The Cultural Integration Mechanism of International Social Work from the Perspective of Community with a Shared Future for Mankind

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Abstract: Against the backdrop of coexisting globalization and anti-globalization ideologies, intertwined transnational mobility and local conflicts, one of the core challenges facing international social work lies in transcending cultural differences to implement effective, equitable, and culturally inclusive interventions. This paper innovatively proposes the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind (emphasizing symbiosis, co-construction, and shared benefits) as a guiding meta-theory, providing a value foundation and macro framework for cultural integration in international social work. Building upon core concepts and theories of the community with a shared future for mankind, international social work, cultural integration, cultural competence, two-way construction, local knowledge, practical wisdom, and global localization, as well as practical experiences in international social work, this study constructs a four-dimensional cultural integration mechanism model: "value-ethical integration and sharing--theoretical-technical dialogue generation--innovative action strategy implementation--Synergy Mechanism of Relationship Networks." This model offers new theoretical frameworks and practical pathways for international social work. In the current context where most cultural hybridity research focuses on cultural exclusionary responses while rarely examining cultural integration preferences, this study holds significant theoretical and practical value.

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1. Introduction

In March 2013, President Xi Jinping first proposed the concept of a community with a shared future of mankind in his speech at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations, calling on the international community to foster a sense of shared destiny. Subsequently, through speeches at UNESCO and other occasions, President Xi Jinping further enriched the connotation of this concept from perspectives such as cultural exchange and global governance. His ideas have been incorporated into the agendas of international organizations like the United Nations and have gradually become an important reference principle for reforming the global governance system.

Practical platforms and research fields such as the Belt and Road Initiative, addressing global issues, and the integration of human rights and values have been progressively advanced and achieved remarkable results. Therefore, advancing theoretical research and practical exploration of international social work based on the concept of a community with a shared future of mankind is highly cutting-edge and practically significant. Combining the macro concept of "a community with a shared future of mankind" with the micro practices of international social work to explore mechanisms for cultural integration is an excellent starting point. This not only aligns with China's active participation in global governance but also provides new theoretical perspectives and practical pathways for the professional field of international social work.

2. Core Concepts and Their Internal Connections

2.1 International Social Work

The rapid advancement of technology has propelled humanity into a truly globalized era through digitization and intelligent systems. Social issues now transcend temporal and geographical boundaries, with challenges like climate change, conflicts, refugee crises, international migration, public health, and mental health demanding global engagement and cross-border collaboration. This has given rise to International Social Work (ISW), a professional field rooted in human rights, social justice, and respect for human dignity. ISW focuses on poverty alleviation, empowering marginalized communities, and enhancing social participation, serving as a driving force for global social equity, human rights protection, and sustainable development. Research in this field primarily explores core concepts, practical applications, and challenges, particularly in achieving more effective social interventions through international cooperation. However, a prominent issue remains the dominance of Western-centric perspectives, with insufficient attention to the subjectivity of non-Western cultures (Hugman, 2010).

International social work is a practical discipline that upholds altruistic values, is based on scientific knowledge, and promotes social change, liberates oppressed groups, and enhances human well-being through professional and vocational service activities. Its core objectives lie in advancing social justice, human rights protection, collective responsibility, and respect for multiculturalism, emphasizing the resolution of social inequalities through empowerment and systemic interventions. The rise of international social work can be traced back to the surge in international refugee assistance needs after World War II, which necessitated transnational social work. In 1956, the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) was established, marking the internationalization of social work. The evolution of international social work has primarily undergone transformations from religious charity to scientific professionalism, and from local practices to global collaboration. One of the greatest challenges in international social work is the cultural differences and resource gaps, whose complexity far exceeds that of local practices. A lack of cultural sensitivity may lead to ineffective interventions, and research on intergroup values and cultural integration in this area both domestically and internationally urgently needs strengthening. China's research and practice in international social work initially focused on introducing Western theories (Wang Sibin, 2010). In recent years, there has been a surge in "Belt and Road" and social work research (Xiang Deping, 2019). However, international social work research focusing on the community with a shared future for mankind is still in its infancy, and transnational social work theories and

practical research based on the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind remain blank. Therefore, this study attempts to construct theoretical and practical pathways for cultural integration in international social work from the perspective of a community with a shared future for mankind.

2.2 Cultural Integration of the Community with a Shared Future for Mankind and International Social Work

Xi (2017) argued that the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind emphasizes the integrity, interdependence, and common future of all humanity, opposing zero-sum games and unilateralism. This provides the highest-level value guidance and policy context for this study, serving as a political and value bridge connecting macro concepts with social work practice. Zhang (2018) conducted an in-depth analysis of the moral foundation and practical principles of a community with a shared future for mankind from an ethical perspective, particularly the traditional Chinese "harmony and cooperation" ethics and global ethics, demonstrating that "community" is not only a political conception but also a universal ethical requirement, emphasizing shared responsibility and coexistence of obligations. This provides a direct philosophical basis for this study to establish ethical guidelines for international social work. International social work encompasses four major fields: comparative studies, international practice, international policies, and international organizations, with professional actions bearing ethical and responsibility implications in the context of global interdependence (Healy, 2008). Some scholars have also systematically demonstrated the internal logic of the "community with a shared future for mankind" concept from the perspectives of international relations and political philosophy, emphasizing its transcendence of traditional global governance models and advocating for a new type of international relations based on mutual respect, fairness, justice, and win-win cooperation (Chen & Yang, 2021), providing theoretical support for this study at the international relations level.

Culture fusion, a manifestation of cultural mixing, refers to the direct integration of foreign cultural elements into indigenous or heritage cultural representations, resulting in a hybrid cultural representation (Cheon and Hong, 2020). Research indicates that factors influencing cultural fusion preferences encompass both group-level cultural mixing frameworks (Cui et al., 2016) and intercultural relationships (Kwan and Li, 2016), as well as individual-level cultural identity, cultural attachment, and ethnocentrism (Nie Chunyan and Liu Yingwei, 2023). Facing the global trend of cultural integration, international social work must clarify the mechanisms of cultural fusion based on the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind. Only then can it properly address the coexistence and prosperity of multiculturalism and operate efficiently in the process of cultural interaction and integration.

Therefore, based on the wisdom theory of China's traditional "harmony and cooperation culture" with the core concepts of "universal harmony", "harmonious coexistence of all nations", and "harmonious symbiosis", this study develops a new paradigm of "relational cultural integration" to explore the four-dimensional cultural integration mechanism of international social work, namely value and ethical integration and sharing—generation of theoretical and technical dialogue—innovative practice of action strategies.

3. Four-dimensional Cultural Integration Mechanism of National Social Work from the Perspective of Community with a Shared Future for Mankind

The concept of a community with a shared future for mankind centers on the common interests of all humanity, advocating for the establishment of a global development framework that encompasses multiple dimensions

such as politics, economy, culture, and ecology. At the cultural level, its essence refers to respecting the diversity of civilizations, using exchanges and mutual learning as means to transcend civilizational barriers and superiority. The philosophical and value foundations of the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind are rooted in the traditional Chinese cultural essence such as the "worldview" and "harmonious culture," extending to Marxist discourse on the "association of free individuals," which embodies inclusiveness, reciprocity, and wholeness. Under the perspective of a community with a shared future for mankind, international social work shifts its service targets from "the other" to "members of a community with shared destiny," and elevates its objectives from "solving problems of specific groups" to "enhancing the overall well-being and solidarity of cross-cultural societies."

3.1 Sharing and Adjustment Mechanism of Value Ethics

How can the principles of "consultation, joint contribution, and shared benefits" from the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind be translated into cross-cultural ethical guidelines for social work practice? This involves deepening reflection on structural inequalities and cultural power dynamics, while prioritizing collaborative partnerships over one-way aid. Dominelli, L. (2010) introduced the framework of "global social work," demonstrating how all local practices inherently possess global dimensions within the context of globalization. She criticized neoliberalism's erosion of social work and advocated for a radical approach grounded in human rights, social justice, and environmental sustainability. This framework is essential for understanding how social work can foster "community" within the framework of global inequality.

With the concept of community with a shared future for mankind as the core, it establishes the ethical foundation of a community that respects differences, pursues justice, and shares rights and responsibilities. It harmonizes and co-constructs "universal ethics" with "contextual ethics," which means acknowledging common human values (such as dignity and justice) while respecting and integrating the unique ethical perspectives of specific cultures regarding family, community, the relationship between humans and nature, suffering, and assistance.

Through dialogue, clarify the core concepts of "goodness," "responsibility," "justice," and "community" in different cultures, and form ethical operational principles accepted by all parties. The traditional Chinese cultural origins of the "community with a shared future for mankind" are the classical ideals of "the world as a commonwealth" and "global harmony," which provide a more relational and holistic philosophical foundation for the ethics of international community work compared to "universalism." It emphasizes the relational identity of "all under heaven are brothers," rather than an abstract collection of individual rights.

The ethical foundation of "benevolence" and "compassion": Evolving professional relationships from contractual service provision to ethical bonds rooted in "ren" (mutual care) and "yi" (social responsibility). This cultivates a cultural emotional bedrock for enduring trust and commitment. The "harmony and diversity" culture as an integrative methodology: "harmony in diversity" embodies the wisdom of cultural adaptation. It rejects homogenization while advocating symbiotic coexistence ("harmony") through acknowledging differences ("diversity"). This framework establishes constructive principles for transcending mere tolerance in cross-cultural conflict resolution and collaborative mechanisms.

3.2 Dialog and Generation Mechanism of Theoretical and Technical Systems

The decentralized theory of knowledge critiques the singular standard of professional expertise, advocating that

empirical knowledge holds equal importance with narrative and contextual local knowledge. The processes of "translation" and "mutual translation" emphasize the creative alignment and reconstruction of specialized concepts (e.g., "mental health," "family") with local cultural concepts, thereby forming new, more explanatory localized concepts.

Theoretical and technical frameworks emphasize a two-way learning and dialogue between local cultural knowledge systems (including indigenous practices and regional wisdom) and global expertise, with a focus on fostering equal dialogue and innovation between "empirical scientific knowledge" and "local knowledge." The former encompasses social work theories, psychological theories, etc., while the latter includes indigenous survival wisdom, folk beliefs, herbal knowledge, narrative traditions, and problem-solving mechanisms.

At the theoretical level, the holistic system thinking of "harmony between heaven and humanity" underscores the interconnectedness and dynamic equilibrium among humans, communities, nature, and the spiritual realm. This framework guides evaluations and practices to focus on systemic and interconnected impacts—for instance, assessing the ripple effects of economic interventions on family ethics or community cohesion. The "Doctrine of the Mean," as a practical wisdom, avoids binary extremes by advocating for "timely moderation" —finding the most appropriate and feasible solutions based on specific contexts while upholding core principles like justice. This approach provides flexible practical judgment for addressing ethical dilemmas in cultural integration.

The key process in the dialogue and generation mechanism of theoretical and technical systems is to establish mechanisms of "knowledge translation" and "technological co-creation". For example, linking the concept of "trauma" in Western culture with narratives of "loss of soul" and "qi stagnation" in China's culture can jointly develop more culturally appropriate interpretations and intervention methods.

3.3 Embedding of Action Strategies and Innovation Mechanism

Adaptively integrate the project-based management and evidence-based practice methodologies (Holt & Powell, 2017) of international social work into the local socio-cultural context and service systems. Simultaneously, professionally refine and empower indigenous assistance methods (such as community festivals, elder council meetings, and traditional mediation rituals) to develop a unique "cultural integration practice model".

Guided by the aforementioned value ethics and theoretical knowledge, we have developed concrete integrative practical strategies to revitalize the norms of "Li" (ritual propriety) and the wisdom of community building. As a manifestation of cultural sensitivity, "Li" fundamentally represents standardized expressions of respect for others, emphasizing cultural humility (Nadan & Korbin, 2018; Tervalon & Murray-Garcia, 1998). In cross-cultural practices, we can draw inspiration from the spirit of "Li" to collaboratively establish mutual respect-based communication protocols and ceremonial norms with communities, significantly enhancing cultural security and trust. The community development path of "Xiu Qi Zhi Ping" (cultivating oneself, harmonizing families, governing communities, and achieving peace) emphasizes a progressive, endogenous development logic that progresses from personal cultivation and family harmony to community governance and global peace. This framework can guide community development projects to start by activating family and neighborhood support networks ("Xiu Qi"), gradually expanding into broader community governance ("Zhi Ping"), rather than directly implementing external blueprints.

The embedding of action strategies and innovation mechanisms enables mutual integration and enhancement between "professional intervention techniques" and "local assistance practices." Professional methods must

adapt to the social rhythms and communication etiquette of the local community, while local approaches (such as community festivals, elder council meetings, and collective labor) are recognized, refined, and empowered to be incorporated into formal intervention processes.

3.4 Mutual Embedding and Synergy Mechanism of Relationship Networks

The study examines the interlocking and collaborative mechanisms of relational networks to construct a multi-level actor network (encompassing local community leaders, grassroots organizations, government agencies, and international NGOs) that transcends departmental and cultural boundaries (Ife, 2013). This framework facilitates synergy through shared vision, transparent communication protocols, and conflict resolution platforms.

The integration of relationships and power promotes the "dualistic perspective of righteousness and profit" and the "gentlemanly friendship." The "dualistic perspective of righteousness and profit" establishes project ethics by prioritizing "moral principles" (social justice and community welfare) over instrumentalizing projects for institutional or personal "gains" (fame, data). This provides a potent cultural critique against neoliberalism's erosion of social work programs, advocating trust-based partnerships over contractual obligations. The relational aesthetics of "gentlemanly friendship as light as water" champions enduring, pure, mutually respectful professional collaborations with appropriate boundaries, rejecting short-term project-based interactions or excessive emotional involvement. Such principles foster healthier, sustainable cross-cultural partnerships.

The interlocking and collaborative mechanisms of relational networks redefine the relationship between "professional authority" and "cultural authority," fostering a partnership where both parties are equal. This involves sharing decision-making power, resource control, and discourse rights. Simultaneously, the key process is establishing a "cross-cultural co-governance framework" to ensure that community elders, local healers, and regional leaders have substantive seats and veto power in project design, implementation, and evaluation (Ife, 2013). This also entails developing an "inclusive toolkit of practices." For instance, incorporating collective singing or ritual elements into group work, and adopting "community walking" over single-questionnaire surveys in community evaluations.

Under the perspective of a community with a shared future for mankind, concepts such as "harmony and coexistence" and "balancing righteousness and interests" can highlight the value markers of international social work. During team-building processes, allowing Chinese and foreign employees to jointly learn about "moderation" and other philosophical thinking characteristics of China, as well as concepts like "relational self," can provide new perspectives for international social work. Integrating fusion intervention modules based on traditional Chinese cultural elements, such as "community teahouse deliberations," "workshops on family traditions and teachings," and "solar terms and community health," into project implementation can enhance new methods in international social work. In the reflection phase of social work effectiveness evaluation, establishing qualitative assessment indicators such as "harmony index" or "relationship quality" can guide teams to reflect on gains and losses during the integration process using philosophical concepts, thereby diversifying the evaluation approach.

In conclusion, by examining the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind and cultural integration, this framework offers a unique and profound solution to international social work challenges. It enables the global social work community to delve deeper into the complexities of relationships, ethics, systems, and balance (Pyles, 2021), thereby enriching the global knowledge base of social work. Moreover, it provides

irreplaceable diverse wisdom for building a truly equitable and inclusive professional practice that embodies the vision of a "community with a shared future for mankind."

International social work theory and practice still face numerous challenges, such as how resource and discourse inequality impacts "two-way" integration, professional arrogance versus local resistance, unconscious cultural biases, and the dilemma of evaluation that requires both cultural appropriateness and international comparability. Meanwhile, community-oriented international social work holds promising prospects. For instance, integrating global citizenship education, cross-cultural philosophy, and political economy analysis into social work curricula can cultivate "global-local" dual thinking. At the research level, advocating participatory action research and dialogic knowledge production allows local voices to become the main body of knowledge creation. In policy and organizational frameworks, it calls for funding agencies to develop policies supporting long-term relationship building, local capacity development, and culturally innovative integration, rather than short-term indicator-driven projects. Regarding professional community development, efforts should focus on establishing global social work knowledge repositories and dialogue platforms grounded in Southern perspectives and multicultural practices.

Digital media technology has transformed modern society into a "global village," where diverse cultures converge and interact. In the context of an overseas communication landscape characterized by "Western dominance and Eastern underdevelopment," there is an urgent need for in-depth research on the cultural integration mechanisms of international social work, grounded in the concept of a shared future for humanity based on harmonious culture. However, most current studies on cultural hybridization focus on cultural exclusionary responses, with few examining the influencing factors of cultural integration preferences. Therefore, this study holds significant theoretical and practical value.

4. References

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