organizations. The proposal of these nine aspects is based on the practical internationalization of enterprise anthropology, and these aspects can be taken as the criteria by which to internationalize a discipline.

Declarations

Ethics approval and consent to participate Not applicable.

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Comments