

# *The Historical Evolution and Modern Governance of the Communication and Integration of Mixed and Scattered Ethnic Groups*

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**Abstract:** Mixed and scattered ethnic area is one of the most important fields for communication and integration between different ethnic groups. This study was based on the theory of symbiotic complementary and used the research methods of field survey method to investigate the historical evolution and modern governance of the communication and integration of mixed and scattered ethnic groups. We found that the history of communication and integration between different ethnic groups in Zhenping County revealed the Chinese nation pluralistic integration pattern. It also presented the development history from the Han dominant to multi-ethnic relationship. In the new era, the communication and integration between different ethnic groups have shown a new trend. The measures such as the construction of inter-embedded community, as important practical methods and paths, have vigorously promoted the modern governance of ethnic affairs in Zhenping County.

## 1. Introduction

"Ethnic inter-embedded community" refers to "more than two (including two) ethnic groups live together and form a community in the same region with different space"[1]. Promoting the establishment of a social structure and community environment in which ethnic groups are inter-embedded is an important measure to promote communication and integration among ethnic groups and consolidate socialist ethnic relations featuring equality, solidarity, mutual assistance and harmony.

Since 2021, China has coordinated the layout of urban and rural development and the allocation of public service resources to promote the mutually embedding of space, culture, economy, social, psychological and other aspects between different ethnic groups. "Promoting the establishment of inter-embedded communities" has become the overall policy of ethnic work in China.

Zhenping County is adjacent to the downtown area of Nanyang City, with a total population of 1.1 million. In the long process of historical evolution, many ethnic groups have come here to breed and live successively, which is a typical scattered and mixed ethnic area. There are now 32 ethnic groups in Zhenping County, among which 31 are ethnic minorities, with a total of 68,700 people,

accounting for 6.3% of the total population of the county. All ethnic groups have played an important role in the development of harmonious ethnic relations in Zhenping County.

## **2. The reason for the formation of harmonious ethnic relations in Zhenping**

### **2.1. The pattern of staggered living space**

In history, due to the military and political measures and immigration policies adopted by the central dynasty, the Han and ethnic minorities lived together in Zhenping County, which laid a spatial foundation for the formation of harmonious ethnic relations in Zhenping County.

Nanyang was the place where the Yuan people destroyed the Song Dynasty, so Kublai Khan, the fifth emperor of the Yuan Dynasty, attached great importance to Nanyang. In 1230s, Kublai developed the agricultural economy in Nanyang Prefecture and immigrated nearly one million people from Shanxi province, Hebei province, Inner Mongolia and Northeast region of China to Nanyang Prefecture. From the beginning of the Ming Dynasty, a large number of Hui people migrated to Zhenping County, which provided the basis for the mixing between various ethnic groups in Zhenping County[2].

In modern times, influenced by the reform and opening up policy, population mobility is more frequent, more and more ethnic groups gather together to trade in commodities, and the trade among various ethnic groups is closer. More and more Uyghur merchants came to Zhenping County to sell jade. Due to the higher economic benefits, these Uyghur merchants began to live permanently in Zhenping County, and their families also moved to Zhenping County.

Whether it is the minorities who settled in Zhenping due to historical immigrants or moved to Zhenping for trade reasons, they and Han people helped each other in the field of technology, trade, culture and other aspects under the common living space. It laid a good material foundation for the mutual integration of various ethnic groups and the harmonious ethnic relations.

### **2.2. The relationship of sharing weal and woe formed in the common struggle**

The people of all ethnic groups in Zhenping not only develop their hometown together, but also share the joys and sorrows in order to protect the motherland. In the struggle against imperialism and feudalism and for the liberation of the Chinese nation and the people's democracy, all ethnic groups in Zhenping county united as one, drove out the invading enemy. Since the outbreak of COVID-19, people of all ethnic groups in Zhenping have actively responded to the call of the country to jointly fight the epidemic. They have earnestly implemented the national epidemic prevention policies, wearing masks, conducted nucleic acid monitoring and vaccination. Many ethnic college students are striving to be volunteers. They contribute themselves to the country's epidemic prevention and control.

In the struggle for national independence and national liberation, in the common confrontation facing the disaster, people of all ethnic groups formed a relationship of full cooperation and laid a solid social foundation for the harmonious ethnic relations of Zhenping.

### **2.3. The relationship of sharing weal and woe formed in the common struggle**

Since the establishment of ethnic unity in Zhenping County in 2016, the government has firmly grasped the theme of common prosperity and development of all ethnic groups, and achieved phased results.

Based on the situation of the county, Zhenping decided to deepen the work of ethnic unity and progress, as the focus of ethnic work at the present stage. The government has implemented a series

of policies, such as supporting the floating population of all ethnic groups to buy houses and find jobs in the county area, improving the public service system to protect the legitimate rights and interests of all ethnic groups, and promoting the people of all ethnic groups to participate in social governance in the way of government purchase of services.

Through the implementation of various measures, all ethnic groups in Zhenping have formed a situation of closer unity, closer feelings, better integration, better life and more beautiful home, which has laid a political foundation for the formation of harmonious ethnic relations in Zhenping County.

### **3. Current situation of social governance and construction in Zhenping County**

Zhenping County has earnestly implemented the national requirements and constantly strengthened the construction of the inter-embedded community in mixed and scattered ethnic area. The government promotes the communication and integration of various ethnic groups from five aspects: space, society, economy, culture and psychology.

#### **3.1. The current situation of spatial embedding in Zhenping County**

With the increase of the population in ethnic inter-embedded communities, the improvement of infrastructure and public services, the degree of communication and integration among ethnic groups is deepening. Take a community named “Tianxia Yuyuan” in Zhenping as an example. The community contains the business district, living area, administrative office area and residential area. Business district includes supermarkets, restaurants, jade shops and entertainment premises. Living area includes a book store, an electronic reading room, a health-center, police rooms, a child-care center, etc. The administrative office area is divided into the floating population management service center, community comprehensive management center and people's conciliation committee. Each department shall reasonably divide its work and perform its own duties. All ethnic groups in this community are living, studying and entertaining together. The community has become the field of communication and integration between different ethnic groups, and promoted the formation of intimate relations among different ethnic groups.

The inter-embedding of living space has promoted common development and prosperity of the migrant workers, the ethnic minorities, the local population and the Han people.

#### **3.2. The current situation of economic embedding in Zhenping County**

After the reform and opening-up, the population flow became more frequent, more and more ethnic groups gathered in Zhenping to trade in commodities.

More and more Uyghur merchants came to Zhenping to sell jade, and established close economic ties with the local Han people. These Uyghur merchants began to live in Zhenping, and their families also moved there. The Uyghur people take advantage of their ethnic cultural advantages to expand their working fields from jade trade to catering, accommodation and other service industries, and actively develop the economy. The Hui people in Zhenping specialize in animal husbandry, cattle and sheep breeding, slaughtering and selling. The Han people are particularly like to buy fresh beef and mutton raised by the Hui people. Zhenping County also encourages people of all ethnic groups to make use of innovation and entrepreneurship. At present, Zhenping County has formed jade carving, vegetable planting, ornamental fish breeding and other characteristic industries. Through the establishment of a sound economic development mechanism, the government surrounding ethnic groups to develop the economy.

The concept of win-win development has promoted the harmonious development and common

prosperity of the local ethnic groups. Zhenping makes use of its geographical and cultural advantages to provide convenient conditions for the economic development of the region. All ethnic groups help each other and realize the economic symbiosis and complementary [3].

### **3.3. The current situation of cultural embedding in Zhenping County**

In order to enrich the spiritual and cultural life of the people, build a common spiritual home of all ethnic groups, and carry forward the fine traditional culture of the Chinese nation, Zhenping County holds various cultural activities relying on the traditional Chinese festivals and traditional festivals of various ethnic groups, to promote the communication and integration of various ethnic groups.

In the process of cultural inter-embedding, all ethnic groups go from passively accepting the cultures of other nationalities to respecting and actively participating in the cultural activities of other nationalities. Zhenping County has carried out regular training in the national standard spoken and written language to enhance mutual understanding between different ethnic groups. It has effectively solved the language communication barriers among the people of all ethnic groups, promoted the understanding, communication, unity, harmony among all ethnic groups, and enhanced the sense of their belonging to the Chinese nation.

### **3.4. The current situation of social embedding in Zhenping County**

In the social embedding, Zhenping County implements community-based services, and includes the floating population of all ethnic groups into the social public service security system. At the same time, people of all ethnic groups participate in community governance and make themselves as masters of the country.

In Zhenping, ethnic minority people participate in social governance. Community consultation and translation services, conflict mediation services and other work are participated by ethnic minorities. By purchasing services, the government assigns ethnic minorities to public administration and social service posts, participates in daily management and services, and encourages them to play a role in community governance. Zhenping county formed the "five mutual" (mutual learning, mutual help, mutual trust, mutual benefit, mutual act) and "six same" (living in the same community, learning in the same school, trade in the same market, seek medical advice in the same hospital treatment, entertain in the same platform, enjoy same achievements) working mechanism to ensure the rights of ethnic minority people.

### **3.5. The current situation of psychological embedding in Zhenping County**

On the basis of spatial mixing and communication of society, culture and economy, all ethnic groups in Zhenping County identify more with each other.

The government seeks consensus in psychology and ideology, and guides the people of all ethnic groups to follow the core socialist values, which will make the sense of community for the Chinese nation rooted in the hearts of the people of all ethnic groups.

The active guidance and effective measures of the government, as well as the mutual help among the people of all ethnic groups, make the people of all ethnic groups have a psychological identity of the Chinese nation. The relationship between different ethnic groups is more intimate and harmonious than before.

## **4. Problems of modern governance in Zhenping County**

### **4.1. Space residential isolation exists to a certain extent**

Space inter-embedding is the basis of communication and integration among various ethnic groups. There are many ethnic minorities in Zhenping County, but only a few ethnic groups live in the same geographical space[4]. The living space between other ethnic minorities shows a trend of mutual isolation. The degree of communication and integration is not deep, and the mutual understanding is not enough. In the long term, various ethnic groups will have psychological alienation from each other, thus affecting the process of modern ethnic affairs governance. The phenomenon of spatial living isolation among different ethnic groups is the result of the differences in the economic development level, customs and culture of different ethnic groups, which needs to be carefully considered by the government and other departments and reasonably plan the spatial living pattern.

### **4.2. Cultural integration needs to be further deepened**

In the modernization construction of Zhenping County, there is a kind of poor communication phenomenon caused by the differences in language and customs. For example, the Uyghur people in Zhenping County are unable to skillfully use the national standard language and written language, and the communication with the Han people is not deep, which is not conducive to the inheritance and transmission of each other's culture, and it is not conducive to the establishment and enhancement of social relations between each other. At the same time, differences of eating habits, religious beliefs, customs and other aspects will also cause a certain degree of estrangement phenomenon. Therefore, it is fully necessary and important to strengthen the training of the national standard spoken and written language and promote the cultural integration among various ethnic groups.

### **4.3. Economic interplay needs to be further enhanced**

Strengthening economic exchanges and mutual interaction is an important link to further promote the working mechanism of mutual learning, mutual help, mutual trust, mutual benefit and mutual action in Zhenping County. The commercial and trade locations of various ethnic groups in Zhenping county are relatively concentrated. For example, the Uygur jade trade gathers in Tianxia Yuyuan Community and the beef and mutton sales are concentrated in the places where Hui people live. At the same time, due to the limited education level and the influence of their own national customs and habits, some ethnic minorities have a relatively simple career choice, which affects their own economic income and consumers' consumption habits and patterns to a certain extent. Relatives is also an important factor that the local people of various ethnic groups consider when choosing employment. The business model of agglomeration also causes all ethnic groups to form a settlement area of their own ethnic groups, which is not conducive to the process of community construction.

### **4.4. Social exchanges need to be further strengthened**

In Zhenping County, the ethnic settlement areas are relatively isolated, foreign exchanges are relatively single, personnel exchanges are relatively fixed. Limited influence by mutual culture, their social system is integrated, but the social exchanges between each other are not deep enough. Gradually solving the problems of medical treatment, education and employment of ethnic

minorities, and strengthening social security is an important issue that needs to be paid attention to in promoting social inter-embedding. At the same time, social governance level needs to be further strengthened. In some communities, the power of multiple governance subject is imbalanced, the consciousness of ethnic minorities to participate in community governance is not strong.

#### **4.5. Psychological alienation needs to be further eliminated**

Due to the differences in customs and habits and living space environment, the unique psychological characteristics of the ethnic groups formed in the historical process, there is still a psychological alienation among the ethnic groups in Zhenping County. These psychological alienation include: poor intimacy with other ethnic members, collectives and society; migrant minority members feel unfamiliar in the new environment; poor sense of belonging and identity to the community.

Therefore, we need to eliminate the psychological alienation among the ethnic groups and enhance the cognition, respect and identity among the members of the ethnic groups through enhancing the correlation of economy, culture and society.

### **5. Suggestions of modern governance in Zhenping County**

#### **5.1. Reasonable planning and adjustment of the living space pattern**

The rational planning and adjustment of the living space of each ethnic group should not only take into account the historical factors and practical conditions, but also consider the customs and cultural differences of each ethnic groups, as well as the stability of social relations and economic development. The planning and adjustment of the living spatial pattern of various ethnic groups is a large-scale and time-consuming project, which needs long-term planning and careful consideration by the government and other relevant departments.

#### **5.2. Enhance the cultural integration**

Through the establishment of cultural parks or folk museums, the museum collects and shows the development history and communication history of various ethnic groups in Zhenping County, exhibits the intangible cultural heritage of various ethnic groups, and records the process of cultural activities of various ethnic groups through new media technology. Through the opening of experience halls, the people of all ethnic groups can participate in each other's cultural activities, so as to guide the people of all ethnic groups to respect each other's culture and enhance their recognition of the excellent traditional Chinese culture.

In addition, relying on traditional Chinese festivals and ethnic festivals, cultural performances and sports events can be held to enhance the understanding of all ethnic groups. At the same time, we should conduct regular training on the standard spoken and written language to effectively solve language communication barriers, enable people of all ethnic groups to achieve barrier-free communication and enhance cultural exchanges between them.

#### **5.3. Provide multiple employment opportunities**

The government should encourage the people of all ethnic groups to build cooperative organizations such as characteristic catering and folk tourism, integrate the traditional cultural resources of all ethnic groups, build commercial blocks with various ethnic characteristics, and improve the market competitiveness and anti-risk ability through the advantages of all ethnic

groups, their strengths and groups. At the same time, relying on the innovation and entrepreneurship platform, we should strengthen vocational and technical education and training, cultivate practical talents, so that the people of all ethnic groups can obtain more vocational skills, and avoid the problems of homogenization and simplification of the people in their career choice, so as to promote the local economic development.

#### 5.4. Enhance the social connection

Through the government purchase of services, more ethnic minorities will be attracted to participate in the community governance, so as to enhance the sense of belonging and identity of the people of all ethnic groups to the community. Through community cadres, build social communication bridge between the Han people and other ethnic groups[5].

#### 5.5. Eliminate psychological estrangement

Through the local ethnic elites, lead the community members to participate in social communication and social governance, enhance their sense of belonging to the community, and strengthen their recognition of the community. Through a large number of activities, increase the way of communication among various ethnic groups, strengthen emotional communication, and enhance spiritual exchanges.

### 6. Conclusion

In the long-term historical development process of Zhenping County, it has formed a living pattern of various ethnic groups, and various ethnic cultures develop together. Under the support of the ethnic policies of the party and the state, the ethnic groups in Zhenping county have formed the community with a shared future. In new era, ethnic relations in Zhenping County has a new development, all ethnic groups live together, trade together, and make their cultures blend more closely. This complies with the development trend of scattered and mixed ethnic groups, and is also a good measure for China to promote ethnic unity and social harmonious development.

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