

Writing of Business Ethnography: Reflections on Fieldwork and Theory

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The writing of business ethnography has expanded from the study of small social units such as factories to the discussion of transnational markets, transnational business networks and global finance in under the context of globalization. A holistic anthropological perspective and use of ethnography research have played important roles in the development of business anthropology. The research tradition and orientation of anthropology not only determine research perspectives and approaches in business ethnography, they also influence the theoretical construction of business anthropology. The study of business ethnography in China provides not only local interpretations of the theory and practice of business anthropology, but also opportunities to reflect on the use of ethnography for such studies.

Keywords: business ethnography, anthropological fieldwork, business study, globalization

INTRODUCTION: ETHNOGRAPHY, ANTHROPOLOGY AND BUSINESS RESEARCH

Similar to the history of any other branch of anthropology, business ethnography directly promotes the orientation and reproduction of business anthropology as an independent discipline. The study of business anthropology was initiated in the U.S. and European countries in the 1930s, while, in the 1980s, it arose in East and Southeast Asian areas in countries such as Japan, South Korea, Singapore and Hong Kong (Jordan 2018). Nowadays, specialized research institutes of business anthropology can be found in the above-mentioned countries and regions, as well as in Mainland China, Macao and Taiwan (Hamada 2018). “Business anthropology” is also referred as “industry anthropology”, “enterprise anthropology”, or “corporate anthropology” concerning different research objects in different countries. In this paper, business anthropology is adopted in a broad sense, including both profit-making units such as business organizations, trading markets, trading of futures and financial organizations, and non-profit making units such as commercial activities in museums (Hiroyoshi 2001). Thus, business owners, formal and informal employees and any other subjects participating in business activities are all touched upon in the writing of business ethnography.

From the perspective of the origin of a subject, anthropological business research is mainly based on the critiques on the Hypothesis of Economic Man in economics and management theories, in which the enterprises are regarded as an impetus in promoting enterprise development and improving the efficiency of the employees. However, anthropologists including Mayo (1933 & 1945), Roethlisberger (1938 & 1951) and Whitehead (1938) put forward different claims. For instance, Mayo (1945) pointed out that “our theory of civilization acts on the assumption that if technical and material advancement is maintained, human co-operation will somehow be inevitable”, emphasizing the importance of diverse civilizations and cultural traditions beyond the industrial civilization in the progress of human society. In this sense, the main

objective of business research in anthropology is not to explore the structure or efficiency of enterprises, but to take business activities as a process of social and cultural change and discuss the behavioral logic and symbolic meaning of enterprises and market entities and interpret them as an integral construction of history, culture, society, politics and economy in the context of cultural and historical diversity.

Taking ethnography as a research method has its relevance to anthropological business research. On one hand, capital, technology and labor enjoy a faster flowing rate under the expansion of world market, leading to a much tighter connection between local communities and the global market. Thus, self-sufficient economies in local communities have been merged into the international market, leading to rapid changes in local communities and cultures. On the other hand, practice logic based on a local culture has been emphasized. The differences existing in local knowledge has resulted in different adjustment and development paths of the economy, market and knowledge structure of local communities (Huang 2012). Both the structure of local markets and the system of world economy have become increasingly complex rather than homogeneous (Berger 2002). In this situation, the importance of ethnographical methods based on the perspective of “the others” has been further highlighted, by which local economy and social changes could be revealed.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE RESEARCH PERSPECTIVES OF BUSINESS ETHNOGRAPHY AND THE RESEARCH ORIENTATIONS OF ANTHROPOLOGY

The research traditions and orientations in anthropology determines how business ethnography is written and how the holistic perspective of anthropology is presented in the economic and business researches in anthropology. The ethnographic researches concerning economy and market in the field of anthropology are distinctively categorized into social and cultural orientations. In his study of the bazaar economy of Morocco, Geertz (1979:140) stated, “As a social institution, and even more as an economic type, it shares fundamental similarities with the Chinese, the Haitian, the Indonesian, the Yoruban, the Indian, the Guatemalan, the Mexican, and the Egyptian—to choose only some of the better described cases. But as a cultural expression, it has a character properly its own.” The bazaar economy he studied showed a combination of the overall background of the Arabic culture, economic phenomena and mainstream Islamic systems, and also the role played by the Jewish communities in economic development. According to Geertz (1979:141, 198-233), the rise of the bazaar economy was influenced by external factors like colonialism, but it was originated from local elements and closely related to the cultural traditions of Morocco. His research on the bazaar economy revealed how a regional modern market had evolved from a complicated interaction among diverse cultures and ethnic groups, the property ownership of the Islamic culture, and the occupational system based on the views of religion and world that categorized social and culture phenomena as either “pure” or “impure”, and how a trading pattern featuring long distances developed into a regional modern bazaar. This is a typically culture-oriented research.

In contrast, Sydney W. Mintz, who, also keen on research into market and economy, focused more on social orientation. He was quoted as saying,

“I think it is because the processes of incorporation into the world economy involve similarities that are not cultural, but sociological — they have to do with culture in a much less significant way than they have to do with how societies are changed by economic and political forces. To say it otherwise, there are social processes that surmount, to some extent, cultural differences; they can bring about structurally similar changes in culturally diverse populations. This in no way diminishes the importance of cultural differences; but it means to suggest that there are good reasons for asking whether cultural differences and social processes can be usefully distinguished from each other.” (Mintz 2004: 8)

Despite the fact that Geertz and Mintz focused on different dimensions in their researches on social and cultural orientations, with Geertz emphasizing cultural characteristics while Mintz highlighting the social relations shaped by economic and political power in terms of the path of textual expression, both culture-

and society-oriented studies, in essence, elucidating the corresponding relationships between structure and meaning, between behavior and idea, and between practice and ideology, and reflect a holistic perspective of anthropology.

To be more specific, the culture-oriented ethnological researches Geertz would name describe and analyze specific social systems and types of economy, covering a discussion on structural factors. In contrast, the society-oriented studies Mintz would name, including those on the cane sugar workers in Puerto Rico and the global trade of cane sugar in the Caribbean, pay much attention to the meaning of life of ethnic groups or individuals in different cultural contexts, involving an interpretation and thick description of culture and its symbolic meanings. As for the path of text presentation, culture-oriented researches are expected to focus on structural, political and economic processes and are, in essence, an interpretation of the structural continuity of a culture, whereas society-oriented ones are supposed to make an interpretation of a culture and its symbolic meanings and are, in nature, an expression of the meanings of local social and cultural changes. Therefore, both culture- and society-oriented studies are a holistic analysis of a local society and culture, indicating the holistic anthropological perspective.

In a like manner, the writing of business ethnography is a practical presentation of the holistic anthropological perspective. Although its research subjects have extended from small social units such as factories to the discussion of multinational companies, global finance and transnational business networks in a global context, the theoretical paradigm based on anthropological research traditions and the practice of ethnographical methods is of significance for the discussion on relevant issues. In the following parts, this paper will conduct an analysis of the research results, theoretical paradigms and practice paths of business ethnography, involving, in the process, the methodology and theory of anthropology as well as the continuity of its traditions, thus revealing the significant role played by ethnographical methods in anthropological business studies.

FIELDWORK, THEORETICAL PARADIGMS AND METHODOLOGY IN BUSINESS ANTHROPOLOGICAL RESEARCH

According to categorization of society- and culture-oriented researches in anthropology and the relation between structure and meaning in the path of presenting and interpreting ethnographical texts, the currently available research achievements in business ethnography can be applied in four dimensions, as shown in the following chart:

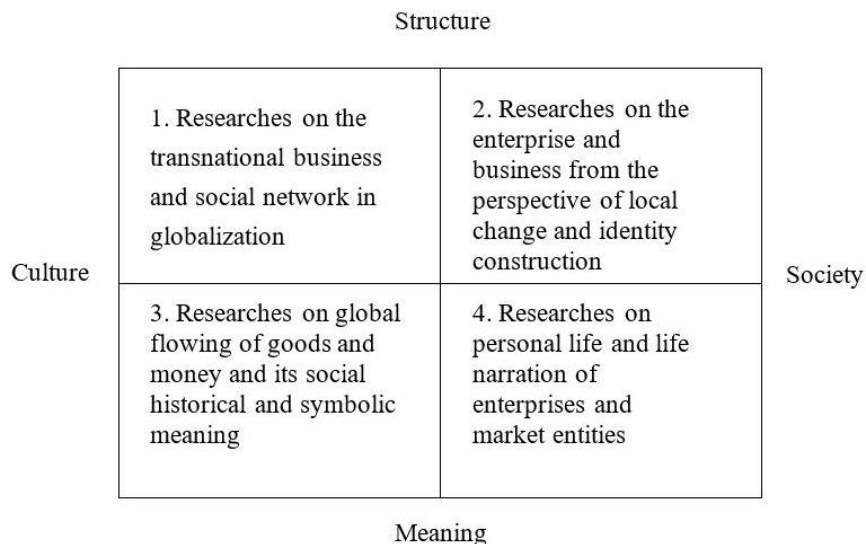


Figure 1. The Four Dimensions of Business Anthropological Research

First, Researches on the Transnational Business and Social Network in Globalization

As mentioned in the introduction part, the early studies of business ethnography from the perspectives of social network and relation are represented by the research series by the Industrial Research Department of the Business Management Institute of Harvard University in the 1930s. They serve as the beginning of industrial ethnography and the earliest attempt by anthropologists to explore the internal management of enterprises from the perspective of interpersonal relationship. As one of the leading persons in the Hawthorne Studies, Dr. Mayo was also among the founders of the school of human relations. However, against the backdrop of globalization, a growing number of studies have extended their coverage from small social unit to the cross-space and cross-boundary ones, including transnational enterprises and markets, aiming to discuss business activities in a broader context of politics, economy and power and among inner links between enterprise behaviors and social order, power relationship, and the subjectivity of participants. What follows are some researches on transnational companies and markets.

As for the researches on transnational companies, the early ones using ethnographical methods to explore the establishment of the relationship between multinational corporations and social networks were conducted in the 1960s and 1970s. Of these, the ones by Alvin Wolfe are impressive. Wolfe (1963) emphasized the important role of “network” in the development of African mineral industry, and discussed social groups like business corporations, families and states within different functions that could be integrated into a system to promote the operation of business organization. Wolfe (1978) believed that taking social network as a research perspective could be beneficial to understanding complex social phenomena such as urban development. He also did in-depth research on social networks from the perspective of methodology (Wolfe, 2012). Apart from anthropologists, economists employed ethnographical methods. For instance, Barnet and Muller (1976) used the ethnographical methods of anthropology in their in-depth interviews with the global managers of multinational corporations, responding to the questions about “irrational nationalism” and those concerning the strategies adopted by transnational businesses to maintain stable circumstances for development while having aggregated poverty and economic inequality around the world.

In terms of the researches on cross-border markets, Cheuk (2022)’s ethnographical observation on the Indian traders in Keqiao Textile Specialized Market in Shaoxing City, Zhejiang Province epitomized how Indian traders from Dubai had established the China-Dubai business networks and cross-boundary global trading networks. From his perspective, the business networks in Keqiao and the Middle East including Dubai were supported by the irregular financial transactions between Indian traders and Chinese suppliers, and the systems comprised intertwined and overlapping networks, including the business networks of the Indian traders in Dubai, between India and Keqiao in China, and of Keqiao. In the operation of multinational networks of finance and business, Cheuk studied how Indian traders as an “India diaspora” could found space for their business survival.

Inspired by the studies whose fieldwork was set in the Western context, the researchers in developing countries and regions explored relevant phenomena. For instance, Giniger (2009) gave a review on the history and practice of industrial anthropology in Argentina, listing case studies conducting by Rosendo who discussed the relationship between workers’ movements and organization control and Perelman who researched the relationship of informal employment among laid-off workers. For another, Kung (2002) from Taiwan looked into the capital-labor relationship among the Taiwanese businessmen in Malaysia with regards to the Malaysian policies on ethnic division of labor management.

Overall, in the ethnographical researches on transnational business and markets, enterprises are the principal part of business operation, influencing global orders while being influenced by them. The case studies of transnational companies or markets essentially describe the operation of the global market system and nation states, the practice of power, and the subjectivity construction of individuals in a holistic way.

Second, the Researches on Enterprises and Business From the Perspective of Local Changes and Identity Construction

The studies of the relationship of enterprise practice to local changes and identity construction present another research paradigm in business ethnography. Influenced by the expansion of the global market, the

rise of nation states, and multiculturalism, ethnicity, cultural adaptation and identity of market entities have become more complicated. To illustrate this, two types of ethnographical researches will be included herein. The studies of the first type focus on multinational business flows and cultural changes, and those of the second type emphasize ethnicity and identity construction of market entities in the process of globalization.

In respect of the researches on transnational business and local social and cultural changes, much has been achieved. In his *Golden Arches East*, for instance, anthropologist James Watson (2007) and his cooperators discussed the expansion of MacDonal as a Western cultural sign and symbol in the East Asia and the correlation of globalization to local culture and identity changes in the process. In view of the spread of the overseas Chinese diet culture, Cheung and Wu (2002) and Tan (2011), all of whom are overseas Chinese anthropologists, revealed how the traditional overseas Chinese diet cultures, including the overseas Chinese diet industry, spread and evolved in Southeast Asia and across the world and how the overseas Chinese communities developed and reshaped themselves as a whole. There have also been some interesting discussions about diet business in the collected works by Cheung and Tan (2007). For example, Shing (2007) observed Poon Choi or big bow feast, a traditional overseas Chinese dish and explored its commercialization as a traditional rural food and the relationship between the changes its consumption and the modernization of Hong Kong. For another, Serizawa (2007) elucidated the production, consumption and meaning of food in charitable activities. Besides, Cheung (2010) studied the industrialization and globalization of food production and their correlations with the development of local economy and cultural traditions, having conducted a case study of the breeding of crayfish in Nanjing, a research on the relationship between the transformation of traditional Hakka restaurants and the changes in the lifestyles of Hong Kong people (Cheung 2001), and a study of the influence of the oyster-breeding industry in Hong Kong on the local culture and community (Cheung 2019).

In discussions about the ethnicity and identity construction in enterprise activities, it is commonly believed that business activities and practice of entrepreneurs or employees are related to their ethnicities, which has been partially revealed in the studies of migrant entrepreneurs or diasporas. Take the researches on the business and enterprises of overseas Chinese for an example. In view of the migration and adaption in the early days, the activities, credit and relations of family business should be equally regarded as traditional cultural strategies for overseas Chinese to live abroad (Barnett 1960; Watson 1975). To a large extent, overseas Chinese migrating to the US, Southeast Asia or Europe followed such a relatively traditional business model based on economic resources and ethnicities (Nonini & Ong 1997). In the process of globalization, ethnicity and cultural identity are presented in a more sophisticated way through business practice. In her study of the elite Hong Kong entrepreneurs living in California, Ong (1999) explored how these entrepreneurs adopted the strategies of family business to accumulate cross-border capital and achieve mobility in identity. Besides, she came up with the concept “flexible citizenship” to elucidate the issues concerning the construction of transnational entrepreneurs’ citizenship in globalization.

Judging from what has been mentioned above, anthropological studies on business activities and cultural transition and identity have shifted attention from ethnic economy to complex issues like globalization, changes in local cultures and identity reconstruction.

Third, the Researches on Global Flowing of Goods and Money and Its Social Historical and Symbolic Meanings

With the development of the global market, anthropologists keen on social and cultural meanings of goods, have gradually extended their research interest from social and economic exchanges in simple social units to reflections on financial institution, stock market, trading of futures in the global market system. However, Malinowski’s (1920; 1922) observation on the patterns and functions of circulating exchanges of the Kula, Mauss’s (2000) construction of theory which took mutual benefits as a symbol of social unity, Douglas and Isherwood’s (1996) interpretation of the cultural meaning of commodity purchase in different cultural contexts, Mintz’s (1985) exploration into the history and social meaning of commodities and consumption, and Bourdieu’s (1984) interpretation of consumption, taste and symbolic meaning, are all applicable to the researches on financial institution, stock market, and trading of futures in the global context. This will be illustrated with some case studies of ethnography as follows.

The first kind of studies in point are those on the global flow, history and symbolic meaning of goods. The flow and exchange of commodities are not only an economic phenomenon but also an embodiment of politics, social structure, historical process and emphasis on cultural symbol (Appadurai 1986). For instance, *The World of Soy*, co-edited by Bois, Tan and Mintz (2008), talked about the different forms and functions of soy food across the globe. Setting soy in a historical global context, the authors reviewed the history of how soy became a primary consumer product with a great impact on the world economy. According to them, the reason why soy has evolved into a part of the mainstream food in different countries lies in certain social history and cultural context. In China, soybean products, as a cultural and symbolic sign, have been incorporated into the country's social fabric; in Japan and South Korea, the regular consumption of soy food is also connected with familial or national sentiment.

The second kind of studies are about the globalization and commercialization of money, including the ethnographical studies on global finance, capital futures and stock systems. Adopting the fieldwork and ethnography of anthropology as research methods, Zaloom (2006), as a futures trader himself, made a participatory observation on the futures-trading markets in Chicago and London with the aiming of exploring the futures transactions and financial systems of the two cities, showing how individual awareness and routine space of traders and market managers were redefined in the context of new technologies. Another achievement in this regard is the ethnographical study of Wall Street financiers, conducted by Ho (2009) over a 17-month fieldwork. Setting his research in the American society as Zaloom did, Ho looked into how the appreciation of the stocks of Wall Street enterprises occurring with the instability in employment and worsening unemployment and how banking investors, states and unfair political orders resulted in more profits for investors rather than the ordinary shareholders. According to the findings, the cultural system and awareness that had formed under such financial and market orders would not be weakened by the development of investment banks; instead, they would be constantly applied and reshaped to reveal unfair labor markets and work orders in a broader way.

Driven by the deepening globalization, those specializing in financial markets expanded their research coverage to the non-Western societies. One of their representative achievements is *Financial Economy, Subjectivity and New Orders* co-authored by Huang and Cheng (2017). The book offers a systematic description of and reflection on four topics, including how the establishment of accounting systems was related to state and market, the pressure from creditors and social harm facing credit card slaves – an emerging group of debtors, the system of land taxation on the Bunun people and the justice in it, and how the Rukai people reshaped their subjectivity in the financialization. According to the authors, the systems of finance, accounting and stock in both Western and non-Western societies have been linked to the practice of social subjects, which influences the world's economic and social orders as well as the reconstruction of individual identity and subjectivity.

Fourth, the Researches on the Narration of Life History of Enterprises and Market Entities

The fourth paradigm in business ethnography focuses on the narration of life history of market entities, including entrepreneurs and employees, against the backdrop of globalization. This practice has been long ever since life history was adopted as a perspective and method in the studies of ethnography. Kroeber (1908), Kluckhohn (1945) and Benedict (1948) all underlined the importance of life history as an anthropological research method. In the context of global narration, Mintz (1974; 2004) emphasized that life history narration should be taken as a methodology in a cross-cultural comparison of the life histories of different individuals, in order to find out the impacts of the social and economic progress beyond culture on the behaviors of individuals. In the studies of business anthropology, the paradigm and methodology of the life history of individuals are mainly applied to different types of ethnographical documents, including oral history, diary, autobiography and biography. In this paper, the documents of oral history and autobiography are adopted for illustrating the use of the paradigm and methodology in the researches on entrepreneurs.

As for autobiography, it is in fact deconstructed by the scholars of business ethnography as a first-hand document from a reflective perspective. Autobiography reveals the reflexive observation of entrepreneurs on their own identity and enables researchers to study the activities of entrepreneurs during a long period of time. For that reason, an analysis of autobiography would show how the life history of individuals is related to

social and economic history. At present, the number of the autographies of entrepreneurs is huge while the quantity of systematic researches on them is relatively small. In recent years, the importance of autography as a first-hand document of ethnography has been increasingly highlighted, and there has been a growing number of studies and discussions using autography to explore entrepreneurship in a methodological dimension. According to some studies, autography helps researchers grasp an overall understanding of entrepreneurs by offering information about their internal aspects (mental state, endeavor, successes, failures, objectives, confusion and desire) and external ones (relationship with family members and relatives, social networks, and particular circumstances during a period of time) (Hulsink & Rauch 2021). This constitutes the vantage of a qualitative method over a quantitative one (Rauch, Van Doorn & Hulsink 2014). Of the case studies of ethnography taking autography as a first-hand document, the most typical one is about Jules Joubert, a French colonial entrepreneur, in which the researcher Reveley (2010) analyzed the correlation between the construction of the entrepreneur's identity and image as an "adventurer" and the establishment of his reputation.

Compared with autography, documents of oral history feature a longer period of time and a wider range of application in business ethnography. The studies of entrepreneurs usually begin with an interview about their entrepreneurial experiences to expose their motivation for starting a business. Then, attention is paid to the difficulties and support in the early stage of entrepreneurship, the risk control in the development, and the link between the personal life of entrepreneurs and the inheritance of enterprises. This also involves the personality and cognition, families and social networks of entrepreneurs. As a matter of fact, oral history is not limited to researches on entrepreneurs in the writing of business ethnography because it is also applicable to the ones about the managers or employees of an enterprise, the workers of a factory, and female and other participants of the business operation.

DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATION OF BUSINESS ETHNOGRAPHY IN CHINA

The development of business ethnography in China has not only been an interpretation of the localization of the enterprise anthropological theoretical paradigm, but a practice in and reflection of anthropological perspectives and methods. Compared with other countries, China has shown two distinct features in the rise of business ethnography, namely the localization of case studies and theoretical paradigms. In general, the evolvement of business ethnography in China can be divided into three stages, i.e. the early stage of exploration between the 1930s and 1949, the transitional stage between 1949 and 1978, and the stage of prosperity and innovation since 1978.

In the early stage, some ethnographical researches had been done before industrial or business anthropology was established as a separate branch of anthropology in China. Most of these researches, in particular, focused on family businesses and factories, low-income groups, and labor relationships in the early stage of industrialization. In the 1930s, how family businesses were related to the industrial development and the paths of urbanization in China was discussed under the push of Professor Fei Hsiao-tung (1993; 2000). Early in the 1920s and 1930s, some researchers paid attention to low-income groups, including Yan Xinzhe (1935) who analyzed the life of rickshaw men in Nanning and Wu Ruilin (1939; 1940) who studied the rickshaw industry in China as a whole and the rickshaw men in Guangzhou. In terms of the labor relationships in factories, Chen Da (1929), He Deming and Wu Zelin (1937) explored the issues concerning Chinese laborers, and Shi Guoheng (1946) studied the factory laborers in Kunshan in East China. By then, branches of the subject had not been established, but a foundation for the development of business ethnography in China was gradually laid. Besides, many of the researches during the period boosted the Chinese business ethnography in the later stages. For instance, Professor Fei Hsiao-tung's researches on family businesses and factories, furthered by himself after 1978, led to a discussion on the Wenzhou business model featuring small businesses and big markets and benefited the studies by other scholars, including Zhou Daming's (2013; 2015) researches on how urbanization was propelled by traditional social networks and family businesses.

In the transitional stage, the number of researches on business ethnography was small due to the social unrest caused by political and economic factors. Despite this, some progress was made in the field. For

example, Professor Fei Hsiao-tung translated *The Social Problems of an Industrial Civilization* from English into Chinese in 1964, introducing the early research results of industrial anthropology in the US to China and thus contributing to the development of the industrial and business anthropology in China. While business ethnography was evolving in China, many overseas scholars were observing the economic rise in Asia. In the 1960s, the East Asian economies, including the Four Asian Tigers, registered rapid development, accelerating the exploration into the reasons behind the economic boom in the overseas Chinese communities in East Asia, Southeast Asia and other parts of the world. Most of the studies at that time were about the relationship between the traditional Chinese culture and the economic development of overseas Chinese. For instance, Berger (1988) highlighted the role of pragmatism of the folk religions and other factors that contributed to the economic takeoff of the East Asian countries.

In the third stage starting from the 1970s, China's reform and opening-up and economic development led to the prosperity of business ethnography. First, there has been a prominent accumulation of localized researches on business ethnography. During his another visit to Jiangcun Village, Jiangsu Province in 2007, Professor Fei Hsiao-ung (2007) reiterated the importance of the path of urbanization with Chinese characteristics or the path of urbanization of rural areas. After visiting Wenzhou, Zhejiang Province, he put forward the Wenzhou Business Model and emphasized the potential role of small family businesses in urbanization and rural industrialization. In addition, other scholars carried out case studies of the localized business models of national enterprises and economy (Wu 2012; Zhuang 2002), cultural heritage and time-honored enterprises (Gao 2020; Gao & Kuah 2021; Wang 2016), small entrepreneurs (Gao 2011) and family businesses (Mei & Lv 2019), and Chinese corporations abroad (Chen & Guo 2015; Wang & Lei 2017).

Second, there has been increasingly innovative localized theories and methods of business anthropology. For example, Wang Xingzhou (2006) and Yin Peng (2014) discussed the application of anthropological approaches in market researches, and Zhuang Kongshao (2012) and Yuan Tongkai (2013) summarized and reviewed anthropological methods from the perspective of organizational anthropology. Besides, Pan Tianshu (2016; 2019) strived for innovation in the research and theory of business ethnography from the perspective of application. In particular, Professor Zhang Jijiao (2009; 2014) tried to create a theory and methodology of business anthropology with Chinese characteristics from the theoretical perspective of neo-structural functionalism and put forward a four-layer analysis of business anthropology. What he did was a significant part of the endeavor to localize the theories and approaches of business anthropology.

Third, the business research journal *International Journal of Business Anthropology* and textbooks edited and sponsored by Chinese scholars were published, which marked a significant progress in business anthropology as a separate branch in China. Edited by Professor Chen Gang, *International Journal of Business Anthropology* has continued its publication for 12 years, and provided the latest advancements in business researches by both Chinese and foreign scholars, having given a close anthropological observation on business phenomena in the context of social and cultural changes in China and other countries. And a series of textbooks on business anthropology were published in Chinese edited by Professor Tian Guang and other Chinese scholars (2012; 2018).

Fourth, there have been more exchanges of achievements in business anthropology between China and other countries. Regarding such exchanges of and introductions to research results, two of Hirochika's (2001; 2015) articles and one of Japanese American scholar Tomoko's (2013) articles were translated into Chinese. In 2008, a symposium themed with "Case Study of Enterprise Anthropology" was held in the Institute of Ethnography and Anthropology, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (Yin 2008). So was the first international conference on business anthropology. Meanwhile, the Academic Committee of Enterprise Anthropology was established (Zhang 2016). These events further promoted the exchanges in business anthropology between China and other countries.

According to what has been mentioned above, there have been distinctive local features of business anthropology in China, including case studies of ethnography with local information, localized theoretical paradigms, discussions on the theories and approaches of business ethnography, and application-oriented researches. The advancement of business ethnography in China exerts an increasing influence on business anthropology around the world and has become an inseparable part of it.

CONCLUSIONS

The theories and approaches of business anthropology derive from the basic theories and research paradigm and methods of anthropology; writing business ethnography is based on a holistic anthropological view; and the ethnographical approaches of anthropology contribute to the methodology of enterprise anthropological studies. In the era of globalization, cross-border markets and global communities have been included as research subjects of business anthropology in addition to small social units, but the mutual trust formed in the long-term contact between researchers and respondents remains critical for information access. As an important part of economic anthropology, the research achievements of business anthropology can be combined with organizational, development- and application-oriented anthropology to reinforce the innovation in the theories and paradigms of anthropology. Besides, the studies of business ethnography also reveal the issues concerning anthropology, and the research subjects are not limited to things in economic development. For developing countries like China and developing regions, local knowledge and traditional social culture remain important in protecting economic growth from turbulence and social unrest caused by a market system of uncontrolled adjustment or by interest-driven models as seen in the Western countries and it is necessary to find a path of industrialization and modernization with Chinese or local characteristics for coordinated development of economy, society and culture. This is not only the ultimate goal of business anthropology and business ethnography but a key issue in the field of anthropology as well.

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