Social Integration Pathways in Multi-Ethnic Communities under the Context of Population Mobility and Ethnic Sociology Interpretation

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Abstract: Based on China's fundamental national conditions of multi-ethnic coexistence and the normalization of population mobility, this study systematically analyzes the current state, core challenges, and underlying causes of social integration in multi-ethnic communities under the backdrop of population mobility. It reviews the experiences and limitations of typical practice models, constructs a four-dimensional social integration pathway encompassing "cultural coexistence, social connectivity, pluralistic co-governance, and identity recognition," and provides in-depth explanations of the intrinsic logic and practical value of each integration pathway from the perspective of ethnic sociology, incorporating key theories such as multiculturalism, social capital, and individual socialization. The research reveals that multi-ethnic community social integration faces four major challenges: cultural misunderstanding, ethnic isolation, governance inefficiency, and identity ambiguity, which result from the synergistic effects of cultural, social, governance, and individual multidimensional factors. The constructed four-dimensional integration pathway, with its interdependent and synergistic mechanisms, can effectively address superficial integration challenges and promote a deeper transformation in social integration. This study enriches research in ethnic sociology and community integration, offering theoretical support and practical guidance for the harmonious development of multi-ethnic communities, the adjustment of ethnic relations, and the cultivation of a sense of community for the Chinese nation in the new era.

Keywords: population mobility; multi-ethnic communities; social integration; ethnic sociology; sense of the Chinese national community

1. Introduction

With the acceleration of urbanization and the normalization of population mobility in China, cross-regional and urban-rural population flows among ethnic groups have become increasingly frequent. The formation of multi-ethnic mixed communities has emerged as a significant hallmark of social development. This ethnic spatial restructuring driven by population mobility not only fosters in-depth interaction and cultural exchange in production and daily life among various ethnic groups but also presents new challenges to the social integration of multi-ethnic communities, becoming a critical issue that urgently needs to be addressed in ethnic work and community governance in the new era.

Currently, as a frontline arena for interaction, communication, and integration among various ethnic groups, the quality of social cohesion in multi-ethnic communities directly impacts ethnic harmony, community stability, and the cultivation of a sense of the Chinese national community [1]. However, in practice, influenced by multiple factors such as cultural differences, ambiguous identity, insufficient governance coordination, and a lack of social capital, some multi-ethnic communities face issues like ethnic estrangement, cultural conflict risks, and low governance effectiveness. These problems constrain the depth and breadth of social integration and also pose new demands on traditional community governance models and ethnic work approaches.

From the perspective of ethnic sociology, the social integration of multi-ethnic communities is essentially a process of ethnic relationship adaptation, cultural symbiosis, identity reconstruction, and governance coordination. While existing research has addressed the connection between population mobility and the governance of multi-ethnic communities, it lacks systematic analysis of the underlying causes of integration challenges. The application of ethnic sociological theories to explain integration

pathways is insufficiently targeted, and there is a lack of precise refinement of practical principles.

Based on this, this paper is grounded in China's fundamental national conditions of population mobility and multi-ethnic distribution, with a focus on social integration in multi-ethnic communities as the core research theme. It reviews the current development status and key challenges, analyzes the underlying causes of these challenges, constructs a scientifically feasible path for social integration by drawing on exemplary practical experiences, and provides an interpretation from the perspective of ethnic sociology. The aim is to enrich research related to ethnic sociology and community integration, offering theoretical support and practical guidance for the harmonious development of multi-ethnic communities and the consolidation of a shared Chinese national identity in the new era.

2. The current situation, difficulties, and causes of social integration in multi-ethnic communities under the background of population mobility

2.1 Development and social integration status of multi ethnic communities

With the intensification of cross regional population mobility among various ethnic groups, multi-ethnic communities have been widely distributed in the suburbs of cities and towns in ethnic areas, forming a development pattern of "mixed living coexistence and diverse coexistence". In terms of population composition, the ethnic composition within the community is becoming increasingly rich, and the proportion of floating population continues to increase, showing the characteristics of "coexistence of local ethnic groups and floating ethnic groups, and multi-ethnic mixing". In some cities, the proportion of floating population in multi-ethnic communities exceeds 40%, and the ethnic composition covers more than three ethnic groups [2]. At the level of social integration, phased results are gradually emerging: economic integration is steadily advancing, and various ethnic groups are forming preliminary interest connections through joint employment and neighborly mutual assistance. Cross ethnic employment cooperation and individual business linkage within the community are increasing; The cultural exchange atmosphere has initially taken shape, and the community has promoted the initial mutual learning of various ethnic cultures through activities such as folk customs celebration and cultural exhibitions; The coverage of public services continues to expand, and basic public services such as education, healthcare, and social security are gradually extending to mobile ethnic groups, laying the foundation for social integration. However, overall, the social integration of multi-ethnic communities is still in a shallow stage and has not yet formed a comprehensive and deep level integration pattern.

2.2 Core challenges faced by social integration

Based on the practice of multi-ethnic communities, their social integration faces four core challenges that constrain the improvement of integration quality. One is the dilemma of cultural integration, where differences in values, customs, religious beliefs, and other aspects among different ethnic cultures can easily lead to cultural misunderstandings and differences in identity. Some mobile ethnic groups adhere to their own cultural traditions, lack adaptation to local culture, and even have minor cultural conflicts. The second is the dilemma of social relationship integration, with prominent ethnic barriers. People of various ethnic groups tend to interact with members of their own ethnic groups, and there is insufficient interaction and emotional connection between cross ethnic neighbors, resulting in slow accumulation of community social capital. The third is the dilemma of governance integration. Community governance is mainly led by the government, with insufficient participation of social organizations and ethnic representatives. The governance mechanism lacks specificity and is difficult to meet the diverse needs of various ethnic groups, resulting in low efficiency in resolving conflicts and disputes. The fourth is the dilemma of identity integration. Influenced by geographical, cultural, registered residence and other factors, mobile ethnic groups have a weak sense of community belonging. There is a phenomenon of "strong ethnic identity, weak community identity". Identity is vague, and it is difficult to actively integrate into community development.

2.3 Deep causes of difficulties

The emergence of social integration difficulties in multi-ethnic communities under the background of population mobility is not the result of a single factor, but the product of the interweaving and synergistic effects of cultural, social, governance, and individual dimensions [3]. Its deep causes are closely related to the characteristics of population mobility, ethnic development laws, community

governance systems, and individual adaptability in China. Essentially, it is a concentrated reflection of multiple contradictions such as ethnic relationship adjustment, cultural symbiosis, social connection, and governance coordination.

At the cultural level, the objectivity of cultural differences and the imbalance of cultural adaptability are the core causes of the dilemma of cultural integration. Culture, as the spiritual core of a nation, has stability, inheritance, and uniqueness. The differences between different ethnic cultures are formed by long-term historical development and are difficult to eliminate in the short term. At the same time, there are significant differences in cultural adaptation abilities between mobile ethnic groups and local ethnic groups. Most mobile ethnic groups are influenced by factors such as education level and upbringing environment, and their cultural adaptation abilities are relatively weak, making it difficult to quickly understand and accept local culture. They also find it difficult to effectively adapt to local ethnic groups in terms of language communication, living customs, values, and other aspects; However, some local ethnic groups lack cultural tolerance awareness and have prejudice and exclusion towards the culture of mobile ethnic groups. They are unwilling to actively understand and respect the cultural traditions of mobile ethnic groups, which further exacerbates cultural misunderstandings and barriers, making it difficult to solve the dilemma of cultural integration.

At the social level, the dual constraints of social stratification and lack of social capital are important reasons for the dilemma of integrating social relationships and identity. In the process of population mobility, mobile ethnic groups are mostly concentrated in labor-intensive industries such as low-end service and construction, with relatively low economic income and low social status, forming a clear social stratification with local ethnic groups. This stratification difference makes it difficult for mobile ethnic groups to form equal social connections with local ethnic groups, further strengthening ethnic barriers. At the same time, when mobile ethnic groups enter new communities, their original social networks are broken, and new cross ethnic social networks have not yet been established. Social capital is severely lacking, and there is a lack of effective interpersonal support and resource connections, making it difficult for them to quickly integrate into community society; However, the lack of effective carriers for cultivating cross ethnic social capital within the community makes it difficult to promote deep interaction and trust building among ethnic groups, resulting in lagging integration of social relationships and difficulty in forming identity recognition.

At the governance level, the fundamental causes of the dilemma of governance integration are the deviation of governance concepts, the uneven allocation of governance resources, and the lack of sound mechanisms for multi-party collaboration. Some local governments and community governance entities have deviated from the governance concept, still using the "management oriented" governance concept, ignoring the diversity and particularity of multi-ethnic communities, lacking the "service-oriented" and "inclusive" governance thinking, adopting a "one size fits all" model in community governance, ignoring ethnic differences and diverse needs, and making it difficult to balance the interests and demands of various ethnic groups. At the same time, there is a clear imbalance in the allocation of governance resources. Communities with a concentration of mobile ethnic groups are mostly old communities and urban villages, with weak infrastructure, a shortage of public service resources, insufficient governance funds and professional talents, and a significant gap compared to communities with a concentration of local ethnic groups; In addition, the mechanism of collaborative governance among multiple entities is not sound, and there is a lack of effective communication, coordination, and division of rights and responsibilities among government, community, social organizations, ethnic representatives, and other entities. They work independently, making it difficult to form a governance synergy, resulting in low governance effectiveness and difficulty in resolving governance integration challenges.

At the individual level, the cultural adaptation ability, identity level, and willingness to integrate of mobile ethnic groups are important individual factors that exacerbate social integration difficulties. The individual differences among mobile ethnic groups are significant, with some groups having higher levels of education and stronger adaptability, able to quickly adapt to local culture and community life, actively participate in community interactions, and form a strong sense of community belonging; However, there are still some groups with low education levels, insufficient language communication skills, weak cultural adaptability, resistance to local culture, weak willingness to integrate, and always in a state of "marginalization". At the same time, some mobile ethnic groups have biased identity recognition, overemphasizing their own ethnic identity and neglecting the construction of community identity and national identity, making it difficult to form a sense of community consciousness of "sharing weal and woe, honor and disgrace, life and death, and destiny", further hindering the process of social integration.

3. Typical practice models and experience reference for social integration in multi-ethnic communities

3.1 Typical practice mode sorting

Based on the actual development of multi-ethnic communities in China, three widely applied and representative social integration practice models have been identified. Each model focuses on different aspects and adapts to different scenarios, forming a complementary and symbiotic practice pattern. One is the cultural integration model, which focuses on resolving the dilemma of cultural integration, based on the characteristics of multi-ethnic cultural diversity and coexistence. Through measures such as building cultural exchange platforms, cultivating cross ethnic cultural carriers, and carrying out cultural celebration activities, it promotes mutual learning and coexistence among various ethnic cultures. The typical representative is the folk celebration mechanism and cultural workshop construction of multi-ethnic communities in Southwest China, achieving a two-way promotion of characteristic cultural inheritance and cultural integration. The second is the governance collaborative model, focusing on the integration of governance shortcomings, building a diversified collaborative governance pattern of "government led, community neighborhood committee led, ethnic representative participation, and social organization empowerment", clarifying the rights and responsibilities of each subject, establishing a mechanism for resolving cross ethnic conflicts and disputes and a communication and negotiation platform, and adapting to the governance needs of urban multi-ethnic mixed communities. The third is the service empowerment model, which aims to solve the dilemma of identity recognition and social relationship integration, focuses on the core needs of mobile ethnic groups, improves public service systems such as employment support, bilingual education, and medical security, builds neighborhood mutual assistance platforms, and enhances the sense of community belonging of mobile ethnic groups through equal services and emotional connection cultivation. It is widely used in multi-ethnic communities with concentrated mobile populations along the eastern coast.

3.2 Model effectiveness, limitations, and summary of domestic and international practical experience

Three typical models have achieved phased results in practice: the cultural integration model effectively alleviates cultural misunderstandings and cultivates a diverse and mutually learning cultural atmosphere; The collaborative governance model has improved the efficiency of community governance and reduced the hidden dangers of ethnic conflicts; The service empowerment model has expanded the integration channels for mobile ethnic groups and enhanced community cohesion. However, there are still obvious limitations to each model: cultural integration models are prone to the dilemma of "emphasizing form over effectiveness", making it difficult to touch deep cultural identity; The participation of social organizations and ethnic representatives in the governance collaborative model is still limited by resources, and the collaborative effectiveness has not been fully utilized; The service empowerment model is influenced by the level of regional development, and the degree of service equalization is uneven. Based on foreign practical experience, the community cultural inclusiveness mechanism under the guidance of multiculturalism in the United States and the resource balance allocation experience in Singapore's ethnic co governance model provide reference for China. Overall, the core experiences of domestic and international practices can be summarized into three points: firstly, adhering to the combination of respecting ethnic differences and fostering a sense of community cohesion, avoiding homogeneous integration; The second is to strengthen the collaboration of multiple subjects and fully leverage the role of the masses as the main body; The third is to focus on demand orientation, promote the deep connection between equalization of public services and cultural integration, and provide important references for the construction of subsequent integration paths.

4. Construction of social integration paths for multi-ethnic communities and interpretation of ethnic sociology

4.1 Construction of core integration path

In response to the four core challenges faced by social integration in multi-ethnic communities, namely cultural misunderstandings, ethnic barriers, inefficient governance, and ambiguous identities, and based on practical experience, a four in one core integration path of "cultural symbiosis, social connection, diverse governance, and identity recognition" is constructed. The four paths support and work together, balancing pertinence and systematicity, to achieve multidimensional and all-round social integration.

One is the path of cultural coexistence, focusing on the dilemma of cultural integration, with "respecting differences, mutual learning and coexistence" as the core, to solve cultural misunderstandings and prejudices. A normalized cultural exchange platform should be established. Relying on community cultural platforms, activities such as folk custom celebrations, traditional skill exhibitions, ethnic culture lectures, and cultural experiences should be regularly held to promote close contact and in-depth mutual cultural understanding among people of all ethnic groups. A collaborative mechanism for the protection and innovation of ethnic culture should be developed to advance the deep integration of ethnic cultures and modern civilization on the basis of preserving the essence of each ethnic group's characteristic culture, respecting religious beliefs and customs, and preventing cultural homogenization and isolation. A cross-ethnic cultural volunteer service team should be formed, and cultural inheritors of all ethnic groups should be encouraged to carry out skill inheritance and cultural co-creation activities to break down cultural barriers and foster a diverse, inclusive, and mutually beneficial community cultural atmosphere.

The second is the social connection path, which targets the integration dilemma of social relationships and aims to "break down barriers and unite emotions" to accumulate community social capital. Standardized cross-ethnic social organizations and volunteer teams should be cultivated to leverage their role as bridges and links, and diverse platforms including neighborhood mutual assistance, employment linkage, and emotional communication should be established. Cross-ethnic social networks should be improved to promote in-depth interaction among people of all ethnic groups in employment cooperation, neighborhood mutual assistance, and public welfare services, so as to break the communication pattern of "intra-ethnic solidarity". A cross-ethnic mutual aid and assistance mechanism should be established to focus on the actual needs of mobile ethnic groups, promote pairing assistance between local and mobile ethnic groups, enhance emotional resonance and trust, and gradually dissolve ethnic boundaries.

The third is the path of diversified co governance, which aims to solve the dilemma of governance integration and enhance the effectiveness of community governance with the guidance of "collaborative, efficient, and precise policy implementation". The collaborative governance pattern of "government leadership, community guidance, public participation of all ethnic groups, and empowerment by social organizations" should be optimized, and the rights and responsibilities of each stakeholder should be clearly defined. The roles of government policy guidance and resource support, community coordination, democratic participation of ethnic representatives, and professional services from social organizations should be strengthened. Targeted mechanisms for cross-ethnic conflict resolution and communication and consultation should be established with professional bilingual mediators, taking into account the diverse interests and demands of all ethnic groups. The mechanism for balanced allocation of governance resources should be improved, investment in communities with large mobile ethnic populations should be increased, and the governance model should be transformed from a "one-size-fits-all" approach to precision governance.

The fourth is the path of identity recognition, which directly addresses the integration dilemma of identity recognition, with the core of "strengthening belonging and consolidating consensus", and promotes the reconstruction of identity recognition. The equalization of public services should be continuously promoted, and supporting policies such as employment assistance, bilingual education, medical security, and household registration convenience for mobile ethnic groups should be improved to narrow the public service gap between local and mobile ethnic groups. A sense of community should be fostered; through the co-construction of community public affairs, the excavation of shared memories, and the promotion of community values, mobile ethnic groups should be guided to abandon the "outsider" mentality and establish a "community member" identity. The coordinated development of ethnic identity, community identity, and national identity should be promoted, the inheritance of ethnic culture should be integrated with the cultivation of the sense of community for the Chinese nation, and the sense of community among all ethnic groups should be strengthened.

4.2 Interpretation of ethnic sociology on the integration path

From the perspective of ethnic sociology, the integration path of "four in one" conforms to the inherent laws of ethnic relationship adjustment and social integration, and deeply integrates core theories such as multiculturalism, social capital, community governance, and individual socialization. Its core logic and practical value demonstrate the clear disciplinary connotation, achieving a deep integration of practical path and theoretical support.

The path of cultural coexistence is in line with the theory of multiculturalism, abandoning the extreme tendencies of cultural assimilation and cultural isolationism, adhering to the value orientation of "each

beauty is its own, and beauty is shared", recognizing and respecting the uniqueness and equality of various ethnic cultures, emphasizing that cultural differences are not obstacles to integration, but important resources for cultural mutual learning and common development. This path promotes the common accumulation of cultural capital among various ethnic groups and resolves cultural misunderstandings and biases through normalized cultural exchange and cultural protection innovation. Essentially, it is a benign adjustment of ethnic cultural relations, demonstrating the sociological value of multicultural coexistence and conforming to the inherent logic of cultural integration in multi-ethnic countries.

The path of social connection is based on the theory of social capital, which clarifies that social capital (trust, norms, networks) is the core support for breaking down ethnic barriers and promoting social integration. The lack of social capital and imperfect cross ethnic social networks among mobile ethnic groups are key causes of the lagging integration of social relations. This path cultivates cross ethnic social organizations, builds interactive platforms, improves cross ethnic social networks, accumulates community social capital, promotes the gradual melting of ethnic boundaries, and achieves deep integration of social relations. It conforms to the sociological essence of ethnic interaction and social connection, and highlights the core role of social capital in ethnic integration.

The path of diversified co governance relies on the theories of community governance and ethnic co governance, breaking the governance dilemma dominated by a single government, constructing a collaborative governance pattern of multiple subjects, and highlighting the subject status of various ethnic groups. The governance integration of multi-ethnic communities is essentially the coordination of ethnic interests and the balanced allocation of governance resources. This path promotes the balanced allocation of governance resources and precise implementation of governance measures by clarifying the rights and responsibilities of multiple subjects, improving coordination mechanisms and conflict resolution mechanisms, and solving the dilemma of low governance effectiveness. It conforms to the sociological logic of multi-ethnic community governance and embodies the governance concept of "diverse collaboration, co construction and sharing".

The path of identity recognition is based on individual socialization and identity theory, which clarifies that individual socialization is the core process of identity reconstruction, and multi-ethnic communities are important fields for the socialization of mobile ethnic groups. This path empowers mobile ethnic groups through equalization of public services and cultivation of community consciousness, promotes their socialization transformation, reconstructs their identity, and solves the dilemma of "strong ethnic identity and weak community identity". It achieves the coordinated development of ethnic identity, community identity, and national identity, highlighting the sociological significance of the coordinated development of individuals, communities, and society, and providing core spiritual support for the deep integration of multi-ethnic communities. The four major paths have worked together to achieve comprehensive integration of culture, society, governance, and identity, promoting a breakthrough in the social integration of multi-ethnic communities.

5. Conclusion

This article is based on the basic national conditions of normalized population mobility and multi-ethnic coexistence in China, with multi-ethnic community social integration as the research core. Combining the theoretical perspective of ethnic sociology, it systematically sorts out the current situation, difficulties, and deep causes of community social integration, summarizes the experience and limitations of typical practical models, constructs targeted social integration paths, and provides theoretical explanations. Finally, a systematic research conclusion is formed, providing theoretical support and practical guidance for the harmonious development of multi-ethnic communities in the new era and strengthening the awareness of the Chinese nation's community, and successfully completing the preset research goals.

Research has shown that under the background of population mobility, multi-ethnic communities in China have formed a development pattern of mixed living and coexistence. Social integration has achieved phased results in the economic, cultural, and public service levels, but still faces four core challenges: cultural misunderstandings, ethnic barriers, insufficient governance coordination, and blurred identity recognition. The causes are the result of the synergistic effects of multidimensional factors such as culture, society, governance, and individuals. Through sorting out typical practice models, it is found that the three models of cultural integration, governance collaboration, and service empowerment each have their own emphasis and complementary coexistence, but they all have limitations such as

insufficient effectiveness and collaboration. Respecting ethnic differences, strengthening diverse collaboration, and focusing on demand orientation are the core experiences accumulated in domestic and foreign practice.

Based on this, the four in one integration path of "cultural symbiosis, social connection, pluralistic governance, and identity recognition" constructed in this article can accurately solve existing difficulties, and is in line with core theories such as multiculturalism, social capital, and individual socialization in ethnic sociology, demonstrating the inherent laws of social integration in multi-ethnic communities. The coordinated efforts of the four major paths can promote the transformation of multi-ethnic community social integration from shallow interaction to deep integration, achieving the organic unity of cultural mutual learning, social connection, efficient governance, and identity recognition.

Although this study enriches the relevant research on ethnic sociology and community integration, there are still limitations such as limited case coverage and insufficient quantitative analysis. In the future, the scope of research can be expanded, and quantitative research methods can be used to deepen the analysis of the causes and effectiveness of difficulties, further optimize the design of integration paths and mechanisms, and explore personalized integration plans that are suitable for different types of multi-ethnic communities in combination with new trends in population mobility. This will help various ethnic groups achieve deep integration and common development at the community level.

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