

## Evidence of Plagiarism and Ethical Misconduct by Anna Lora Wainwright

This document provides evidence of plagiarism and other ethical misconduct in research relating to Anna Lora Wainwright's book, *Resigned Activism*, which was published by MIT Press in 2017. We believe it is in the interests of professional integrity in the social sciences and in international research collaboration for this information to be public.

### Background

*Resigned Activism* is comprised of six chapters. Chapter 1 reviews international research on environment and health, and rural responses to the health impacts of pollution in China. Chapter 2 presents the work of Professor Chen Ajiang and his team at Hohai University on "cancer villages". Chapters 3, 4 and 5 discuss research conducted in rural sites in Yunnan, Hunan and Guangdong Provinces. Chapter 6, the conclusion, compares the findings of chapters three, four and five, using a framework derived from Chapter 2.

With the exception of Chapter 5, the research reported in these chapters was initiated through the small grants program of the Forum on Health, Environment and Development (FORHEAD)/Social Science Research Council (SSRC). Anna Lora Wainwright's (ALW) involvement in each of these projects was different. Details are given where relevant below, but none of the research discussed in RA was conducted by her alone. ALW played no role in the planning, fieldwork or analysis of the research on "cancer villages" reported in Chapter 2. She was an international consultant to the project in Yunnan reported in Chapter 3. She made important contributions to that project (particularly the methods) and participated in some of the fieldwork. However, the majority of the fieldwork was done by Chinese researchers associated with the Yunnan Health and Development Research Association (the grantee) and the Yunnan Academy of Social Sciences. The findings of the research were jointly produced by the team, and ALW did not have the right to use the data without YHDRA's consent.<sup>1</sup> In the case of the research in Hunan reported in Chapter 4, ALW brought some funding for her time and travel, and contributed an anthropological perspective to the project. Some problems in her use of this research were addressed in an interaction with that team in spring 2016, but her account of her colleagues' work in this site in the published version of RA still contains many errors.<sup>2</sup> In the case of Guiyu, ALW provided the majority of the funding, but additional financial support and in kind contributions were provided by Professor Li Liping of Shantou University and Professor Li and her students conducted the majority of the interviews with officials and villagers.

None of the relationships in these research projects is accurately described in *Resigned Activism*. Due to constraints of space we give a limited number of examples below.

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<sup>1</sup> In this case there was an IP agreement which specified that the data belonged to YHDRA and team members must secure consent before using it.

<sup>2</sup> The remaining problems relate to ALW's erroneous reporting of the findings of natural science and medical data and will be discussed separately.

## Chapter 2: from Principal Investigator to Second Author to Data Source

The research discussed in chapter 2 of *Resigned Activism* (RA) on “cancer villages” was conducted over several years by Chen Ajiang and his (then) graduate students at Hohai University. It built on work Chen had done starting in 2007 with funding from the Chinese National Social Science Foundation on “Harmony between People and Water.” With a grant from the Social Science Research Council (through the FORHEAD) in 2010, Chen and his team investigated a number of villages in which the media had reported that there were high rates of cancer that were attributable to pollution. This research was published in 2013 as a Chinese language edited volume, titled “Cancer Village Research” (“癌症村”调查) (Chen et al. 2013). Some of the chapters were also published as journal articles, in Chinese. ALW took no part in that research.

There are three problems with Chapter 2 of *Resigned Activism*: the copyright/intellectual property status of the individual chapter; the unacknowledged use of the ideas of Chen Ajiang and his team in ALW’s analysis of the other cases in the conclusion of RA; and ALW’s failure to secure informed consent from Chen Ajiang to use his team’s research.<sup>3</sup>

The first sentence of chapter 2 of *Resigned Activism* carries an endnote on p.192 which states,

A shorter and earlier version of this chapter appeared as *Cancer Villages: Contested Evidence and the Politics of Pollution*, by Anna Lora-Wainwright and Ajiang Chen, in a Companion to the Anthropology of Environmental health (2016)....

Lora Wainwright thanks the publisher of the Handbook, Wiley Blackwell, for permission “to revise and publish this version of the chapter.” However, analysis with plagiarism-detecting software shows that of the 10,179 words of RA Chapter 2, 4,506 (around 44%) are *verbatim* from the earlier Wiley Blackwell chapter or have minor linguistic changes that do not affect the meaning or style (for example, switching the order of sentences or paragraphs or using a different format for dates).<sup>4</sup> This includes the whole of the introduction section and three of the six case studies. Almost half of Chapter 2 is therefore a direct reproduction of material from the Wiley Blackwell chapter, not a revised version. But in reproducing this material, ALW has dropped the name of Chen Ajiang, who was the co-author of the Wiley Blackwell chapter and the PI of the team that did all the research.

Nowhere does ALW indicate which parts of Chapter 2 of RA are directly reproduced from the Wiley Blackwell chapter. Her failure to do so gives the impression that the verbatim and minimally edited text contains new analysis of these cases when it does not. For example, the endnote 8 on page 193 for the case study of Shangba Village reads, “This account is a summary of findings discussed by Chen and Cheng (2013) and Li and Cheng (2013).” But this text is a direct reproduction of the same summary from the co-authored Wiley Blackwell chapter. The same is true for the endnotes to the case studies of Dongjing and Huangmengying.

Even if the entirety of the Wiley Blackwell chapter were covered by a new copyright, ALW did not have sole right to it and she had no right to request permission from the publisher to reproduce that material without Chen Ajiang’s consent. In fact, the situation is more complicated.

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<sup>3</sup> In legal terms, consent is irrelevant unless it takes the form of formal copyright agreement, but from an ethical point it is not; and ALW failed to comply with Chen Ajiang’s requests regarding her use of his work.

<sup>4</sup> This analysis is based on a comparison of the texts of Chapter 2 and the conclusion of *Resigned Activism*; the Wiley Blackwell Chapter, and the English Translation of Chen et al 2013.

Our understanding is that the Wiley Blackwell chapter was itself already what copyright law terms a “derivative work” based on the original Chinese language book, “Cancer Village” Research (Chen et al 2013) from which all the case studies are taken. According to the US Copyright Office’s Guide to Copyright in Derivative Works, a “derivative work” is

**a work based on or derived from one or more already existing works. Common derivative works include translations,** musical arrangements, motion picture versions of literary material or plays, art reproductions, abridgments, and **condensations of preexisting works.** Another common type of derivative work is a “**new edition**” of a preexisting work in which the editorial revisions, annotations, elaborations, or other modifications represent, as a whole, an original work.

**The copyright in a derivative work covers only the additions, changes, or other new material appearing for the first time in the work. Protection does not extend to any preexisting material, that is, previously published** or previously registered works or works in the public domain or owned by a third party.

**Only the owner of copyright in a work has the right to prepare, or to authorize someone else to create, an adaptation of that work.** The owner of a copyright is generally the author or someone who has obtained the exclusive rights from the author.

According to the guidelines above, the new copyright held jointly by ALW and Chen for the Wiley Blackwell chapter would cover only material that was new in that text: i.e. the review of the literature, some background material and the conclusion. It would not cover derivative use of material that had been previously published: i.e. the summaries of the case studies and other material taken from the Chinese-language Chen et al. 2013. Copyright to this material would remain with Chen and his colleagues, or the original publisher of Chen et al 2013, the China Social Sciences Press. An additional 9.7% (993 words) of RA chapter 2 consists of 3 additional cases drawn from Chen et al. 2013 that were not included in the Wiley Blackwell chapter. This material is also a derivative “condensation”, and as ALW was not the owner of the original copyright she had no right to publish it.

A translation of Chen et al 2013 is now complete and awaiting publication. (It was preparation of this translation that alerted us to the problems in ALW’s book.) Comparison of the original Chen et al 2013, the Wiley Blackwell chapter and chapter 2 of RA confirms that the summaries of the case studies in the latter two publications are derivative condensations of the material in the Chinese language book. In the Wiley Blackwell chapter, some references to international literature that makes similar points have been added, but the core ideas were already in the Chinese language text. In places, the language used is more or less a direct translation of the Chinese. For example, in the summary of Dongjing village, when discussing the villagers’ failure to win compensation through lawsuits, the original reads,

Analysing these two lawsuits, we can see that the Dongjing Villagers lost their case because they did not provide evidence that had legal effect. On the surface, the ruling of the court upheld justice. The villagers could not provide evidence that had legal effect, and it was natural that they should lose the case. However, we need to think more deeply about why the Donging villagers were unable to turn the “social

facts” they saw and experienced into “legal facts” the court would recognize? [Here a footnote credits Chen Ajiang for the term “social facts”] Did they actually have the power to turn social facts into legal facts? And if they did not, then when the law did not take into consideration the villagers’ ability to provide evidence, was it actually upholding justice or injustice. (p.61-62)

The summary of the case in both the Wiley Blackwell chapter and RA reads,

Because of legal parameters, villagers were unable to turn pollution’s effects, which for them were a social fact, into a legal fact. In such circumstances, the law ultimately makes their suffering invisible, caught as they are in a double bind of being victims of pollution but unable to achieve recognition of their suffering (see Phillips 2012). This begs the question: if courts do not take into consideration the ability of villagers to compile the kind of data required, who or what are they protecting? Are they actually safeguarding justice? (Luo 2013) (RA, p.51).

Anna Lora Wainwright claims that she made a new analysis of the material derived from Chen et al. 2013 in chapter 2 of RA. But she did not. In the concluding section of the chapter, on page 54, ALW presents a typology, which she later uses in the concluding chapter of RA to analyse the cases in Yunnan, Hunan and Guangdong. It lists the four main factors that are important in understanding whether and how villagers respond to cancer and other pollution-health problems. These are:

- 1) Types and levels of pollution, relative level of clarity of its link with particular illnesses, level of awareness of pollution and its harm
- 2) Community cohesion, its organizational potential, and the role of charismatic leaders (particularly local doctors and elites, including village cadres, and villagers who are well-connected, educated, or have had a rich life experience outside the immediate area
- 3) Local political economy, degree of dependence on industry and relationship to various levels of government
- 4) Support from civil, society, the media, and outside expertise. (RA, p. 54).

The reader is given the impression that this typology is the product of ALW’s own analysis. Yet, on page 29 of RA, she previously stated that,

Research by Chen and his colleagues... is based on years of fieldwork in heavily polluted areas, including a number of "cancer villages". **Their book covers a range of sites through indepth case studies that highlight the uneven understanding of pollution among villagers, equally uneven evidence of a correlation between pollution and health effects, and the diverse reactions of local communities to pollution. They attribute such diversity to different local political economies, different relationships between communities and polluters, and varying levels of interactions with outside actors, such as the media, lawyers, and higher government authorities. (RA, p.29) (Our bold font).**

On page 157, at the beginning of the concluding chapter of RA, ALW writes,

At the end of chapter 2, based on an overview of cancer villages studied by Chen and his team, **I extrapolated a set of factors** which influence individuals' and local communities' attitudes and responses to pollution and their effects. Let me now return to those factors to draw some comparisons across my three case studies.

But as she acknowledged on page 29, all these factors were discussed in the original book by Chen and his team. ALW's "typology" is also derivative use of this material. Each of these factors is discussed at length in Chen et al. 2013, including the role of social organization (kinship ties, villager doctors, cadres, charismatic leaders); the political economic context (dependence of the local economy on industry, whether polluters are local or from outside); the availability and advantages of various kinds of outside support (media, courts etc.); and the different resources villages have to avoid pollution (moving, buying water, etc.).

For example, Chapter 2 of Chen et al. 2013, on the Subei village, has a lengthy and detailed analysis of how economic and political factors affected the ways in which residents responded to pollution and their interactions with the enterprise, local government, media and courts (see especially page 11 on). Chapter 3, especially from page 16 on, discusses the role of village elites in mediating environmental conflicts as well as the villagers' interactions with factories of different ownership, government, and media, and the factors affecting their choice of resistance. It also discusses their strategies for avoiding harm by changing food stuffs, moving away, protecting vulnerable family members, etc. Chapter 4, which focuses on a former state-owned farm, explicitly discusses the way in which the legacy of state ownership and downward mobility of formerly privileged SOE workers in relation to others in the area led them to leverage the issue of pollution as a way to seek other benefits, leading to very active protesting.

ALW was not the first to draw comparisons across these "cancer villages". Chapter 5 of Chen et al. 2013 compares two villages in Guangdong and analyzes the ways in which the relative severity of the pollution and economic, social and political factors shaped villagers' resistance strategies and how successful they were in achieving their goals. The abstract reads.

The "cancer villages" Liangqiao Village and Shangba Village are situated upstream and downstream of the same polluted river. But we discovered through our fieldwork that the villagers' awareness of environmental health risks in the two villages, and their coping strategies, varied enormously. Further research showed that the two villages were at different stages in the process of environmental resistance. Liangqiao was at that time actively trying to problematize the situation, hoping to gain attention to its problems and thus solve them as soon as possible. Shangba had also gone through this process of "problematization", but in recent years, its problems had been partially solved, and at the same time, village officials had started to realize the negative consequences of the stigma of being known as a "cancer village". They were trying to engage in a process of "de-stigmatization". The reason why the two villages received different treatment is because they differed in terms of population, demographic composition, economic capacity and other factors. This research also shows that clan power and other social factors also played an important role in the process of resolving environmental problems.

Chapter 7 of Chen et al 2013 contains further comparison across villages in terms of economic structure, social organization and stage of development and how these affected villagers' perceptions of pollution and their responses. The abstract reads,

Medical science still has difficulty determining the relationship between cancer and pollution in so-called "cancer villages", but regardless of their scientific basis, "cancer villages" nonetheless exist as a social fact and their existence affects the lives of villagers. Drawing on fieldwork in four selected "cancer villages" in Zhejiang, Jiangxi and Guangdong, combined with the findings of natural science research, this chapter discusses villagers' perceptions of cancer, of pollution and of the "cancer-pollution" relationship, as well as their responses to perceived health risks. Although villagers were keenly aware of pollution, and extremely concerned and sensitive about the high incidence of cancer, their perception of the relationship between pollution and cancer was also quite strongly influenced by external factors, and fell along a spectrum between two extremes. Because it was difficult for the government to eliminate health risks caused by pollution within a short period of time, it became an urgent matter for villagers to manage them in their daily lives. They did this in a variety of ways, including attempting to eliminate sources of pollution, moving away, or changing their sources of water and food. In this process, economic factors affected the intensity of villagers' environmental protests and the strategies they employed in responding to risk. Furthermore, villagers' responses towards risks were often embedded in rural patriarchal relations, local "clan power", the legacy of the "work unit system", and other social structures."

The table on pages 2-3 of chapter 7 of Chen et al 2013 is a precursor of the one in the conclusion of ALW's book (pages 158-60). It discusses the connection between pollution sources and health and villagers' perceptions of disease and the relationship between the two. Chen et colleagues also classify the state of knowledge about the pollution-cancer relationship in the various villages into four broad categories ranging from totally uncertain to certain. From page 18, this chapter of Chen et al 2013 turns to the ways that villagers responded to the situation and why, with a discussion of strategies from active protest to efforts to avoid harm by moving away, changing sources of food and water, and the role of economic constraints on their options, as well as the fact that some can be done individually (changes in food source) but others usually require collective action (improving the water supply). The discussion starting on page 26 further emphasizes the social and economic factors influencing the choice of strategy and the inequalities that drive and result from this situation. ALW does not reference any of this analysis in *Resigned Activism*.

Chapter 8 of Chen et al 2013 chapter focuses specifically on villagers' efforts to mitigate the impact of pollution on their lives in a situation where they cannot eliminate the source. The abstract reads

.... However, villagers are not completely helpless in the face of these dangers. They make use of the social structure and cultural system of the rural "familiar society" (*shuren shehui*) and they combat the problem of limited information by making complete use of the limited information they do have. When they are faced with pollution, and cannot change the situation, villagers draw on their life experience and

common sense to devise strategies to address health risks. Kinship, and other local relationships, as well as the nature of the relationship between elites and commoners in rural society also influence the way in which villagers avoid environmental health risks.

That such practical efforts to avoid harm and protect one's family are a form of activism that exists within the larger context of resignation to the fact that often little can be done to eliminate pollution, is a major theme of Resigned Activism. Yet, the Hohai team had already understood these practices in more or less this way and also that the ability to engage in them is constrained by economic and social resources. They write,

But even when it is difficult to stop or eliminate pollution from outside sources, villagers do not turn a blind eye to the health risks. In fact, they are very active, and their exploration and experiments produce a set of practical strategies to avoid harm. We refer to these as a form of "mitigation" (*huajue*). When villagers become aware that pollution can damage their health, they draw on their life experience and existing knowledge to reduce the risk as far as possible and minimize the harm pollution does to their health. The original meaning of the Chinese word "huajue" was to "eliminate" or "remove". In Tai Chi, "hua" has a special meaning. It refers to winning through ingenuity when engaging in the practice of Tuishou<sup>5</sup> When your hands are pressed against each other and you are moving around, as your opponent's external force comes towards you, you neither wait passively, nor counter-attack aggressively. Instead you evade the pressure and make your opponent lose his purchase, and then you look for a chance to push back. In a similar way, villagers' strategies to "mitigate" the health risks of pollution are neither a simple evasion, nor are they direct and active or radical resistance. Instead they allow the oncoming force to take its course and work around it. It may appear that they are adopting an attitude of resignation in the face of adversity, but in fact, although there is some implied resignation, while villagers allow the pollution take its course, they make an effort to mitigate the effects and reduce the health risks to a minimum.

The interpretation of the ostensibly-passive-but-actually-active responses of villages through the lens of the Chinese practice of Taichi (*taijiquan*) is very interesting, and pertinent to the concept of *resigned activism*. Yet ALW did not discuss this analysis by her Chinese colleagues along with all the European and American research she reviews in chapter 1 of her book. Instead, throughout RA, she gives the misleading impression that Chen and his colleagues gave only a descriptive account of these villages that she later analyzed. She treats their book as if it were a primary data source.

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<sup>5</sup> Tuishou is an exercise in Taichi in which two people take part.

## Colleague, fieldworker, helper, host

Lora Wainwright's lack of acknowledgment of her Chinese colleagues is not limited to Chen Ajiang and his team. On page xxxii of the introduction to RA, she writes,

Leading or participating in research projects populated largely by Chinese colleagues has put me in a position of relative privilege when it comes to analyzing the findings and reflecting on these projects in English medium publications. I am keenly aware of this imbalance. To address it, I have previously published in conjunction with some of my closest collaborators (see for instance Lora Wainwright, Zhang, Wu and Van Rooij 2012; Lu and Lora Wainwright 2014) and have sought to consult colleagues as I revised this book's manuscript.

There are a number of problems with this statement. First, it implies that ALW was doing her Chinese colleagues a favour by co-authoring with them; and that they were not her equals. This attitude is also evident in the acknowledgments sections, where Chinese colleagues are thanked, but generally referred to as "hosts", "facilitators", "assistants", and "fieldworkers". For example, on page xiv, she writes,

For research on Baocun, I am immensely grateful to Zhang Yiyun who capably coordinated, arranged and took part in fieldwork, and to the dynamic Yunnan-based NGO for which she works. YHDRA, which hosted the project. Thank you to Wu Yunmei, who assisted with her admirable fieldwork skills, to Benjamin van Rooij and Wang Qiliang, for supporting the project at crucial times, and to all other researchers involved in data collection.

The portrayal of Chinese colleagues as her assistants is even more pronounced in an interview ALW gave with the BBC's Thinking Allowed program.<sup>6</sup> Asked how she managed to conduct the research reported in RA, she replied,

"I teamed up with colleagues from within China, who helped me on the project."

And later in the interview,

I: Tell me about why you chose these areas? How easy it was to gain access to the people who lived there?

ALW: Certainly not easy, and indeed the choice of sites had a lot to do with access. So in the case of *Baocun* and *Qiancun*, the first two sites, it was very much to do with the fact that previously someone else had done research there and I could get the contacts to work there. In the case of *Guiyu*, it was quite different, the access there remained the problem ... And so I had to work quite flexibly and to make much shorter research trips, and collaborate with local students to do some of the interviews with me.

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<sup>6</sup> Until September 2018, ALW's Oxford University webpage contained similar inaccuracies. It has since been changed.



On page 179, ALW uses similar language, writing, “The research sites were selected....” And “I needed to select sites.”

Yet she did not select the sites for the projects discussed in chapters 3 and 4. These projects were initiated by others and ALW was invited to participate on the understanding that she would contribute to co-produced research. Given the sensitivity of the topic, it is impossible that she could have secured permission to work in these areas outside the framework of Chinese-led teams. In the case of Baocun in Yunnan, the Yunnan Health and Development Research Association (YHDRA) was the grantee, and ALW was a consultant who was invited to participate because her doctoral dissertation was on rural environmental health and she had experience with ethnographic methods. She did make a large contribution in that regard. However, as the project proposal and reports show, Zhang Yiyun of YHDRA and Wu Yunmei from the Yunnan Academy of Social Sciences were involved in the design of the project, conducted the majority of the fieldwork and participated in the analysis of the data. They were not assistants of ALW, but participants in the intellectual project of the research. In Hunan, ALW also joined a FORHEAD project that was ongoing; researchers from the Institute of Geographic Sciences and Natural Resources Research had been working in the site for many years with a view to understanding and responding to health risks from heavy metal poisoning. In Guiyu, the research was entirely dependent on Professor Li Liping’s connections and insights from her many years of working in the area, which she shared on the understanding that this was a collaboration that would result in joint publications.. Professor Li contributed funding from her university’s training fund, and recruited and helped to train the students, who conducted the majority of the interviews by themselves (not “with” ALW as she states above). Professor Li herself also conducted interviews with government officials who would not have agreed to be interviewed by a foreigner.

There is almost no mention in the substantive chapters 3 to 5 of RA of the role of different researchers in generating the information reported. Even in the methodology, where one would expect more detail, ALW’s gives vague dates regarding the duration of fieldwork and her use of pronouns and sentence structure render the division of labour and the intellectual contributions of different participants unclear.<sup>7</sup> Individually, these may seem to be minor inaccuracies, but the cumulative effect creates a mistaken impression of who did what, where and for how long, and exaggerates ALW’s contribution in relation to that of her colleagues.

For example, in the methodology (page 178, para 3) she writes, “Extended periods of fieldwork were undertaken in the three sites between 2009 and 2013,” and on page 184 (para 3) she says,

All data for Baocun and Qiancun was collected between April 2009 and September 2012, over several research visits. Fieldwork was conducted in five phases. April-June 2009 (Baocun phase 1); July-August 2009 (Baocun phase 2); August 2010 (Qiancun phase 1); September 2011 (Baocun phase 3) and August-September 2012 (Qiancun phase 2).

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<sup>7</sup> The published version of the methodology chapter in RA reflects extensive revisions in response to comments from Jennifer Holdaway, Wang Wuyi, Fang Jing and others in June 2016, including specific requests to more accurately represent the intellectual contribution of Chinese colleagues. (This correspondence is on file with us and was cc’d to our funder). However, the published account is still not an accurate portrayal of the co-produced nature of this research.

This suggests that fieldwork in Baocun might have taken as long as 6 months over three phases. In fact, Zhang Yiyun, Wu Yunmei and other Chinese researchers conducted fieldwork in the first Baocun site from April 24 to May 21, 2009 and ALW joined them for only 10 days, from May 2 to May 13. Wu and other team members conducted all the fieldwork in the second Baocun site. In the case of Guiyu, students did nearly all the interviews, and ALW spent only a few weekends in the e-waste processing area. She was in Shantou City most of the time.

ALW's use of pronouns and sentence structure when discussing fieldwork is also often subtly misleading. On page 35 of chapter 2, she writes, "not having been directly involved in the fieldwork [on "cancer villages"] does not put me in a position to comment..." This suggests that she participated in the fieldwork in some "indirect" way, but in fact she had no involvement at all in the project. Again, when describing the methodology employed by Chen and his team her use of language obscures the identity of the people who did the work and the origin of the ideas. On page 182 (para 3) she writes,

Researchers focused fieldwork investigations around the broad questions of rural environmental change and the relationship between environment and health. The research focus evolved gradually and became more refined through increasing close engagements with each site. Research methods were mostly qualitative, relying on observation, semi-structured and unstructured interviews, and informal conversations. In some villages, questionnaires were also employed. Interview subjects included villagers, villager doctors, members of the village elite, (such as well-educated and well-connected villagers), industry managers, and representatives of village committees and of relevant government bureaus at the township and county level. Researchers closely examined the historical development of any pollution firms (some of which had since close), the manufacturing processes they employed and the pollution they may have produced.

If the passive voice and anonymous "researchers" are replaced by active verbs with Chen Ajiang and his team or "they" as the subject of every sentence, the reader's impression is very different.

Chen and his team focused fieldwork investigations around the broad questions of rural environmental change and the relationship between environment and health. Their research evolved gradually and became more refined through increasing close engagements with each site. The research methods Chen and his team used were mostly qualitative, relying on observation, semi-structured and unstructured interviews, and informal conversations. In some they also used villages questionnaires. The people Chen and his team interviewed included villagers, villager doctors, members of the village elite, (such as well-educated and well-connected villagers), industry managers, and representatives of village committees and of relevant government bureaus at the township and county level. Chen and his team closely examined the historical development of any pollution firms (some of which had since closed), the manufacturing processes they employed and the pollution they may have produced.

It is also important to note that *Resigned Activism* was published as an ethnography, and in ethnography fieldwork is not only the collection of data according to a pre-determined framework. ALW herself acknowledges this. On page 187, discussing the Yunnan project, she writes,

During each stage of data collection, researchers compared initial findings and modified areas of enquiry accordingly. Further fine-tuning took place following the completion of each stage of research and before commencing subsequent stages. **Given the hermeneutic process of constantly refining questions through data collection, the processes of data collection and analysis became to large extent inseparable. This is one of anthropology's trademarks.**

Yet, although bulk of the ethnographic work reported in RA was done by others, ALW does not acknowledge this, and it is impossible to tell throughout RA which ideas come from whom. In two other articles from the same project, of which Benjamin Van Rooij is the first author (see the discussion of Van Rooij et al 2014 and Van Rooij et al 2012 below), the interviews that the analytical points draw on are referenced, along with the people who conducted them. The majority are by Wu Yunmei and Zhang Yiyun. Nowhere in RA does ALW indicate who conducted the interviews quoted and analysed in her narrative. For example, the first and third of the header quotes for chapter 3 (p.59), are from interviews done by Wu Yunmei and Zhang Yiyun when ALW was not in the field site; and all the case studies and discussion of the situation of migrants on pages 71-72 are also taken from the fieldnotes of Zhang and Wu.

Although she uses their fieldnotes and quotations without acknowledgment, ALW did not share her own fieldnotes with any of her Chinese colleagues in these projects. Furthermore, she did not, as she claims on page xxxii, consult with them regarding her use of their work in the preparation or revision of her book. Given the team nature of these projects, she should have sent the draft manuscript of RA to all the colleagues involved before sending it to MIT Press for external review. This review process in itself exposed work that had not been previously published in English to other readers without the authors' consent, in particular the summaries of the unpublished cases from Chen et al 2013.

It was not until May 2016 that ALW shared anything, and she then sent only a draft of Chapter 4 to Jennifer Holdaway.<sup>8</sup> She did not ask Chen Ajiang for permission to draw on his work until June 2016; and then she did not tell him that she planned to reproduce large sections of their co-authored article in her name alone. Nor did she comply with his request that she give full citations with page numbers when using findings from his team's work. Chinese colleagues in the Yunnan and Guiyu research were never asked for their consent or feedback and did not know that her book existed until 2018. In the case of the Yunnan project, this violated a written agreement.<sup>9</sup>

As she could not have given MIT press authentic written permissions to use the work of her colleagues, ALW must therefore be in violation of the warranty that authors are required to make in book contracts that they have the sole right or written permission to use the material in their manuscript. Given that much of the book obviously drew on team research it also seems that MIT Press did not do due diligence in this regard.

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<sup>8</sup> On our request she later sent the methodology chapter, but we did not see the revised version before it went to press, or any of the other substantive chapters.

<sup>9</sup> This agreement did not preclude team members from preparing single-authored publications, which was recognized to be important for their career advancement. But it did require their asking permission from the PI (YHDRA) and clearing topics and approaches with other team members to avoid conflicts of interest.

## **From “Learning to Live with Pollution” and “Activist Acquiescence” to “Resigned Activism”**

ALW’s use of the work of Chen Ajiang has already raised the larger question of intellectual property regarding the concept of Resigned Activism and ALW’s claim to offer an original analysis of the factors that shape villagers’ perceptions of and responses to pollution’s impacts on health. A similar question hangs over her use of the research in Yunnan that is reported in Chapter 3 of RA.

In mentioning that she previously co-authored with colleagues (see above), one of the two articles ALW cites is Lora Wainwright, Zhang, Wu, and van Rooij (2012). Titled, “Learning to Live with Pollution: constructing environmental subjects in rural China,” it begins with the following paragraph.

It is often assumed that, when citizens do not oppose pollution, it is due to their ignorance of its effects or to structural barriers to change. This article argues that a sense that pollution is inevitable is also a major obstacle. We outline the gradual formation of environmental subjects who have learnt to value their environment in ways consonant with the seemingly inevitable presence of pollution. We argue that perceptions of inevitability were produced by: (1) the subordination of villagers to their leaders and the dependence of both on local industries; (2) experiences with protests; and (3) the framing of the exploitation of local resources as part of a broader national project of development. This study sheds light on the study of environmental protests in China by illustrating how parameters for contention come into being and how they are intertwined with the governance of the village and of the environment.

In addition to this, another publication is relevant to the evolution of the concept of Resigned Activism, which ALW does not mention. In 2014 the Yunnan project team published a co-authored article - this time with Van Rooij as the first author - titled “Activist Acquiescence, Pollution, Power and Access to Justice in a Chinese Village,” in the University of California Legal Studies Research Series (Van Rooij et al. 2014). The abstract reads,

This paper studies access to justice in China. It provides an in-depth case study of three decades of failed local activism to deal with environmental grievances. The paper finds that access to justice need not be a matter of choosing between justice from above or from below. Rather the patterns of action in this case are the result of strong control exercised by local industry, local village leadership and the state, as well as by internalized frameworks of thought and practice amongst villagers. Moreover, the paper finds that the forms of action taken here strengthen the existing manifestations of power that control grievance awareness and potential activism. As such the paper provides a new view on contentious politics in China, showing how activism can be neither rightful resistance type justice from above, nor effective justice from below. Instead it can also occur in the form of activist acquiescence, where citizens have come to accept their powerlessness and the limited role as activists still allowed, and where their activism strengthens citizen controls without stimulating justice, resulting in submission instead of resistance.

The title *Activist Acquiescence* is strikingly similar to *Resigned Activism* and many of the main themes and key points of RA are in this and and/or the *Learning to Live with Pollution* article. There is, in fact, a third precursor article by the same team, titled “The Compensation Trap: the limits of community-based pollution regulation in China” (Van Rooij et al 2012), which also presages many of the same themes, but gets almost no mention in ALW’s book.

It is not uncommon for scholars to republish the same material with minimally tweaked conceptual framings. The academic reward system encourages this. ALW probably also contributed to the formulation of the ideas in these precursor publications. The question is whether the level of conceptual reworking of those ideas in RA is sufficient to justify a switch to single authorship. Readers can review these texts and decide for themselves. But in our view, at the very least, ALW should have directly discussed the relationship of the concept of Resigned Activism to these previously co-authored articles and indicated precisely where her new contribution lies. But when discussing the idea of Resigned Activism in the introduction to her book (for example on pages xxviii and 13) she does not do this. On page xxvi, she says “the fact that Baocun could seem both acquiescent and activist” presents an important lesson, but the co-authored article *Activist Acquiescence* is not mentioned until page 84 of RA, and then not in the text itself but in an endnote to a sentence discussing the normalization of pollution. People who do not read the endnote would never know of the existence of this earlier co-authored publication.

Another example is ALW’s discussion of the expression *meibanfa*. On page xvii, she writes,

The expression, *meibanfa*, meaning literally “there is no way” was the most common reply I received when, in the context of discussions of pollution with villagers in all three sites, I asked the open question “what can be done?” (*zenmeiban*). It was so prominent that I considered adopting it as the first part of the book’s title....

The frequent use of the expression *meibanfa* was previously discussed in the 2012 Compensation Trap article as a typical response in what the team termed the “pessimistic phase” of responding to pollution. Yet ALW does not reference this, and her repeated use of the first-person pronoun in this paragraph gives the reader the impression that she was the first to notice it. What is striking generally about the pattern of ALW’s citations, is the tendency for distant international sources to be included and directly relevant publications by her close collaborators to be omitted, as in the examples from Chen et al 2013 above.

While this is only a partial list of the problems we have identified in Resigned Activism, we consider that the evidence we have presented here is sufficient to prove that ALW has committed intellectual property violations and ethical misconduct in research for which she should be held accountable, and that the problems with the book cannot be addressed by minor revisions and additional citations; it should be withdrawn from circulation.

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