

The Role of Anthropology in Global Social Governance: Collaboration With the World Bank in China

Daming Zhou
Yunnan Normal University

Qin Hu
Sun Yat-Sen University

Anthropology now plays a crucial role in the Global Social Governance. This article traces the development of cooperation between anthropology and international organizations from the perspective of anthropology's participation in the operation of international organizations' projects. It presents the status and role of anthropology in global governance, and briefly describes the operation mode of anthropology in international organizations and the practice status in China by taking the cooperation with the World Bank as an example.

Keywords: anthropology, global governance, international organization, The World Bank

ARGUEMENTS ABOUT ANTHROPOLOGICAL ADVOCACIES OF SOCIAL GOVERNANCE

The early history of anthropology in general has a strong connection with colonialism (Foster, 1969; Lewis, 1973). At that time, anthropologists in the colonial countries turned to put their knowledge into use. In Britain and France, management problems in the colonized regions had prompted many collaborations between anthropologists and government offices. Consequently, a number of outstanding anthropological academic works came out, of which *The Nuer* by Evans Pritchard is a representative one. And the American government's attention to Indian management affairs also led to the early development of American anthropology. Subsequently, applied anthropology had branched on the basis of its extensive participation in governmental decision-making in the 1930s and 1940s (Escobar, 1995). As a result, anthropology, seen as an accomplice of colonialism, fell into a short-term silence, but in the late 1960s it restarted to participate in the practice of global developmental affairs (Sibley, 1989).

The development of applied anthropology has experienced an entangling development process. In the early days anthropologists had arguments and even conflicts with government officials and activists, because anthropologists, especially those liberal and anti-colonization anthropologists, greatly emphasized the importance of a local culture, taking preserving local cultures for granted. So, officials and activists who were eager to solve problems argued that anthropologist's bookish spirit seemed incomprehensible and did no good for the management affairs. The so-called cooperation between anthropologists and the colonial governments actually remained a state of mutual detachment. Moreover, it is not only colonial governments and other activists who have been critical of anthropologists'

participation in applied affairs, but anthropologists themselves also argued about whether or not to get involved in the social affairs (Firth, 1981).

Applications of anthropology have brought about possibilities for changes. And most practices that were aimed at promoting local changes inevitably ended up with changes including even those cultural preserved projects. Hence, it arouses the arguments whether anthropologists, as external observers, had the right to intervene in local affairs. Dealing with change has become an unavoidable academic ethical issue. It was not until the 1960s, when anthropologists came up with the saying “change is inevitable” about cultural particularism and acculturation, that the argument settled down. Just like what Beattie (2013) illustrated in *Other Cultures: Aims, Methods and Achievements in Social Anthropology*, “Change is taking place in all human societies all the time. Sometimes it is sudden and catastrophic, as when a system of government is destroyed by revolution and replaced by a different one; sometimes it is gradual and hardly perceptible, so that even the members of the society themselves scarcely notice it.” And this view of change as an inseparable part of society was increasingly accepted by anthropologists and has become one of its academic principles.

Another factor related to anthropologists' social practice might be cultural relativism. For applied anthropologists, this raised a scholarly ethical issue: if a culture was to be understood and developed in its own light, did people from other cultures have the right to speak for it? Eric Wolf (1969) once reflected that applied anthropology, by definition, embodies a reaction against cultural relativism because it does not consider the culture that applies anthropology is equal to the one to which anthropology is applied. This shows that the essence of the debate was a struggle for power. As Van Willigen said, the history of anthropology, both basic and applied, is the history of the power relationships between anthropologists and the people studied (Van Willigen, 2002). In the mid-twentieth century, anthropologist sparked a self-reflection on their roles, and admitted that they had intervened into other cultures. These applied anthropologists constantly worked with others either in an intimate or detached way, and the distribution of resources and power changed among these two groups. It also changed the academic objective, which meant a shifting of focus from the study of “culture” and “tribe” to “community” and “problem”. This “shifting gaze” was far from a description of a specific culture, and it was trying to respond to the representative ethical issues that anthropologists deal with in view of the culture of the other, and also trying to make the other speak for themselves (Rylko-Bauer, Singer & Willigen, 2006). It showed that people being studied were drastically capable of rejecting unfairness and claiming their own rights. Although the debate had not been thoroughly settled, anthropologists were no longer stumped by cultural relativism. Since then, more and more anthropologists tried to devote themselves to public affairs. The officials need information and help in policy-making, and anthropologists provide possible feedback in turn. Cernea (1995), as a government consultant demonstrated that his research projects were related to social affairs, and helped the government with suggestions on agricultural difficulties and social surveys. It was a common pattern for applied anthropology at that time. At the beginning of the 20th century, anthropologists advocated a code of action to engage in social affairs, emphasizing that “we must never forget our commitment to clarifying social problems, advancing problem solving and making the world better” (Rylko-Bauer, Singer & Willigen, 2006). The declaration required a greater engagement of applied anthropology with more evidence-based solutions to social affairs, in addition to shaping the public theoretical discourse. In this way, applied anthropology did take part in a number of social development projects in the global dimension. Gradually, a large number of anthropologists were employed by various international organizations, such as the World Bank (WB), the World Health Organization (WHO), and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (Zhou, 2004).

POST-WAR AIDS, INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND APPLICATION OF ANTHROPOLOGY

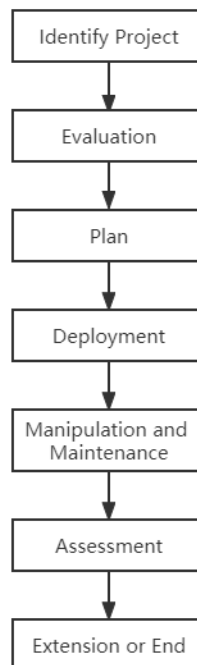
Anthropologists now began to appear in the international organizations related to social context, historical situations and industrial development. After World War II, the economic downturn rendered

Western countries confronted with security problems and economic reconstruction. As a result, the 1944 Bretton Woods Accords came out, giving birth to the International Monetary Organization (IMF) and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), which later expanded into the World Bank (WB). There is no doubt that the framework of the Bretton Woods agreement had a huge impact on the reconstruction of Western countries. Through it, large amounts of aid flowed into those war-torn countries, enabling them to recover their economies quickly and broadening an impressive economic development concept of rapid reconstruction and economic growth.

So far, the related international organizations beyond the International Monetary Organization and the World Bank grew explosively, which could be divided into four types. One is called multilateral agreement organization, including the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the World Bank (WB) and so on. Such intergovernmental organizations do not challenge the authority of a government, but play a role in coordinating joint actions. The second one is the organization of bilateral agreements. Almost all major industrial countries have at least one development-related bilateral agreement with other countries. For example, the United States Department of International Development (USAID) has signed bilateral agreements on social development with many countries. The third one refers to nonprofit-aimed NGOs that take an active part in global governance affairs. The last one is private consulting firm. Nowadays, countless private consulting firms exist, some of which serve for development affairs, mainly providing professional technical assistance.

In a common sense, international organizations generally participate in the developmental affairs via projects. And they manage in a systematic way, adopt a process-based operation mode, and emphasize teamwork of experts in multiple disciplines. Since the 1970s, the standard operation for developmental projects has generally followed the following procedure (Figure 1):

**FIGURE 1
PROJECT FLOW CHART**



Taking the United States as an example, anthropologists, for a long time, were not enthusiastic about applied practice due to their reflections on the Vietnam War and their rejection of research for political aims. However, there were brilliant works during the period, such as the VICOS Project. By the mid-1970s, the promulgation of the National Environment Act of 1969, and the Foreign Aid Act of 1973 made

a great difference and provided excellent opportunities and social environment for anthropologists to work in social affairs. Subsequently, applied anthropology developed rapidly. In 1980, 1/4 of the members of the American Association of Anthropologists were full-time applied anthropologists, and a considerable portion of them were working in international organizations (Chambers, 1985).

Anthropology offers a perspective of otherness and a sensitive grasp of social affairs, bridging the gap between policy, plan, project and manipulation practically. And the sustained effort of numerous anthropologists had a great impact on the developing industries and international organizations. The basic attitude of anthropology toward local cultural orientation, its critique of the development industry and its study of Dependency Theory, and its collaboration with other disciplines, have largely changed the arrogance of the developed countries in their assistance to the Third World, gradually considering the possibility of locally based integrated human development instead of the emphasis on the rapid economic growth. And the details are below.

First comes academic research. Anthropologists have done a great deal of valuable academic work and found creative methodologies for international organizations to deal with practical social affairs (Farmer, 2001). These findings help provide theoretic evidence for policy-making and practical programs in which anthropologists sum up the rapid participant appraisal. The second is leadership. Anthropologists take leadership roles in some international organizations and work closely with other experts in a practical manner. For example, anthropologists, biologists and ecologists work together to promote projects on poverty alleviation and environmental sustainability. Then comes appraisal. Anthropologists can easily clarify the disadvantages of one project to potential beneficiaries. At the beginning, the work of anthropologists was limited to an early-stage appraisal and a final evaluation. In the past 30 years, anthropologists have become largely involved in all sections of an entire project. Last is local knowledge and a local perspective, which prove to be the most essential work of anthropology. Meanwhile, there is a growing acceptance that the perspective of the beneficiary concerned in project planning and design seems critical to the success of a project. Anthropologists can unearth a treasure trove of local skills, knowledge, experience, expertise, and demonstrate more possibilities for these to be used in the projects.

ANTHROPOLOGICAL ADVOCACY TO THE WORLD BANK

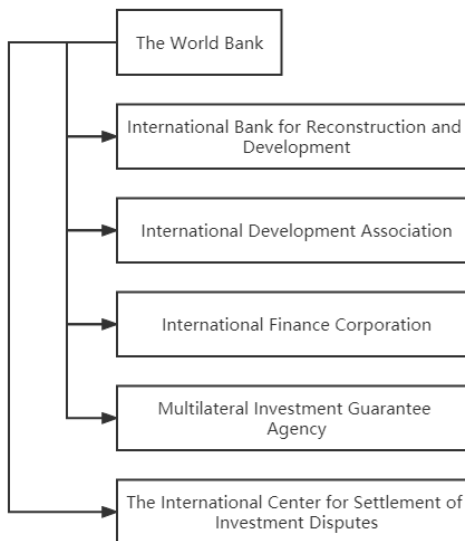
The World Bank Group founded by Bretton Woods system works in every major area of development as a multilateral international organization. And it does provide a wide array of financial products, technical assistants, innovative knowledge and solutions for helping developing countries to face their challenges. It, serving 189 member countries, consists of 5 parts (see Figure 2), among which the International Bank for Reconstruction was the foremost financial supporter. Correspondingly, the World Bank has also gained a great amount of knowledge of the countries it serves, and also exerts a great influence in their policy-making and developmental practice. In the early 1990s, the World Bank had also become a large employer, which had more than 7,000 people from about 130 countries, including a large number of sociologists and anthropologists (Baba, 1994).

However, anthropologists did not cast their shadow at the beginning, because the World Bank only took the economic issues as its goal, resulting in the neglect of the anthropological holism and local knowledge. It wasn't until the 1970s, when poverty reduction became urgent, that the World Bank began to throw eyes on anthropologists. In 1972, driven by a report on "How to Use Anthropology in Project Operations", the World Bank formally paid attention to the importance of the "social context" of development projects (Perret, 1980) and then began to hire full-time anthropologists and sociologists. In 1984, the World Bank proposed that social assessment should be an essential part of a project feasibility report, which should be mainly undertaken by anthropologists. Since then, the Bank has gradually become one of the largest institutions to promote cooperation between anthropology and international organizations.

A focus on poverty, accounting for one-third of the total projects, became the nexus of the World Bank's collaboration with anthropologists. Anthropologists focus on human-beings rather than technology and resources, and on the link between "to-do" and "can do". Cernea (1996) concluded that

the anthropologist's effort was to show that the requirement of anthropological and sociological social research and analysis and its embedment in development projects are not a luxury or an irrelevant add-on in development projects when they are being introduced. It is as necessary an initiative as an economic analysis in designing an adequate goal orientation, together with a confirmation of the feasibility of development projects. The World Bank's interface with anthropology is not a one-way and passive process, but a two-way interaction. The World Bank recognizes the importance of anthropology and hires anthropologists to work for it. At the same time, anthropology strives to prove its practical value and tried to change the World Bank's decision-making rules.

FIGURE 2
STRUCTURE OF THE WORLD BANK'S BRANCHES



In the 1970s, anthropologists and sociologists used informal interpersonal networks to expand their numbers and influence in the World Bank. Through informal networks, anthropologists made a greater advocacy in the Bank. Soon, at the end of 1970s, the interpersonal networks became an academic working circle known as “an important vehicle for support and change within the World Bank” (Kardam, 1993). They met, discussed and shared information and contributed to the changes in the World Bank through two strategies. One was through direct discussion and demonstration, and the other to slowly enrich the theoretical knowledge on "development" and its undergoing mechanism. In the mid-1990s, about 70% of World Bank employees were economists (Escobar, 1995). The ratio of economists to all other experts was as high as 28:1. Though place in an incomparable comparison, the number of anthropologists has been increasing, reaching a number of 60 (Horowitz, 1996).

At present, the World Bank has officially employed more than 100 anthropologists, who are making fabulous contributions to policy-making, particularly concerning involuntary resettlement policy, urban development, primary education, aboriginal issues, forest and reforestation issues, water issues, poverty alleviation, etc. And the participation of anthropologists has resulted in a policy shift, differing from the ideological concept of development.

Of course, there have also been some arguments. Some criticize the World Bank's policies as inadequate and biased, and some point out that the World Bank is still focused on “economic growth first and poverty alleviation second”. Although the World Bank also applies the term “social output”, it is not their primary consideration of projects. Cernea (1996) accused the World Bank of being economic-centered, technology-centered and commodity-centered. Escobar questioned the Bank's influence on and

significance in local residents (Escobar, 1995). Indeed, the World Bank still has a long way to go before the relevant social and cultural issues are adequately considered. The obstacle is that some in the senior echelons of the World Bank are still quite oblivious to the role that anthropology and sociology can play in development affairs. And it does take a long time before both anthropologists and the World Bank can reach a mutual balance.

PRACTICE IN CHINA, THE WORLD BANK AND ANTHROPOLOGY

In 1981, the World Bank provided the first loan for supporting universities in China. Until July 2018, the World Bank had provided China with a total of more than 50 billion US dollars in financial aids, supporting 566 projects, of which 106 are still in progress. China's total loan ranks NO.1 among all the borrowing countries. And these loan projects have covered agriculture, environmental protection and education areas. Since 2000, we have hosted a series of projects in cooperation with the World Bank, including rural and urban projects in many developing provinces and regions. And the characteristics of the collaborations between anthropology and the World Bank will be elaborated on the basis of these projects.

First of all, the major forms of the anthropological practice are assessment and consultation in which anthropologists mainly cooperate in the projects with the World Bank and the Chinese government as external consultants. They possess a body of professional knowledge and therefore are good at using participant observation and social-analyses to come up with the social assessment and consultant reports. Sometimes they also propose development proposal. Various ways can be used to classify assessment and evaluation. According to the type, it can be divided into social assessment, environmental assessment, economic assessment, etc. While according to the project implementation phase, it can be divided into pre-assessment, mid-term assessment and overall project evaluation, etc. At present, in all the World Bank-Chinese government projects, social assessment is a part of the project integration, in which anthropologist commonly participate. Thus, anthropologists contribute to:

- 1) Helping lenders plan and accomplish intended projects with the support and active participation of individuals and groups directly affected by the project.
- 2) Identifying and dovetailing the respective interests of the sophisticated groups, and achieving the relevant social development goal.
- 3) Orienting beyond economic and political factors towards social factors, and minimizing the negative effects to the local society.
- 4) Establishing a sharing platform for all the interest groups so as to do better social monitoring and social evaluation.

Case 1: The Agricultural Modernization Project covers 4 cities including Jiujiang and Shangrao, from which 5,000 villages and 1.5 million farmers benefit directly or indirectly. And the total investment of the project is 154 million US dollars, of which 100 million from the World Bank, accounting for about 64.9% of the total. The main purpose of this project was to increase the income of farmers, to strengthen the construction of agricultural infrastructure, and to promote the development in an all-round way. In order to reach the goal, three sub-projects were proposed, regarding the construction of agricultural water infrastructure, improvement of agricultural production and the construction of market system. And a social pre-assessment was conducted in 2001. The task of anthropologists in this process is to provide sound advice in the preparation of the project or to propose an appropriate solution to mitigate the social drain and negative impact of the implementation of the project on the local community. Anthropologists should also consider the general needs of the farming community, including how they sought to have their needs met and what their priority needs were at the time of project implementation. Moreover, they should consider the differences in benefits that arise from the division of labor between men and women, and possess an understanding of the strengths and problems of socioeconomic development in the project area being influenced. The Anthropological Evaluation Team conducted a comprehensive evaluation of the project. They figured out the priorities of the relevant interest groups, including wealthy peasants, poor peasants, ordinary peasants, rural cadres, non-government organizations and government

organizations. And the specific activities that peasants might participate in varied from groups to groups, according to their own intended development goals. Thus, the anthropologists had to make practical suggestions flexibly. Likewise, the highest priority of poor peasants was to be helped out of poverty. And a close investigation showed that they might participate in the construction of water conservancy facilities and improvement of farmland production. So, the scholars suggested that one leading peasant could drive several poor peasants to participate in the project, and water-user associations could be established in irrigation areas so that every participant would know how the water conservancy systems work, how irrigation water is delivered, etc.

Anthropologists finally completed the consultation properly and suggested the “company + farmers” model, which meant integrating the agricultural product market networks, establishing an agricultural marketing center, setting up water-using peasants’ associations, strengthening peasants’ self-service awareness, and formulating an information feedback system and supervision mechanism. Besides, the consultants suggested it would be better to create a cultural context compatible with the market economy so as to change peasants’ survival disadvantages and behavior patterns in general. Compared with the original one, the supplement was deep-going for the local development, which had been praised by experts from the World Bank (Zhou & Qin, 2005).

The main methodological tool used is the Rapid Participant Appraisal (RPA), originating from the anthropological concept of participatory development. Participatory development is an important concept in the practice of applied anthropology. It emphasizes that the target group receiving development assistance is genuinely involved in every step of the development project from the beginning to the end, including decision-making, evaluation, implementation, and management. The concept also requires anthropologists to seek the opinions and suggestions of the target group, to combine each other's knowledge and experience, and to cultivate their sense of responsibility for the development so that they fully identify with and accept the development decisions and choices. The goal of development can be achieved to the greatest extent only if local people treat development as their own commitment and turn all external support in terms of information, technology and finance into their own motivation for the development. As for RPA, it is a program evaluation method developed based on the anthropological fieldwork method, including PRA (Participant Rural Appraisal) and PUA (Participant Urban Appraisal), in which questionnaire, symposium, drawing, sorting and semi-structured interviews could be frequently used. It is no longer limited to a fixed survey procedure and questionnaire, but focuses on the process and content of a survey, which is continuously adjusted and improved based on the information obtained. The differences and contradictions reflected in the survey information are then examined. This method emphasizes that the target group be assimilated into every part of the developmental project's decision-making, appraisal, implementation and management process. It also requires anthropologists to get to know all the thoughts of the target group, and to cultivate their sense of responsibility for the project in an acceptable and local way. And it addresses the dynamic process in which ideas and feedback flow both ways. Only when the local people regard the development as their own commitment and absorb all material, financial and technological support into their own action, can they achieve the goal of the development at the largest scale. Statistically, almost all the collaborations with development projects are manipulated with such a method. RPA has its own advantages of rapidity and flexibility; meanwhile, with its disadvantages of being hasty and superficial, it is difficult to establish a familiar partnership with the respondents. However, throughout the collaborations, it is of great significance to operate with applied anthropology.

Case 2: The Guangxi Poverty Alleviation Rural Pilot Project was conducted in 2016 mainly in the west of Guangxi Province and Yunnan-Guangxi bordering area. Through participant observation and statistical data analysis, we found that the 10 selected counties were in extreme poverty, lacking in natural resources such as water and fertile soil. Moreover, 90% of the poor were ethnic minority people. Therefore, the consultant team especially took the means of livelihood in ethnic areas into account when formulating the Ethnic Minority Development Framework (EMDF), and emphasized the acculturation and influence in their working on tourism development proposals. In the Maonan village, the consultant team broadly interviewed local women through extensive consultation and fieldwork among local

residents. Most of the interviewees had a low level of education, and in terms of household division of labor, they had to participate in the field work apart from taking care of all their household chores and children. Therefore, the project paid much more attention to providing equal opportunities for women to join in the cooperatives and to train them into specialized agronomists.

Case 3: The project “Basic Education Development in Western China” supported by the World Bank and the Department for International Development in 2002 covered 5 provinces and 98 counties in Yunnan, Sichuan, Guangxi, Ningxia and Gansu provinces, involving 37.7 million people, of which 19.6% are ethnic minority peoples. Since the research sites involved 23 different ethnic minorities, the consultant team suggested that the project take full account of the characteristics of each ethnic group in each region. Moreover, field research and statistical data analysis revealed that the inability to pay for schooling was the primary factor causing students to drop out of school. On this basis, the consultant team made recommendations on the need to develop programs for students in especially hardship areas in the project design, and at the same time, to establish a work-study base for needy students when building boarding schools, and to solve the problems of covering expenses of students’ accommodation, stationery and living subsidies in addition to tuition and miscellaneous fees. Besides, due to the complex language and dialect situations of the communities in the research counties, the consultant team specifically proposed a policy for bilingual education, that is to say, the project should choose teachers who knew both the local dialect and Mandarin to teach at each educational place as much as possible, and to develop simple and practical bilingual teaching materials that could meet local realities in a feasible manner (Zhou & Qin, 2005).

In addition to the social assessment projects, anthropologists have gradually engaged themselves in the World Bank’s specific projects and policy-making programs. The in-depth collaborations demonstrate the closer relationships between applied anthropology and the World Bank in China.

Case 4: In a Chinese agricultural technological and project, the World Bank found that scattered peasants might not be given the advantage over the technology enterprises under a “company + farmer” circumstance. Meanwhile, agencies that could unite scattered peasants worked effectively. After revising the history of Chinese professional agricultural associations, and investigating on the spot, we discovered that self-running agricultural associations could help promote cooperation and satisfy the World Bank’s requirements. Therefore, we submitted the “Proposal on Promoting the Development of Farmers’ Professional Cooperative Associations”, encouraging the farmers to organize local self-running professional associations and giving detailed and strategic suggestions (Zhou & Qin, 2005).

CONCLUSION

The practice of applied anthropology has had an entangling process, through which, anthropology has gradually accomplished a greater engagement into the practical issues. And it is in the step-by-step exploration that anthropologists have positively strengthened their cooperation with international organizations and devoted themselves to global governance, though it has taken a long time to bridge the gap between the theoretical and applied ends. In the 1970s, the efforts from the two sides were put into effect. After the 1990s, the application of participatory development concerning the international aid became matured. The collaboration between applied anthropology and the World Bank can be seen as a successful example of anthropology and international organizations working together.

In the last period of 30 to 40 years, anthropology has played an important role in transforming the World Bank’s developmental philosophy, policy-making and project operations, which can provide a reference for other forms of cooperation with other international organizations. The two-side cooperation is actually interactive. On the one hand, international organizations provide a stage for the practice of anthropologists. On the other hand, anthropology, with a wealth of knowledge, experiences, insights and skills, has broadened the understanding of “development” of international organizations, which means that practical applications concerning the social issues can be operated more effectively.

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Zhou Daming is the Distinguished Professor at School of Law and Sociology in Yunnan Normal University, and Emeritus Professor of Anthropology at School of Sociology and Anthropology in Sun Yat-sen University. His research focuses on migration and urbanization, ethnic groups and regional cultures applied anthropological research. Hu Qin is a MA student in Anthropology at the School of Sociology and Anthropology of Sun Yat-sen University.

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