

A Study on Multi-Ethnic Economic Collaboration in the Development of Local Specialty Industries: A Case Study of the Sheep Industry in Jingyuan County

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Abstract: Based on the case of the sheep industry in Jingyuan County, this paper studies the division of labour and cooperation between the Hui and Han ethnic groups in the chain of the sheep industry. It is the basic virtuous cycle mechanism of "division of labour - integration - mutual trust". Due to the difference in resource endowments, the Hui and Han ethnic groups have set up a complementary division of labour in improved breed breeding, breeding and disease control, slaughtering and sales. Resource recycling and technology sharing have promoted deep economic integration, and as a result, the cultural trust among the people has developed from basic tolerance and shared rule-making to emotional identification. Thus, Fei Xiaotong's theory of the "pattern of diversity in unity of the Chinese nation" can be applied in practice, and it has also served as an excellent model for implementing rural revitalization and building a Chinese national community in multi-ethnic areas.

Keywords: Local Specialised Industries, Multi-ethnic Economic Cooperation, Economic Integration, Cultural Mutual Trust

Introduction

In light of the deep implementation of the rural revitalization strategy and continuous promotion of broad interaction, exchange and integration among all ethnic groups, strengthening the integrated economic development and prosperity of ethnic regions is an essential way to build the Chinese national community. Strengthen economic cooperation among ethnic groups is one way to achieve the above. Fei Xiaotong's theory of the "pattern of diversity in unity of the Chinese nation" holds that the Chinese nation is a dialectical unity of "diversity" and "unity", and "diversity" refers to the specific ethnic characteristics of all the groups in terms of culture, mode of life and resource endowment. Give attention to the ethnic characteristics and make full use of them to promote cooperation; "unity" refers to the economically complementary and socially harmonious relationship among different ethnic groups that has been established over a long period of contact, as well as a shared sense of the future resulting from this contact^[1]. The above idea can be applied to understand multi-ethnic economic cooperation in the development of local special product industries.

Most of the research at home on ethnic economic cooperation can be divided into the following three types: first, the effect of policies on ethnic economic integration^[2, 3]; second, the reasons for promoting ethnic economic integration and its role in fostering social development and cultural exchange among different ethnic groups^[4, 5]; and third, cross-ethnic business activities among various ethnic groups and an analysis of their attributes, rules and importance in a market economy system^[6]. It can be seen from the above that most of the existing studies are at the macro level and lack micro-level changes; thus, there is a deficiency in all-encompassing and detailed studies on multi-ethnic economic cooperation in the development of special-industry cities in the northwest region. Jingyuan County is a place where the Hui and Han people live together, and sheep farming is its main industry. Due to the difference in resources, the Hui and Han ethnic groups have formed an original division of labour at the upstream, midstream and downstream links of the sheep industry chain, and "diversity" can promote "unity". Based on fieldwork conducted through all kinds of channels, this paper examines the features of two-way empowerment in resources, technology, markets and culture for cooperation between the Hui and Han ethnic groups in the sheep industry of Jingyuan County. Raise the bar for multi-ethnic economic cooperation and provide a reference case on the implementation of policies in this area to promote rural revitalization and the construction of the Chinese national community in multi-ethnic regions.

1. The Upstream, Midstream and Downstream Division of Labour System in the Sheep Industry Chain under the Economic Collaboration of the Hui and Han Ethnic Groups

Cooperation between the Hui and Han ethnic groups in the sheep industry of Jingyuan County covers all links of the "breeding-processing-circulation-sales" chain. As the Hui and Han people have different sources of livelihood, an institutional structure has been formed with roles in the upstream, midstream and downstream sectors, cooperation among various links has been achieved, and risks have been shared.

1.1 Upstream: Practices of Improved Breed Breeding and Fodder Supply under the Economic Collaboration of the Hui and Han Ethnic Groups

The upper sections of improved breed breeding and fodder supply are the first instances of mutual respect for the cultures of the Hui and Han ethnic groups. Based on the strengths of each side, these two groups will divide the work among themselves. This will reduce the costs of production, improve the quality of the products in the sheep industry, and help us build a foundation for cultural trust through common interests. It will provide a foundation for the following cooperation and further promotion of economic integration and cultural confidence in all sectors of the industry chain.

In the improved breed breeding area, the Hui and Han people have joined hands due to common economic interests. By dividing the division of labour in the industry chain and using complementary resources, they can increase the economic value of the breed and build a mutually beneficial win-win economic cooperation model. Based on their own experiences and new varieties suitable for the climate in Jingyuan, the Hui farmers have achieved good breeding results. They have family farms for raising healthy ewes and high-quality rams to maintain breed purity, and they also try to buy breeding sheep from other places for crossbreeding with local breeds. Thus, the three general steps of introduction, trial cultivation and selection have been established. By improving the breeding quality of sheep, they can enhance their market competitiveness and provide a good breed foundation for increasing economic benefits at the farming level. Han farmers focus mainly on fattening. Although they are not directly involved in the breeding of purebreds, they select sheep that are well-adapted to the local climate and have good roughage tolerance for breeding, forming a farming model based on fattening sheep; they purchase thin lambs, raise them to maturity, and then sell them. Han farmers will inform the Hui buyers about the conditions of lamb growth and its resistance to disease. The above feedback will enable the Hui people to adjust the direction of breeding and create an economic link between the breeding and fattening sectors. The first is to improve the quality of breeding; as a result, the efficiency of fattening will rise, increasing the income for both sides and providing stable economic support for the establishment of a trust relationship. It will help promote the joint interest in resource recycling and coordinated economic development at all links of the industry chain.

In the forage supply sector, the Hui and Han ethnic groups are doing economic cooperation according to their own resource conditions. In a market economy system, a lower price will help promote more efficient use of resources and demand-driven innovation; thus, production and operation costs for all parties will be reduced, and a stable economic cooperation system based on shared interests will be established. Han farmers use corn and wheat straw to make animal feed for the basic needs of livestock and poultry. At the same time, they provide surplus silage corn to the Hui at a price 10% lower than the market price for silage production. In this way, we can solve the raw material shortage problem for large-scale Hui sheep farmers and reduce the procurement costs of Hui fattening households through bulk supply. Hui farmers, in turn, will increase their demand for fodder and thus drive up the supply. Together with the buyers, they have set certain feed-quality requirements for their partner Han farming companies. Therefore, the supply of Han fodder has been standardised, and Han farmers are now more careful about the quality of their raw materials before making silage. Through continuous cooperation, the Hui and Han ethnic groups have been exchanging ideas and learning to respect and understand each other's production methods and business philosophies, thus ensuring the economic integration of the two groups.

1.2 Midstream: Livestock Farming Practices and Disease Prevention and Control Networks Promoted by Hui-Han Economic Cooperation

The middle parts of livestock farming and disease prevention and control are the main areas where economic integration and cultural trust have been established between the Hui and Han ethnic groups. Based on their own resources and production experience, Hui and Han farmers have developed

different but complementary development models. The basic reason for this collaboration is to meet production needs, and it can help improve resource allocation efficiency and reduce farming risk; at the same time, over a long period, trust will be built among the two cultures.

In the livestock farming sector, given the different resources and technical strengths of the two groups, the Hui and Han peoples have established a combined model of Hui pastoral management and Han captive breeding and fattening. Many Hui farmers have had the experience of cross-provincial migration and wild pasture farming historically. Unique natural resources in the wild are good environments for the growth of meat sheep and can also reduce feed costs. Han farmers, on the other hand, are based on the conditions of agricultural land and diligent management. Captive breeding and fattening are being carried out to obtain locally adapted and increased benefits from the system of captive breeding. Given that they have farmland, a fattening system combining captive breeding and self-sufficient forage production has been established. Han farmers use their own corn and alfalfa to produce silage and feed lambs a diet of corn silage and concentrated feed to increase the weight of the lambs rapidly and raise profits. Large-scale farming of the Hui and intensive captive breeding by the Han have each had their own strengths. The two parties have formed a good economic relationship through sheep trade and cost-sharing.

To prevent and control infectious diseases in the area, the Hui and Han ethnic groups have formed a joint working group and collaborated to fight the epidemic together. The first is to reduce the risk of disease in lamb farming, promote the stable development of the livestock economy, and strengthen the sense of social responsibility among all parties involved. Based on their own experience and practical skills, the Hui people have developed various ways of preventing illness according to their own culture. Farmers regularly disinfect their sheep farms and clean the sheep sheds in accordance with the hygiene regulations mentioned above. At the time of purchase, buyers are seeking healthy, non-sick sheep and are also mindful of the cleanliness of the farm environment. Therefore, the first will be to educate the farmers on disease prevention measures for the lambs. Han farmers are also participating in the prevention work through their own experiences and adapting different methods. Although Han farmers do not have formal veterinary education, they have developed local disease prevention skills over a long period and learned from the Hui. For example, one Han farmer boldly experimented and gained a good name among the villagers, becoming a "veterinarian" who could handle serious illnesses in sheep and goats. His services are used by the Hui and Han farmers. It can be seen that the Hui and Han ethnic groups have promoted economic integration through joint experience and technical complementarity, strengthening their mutual trust and cooperation in the process of technical exchange and mutual assistance.

1.3 Downstream: The Structure of Slaughtering, Processing and Market Circulation Supported by Hui-Han Economic Collaboration

Slaughterhouses, processing and market sales in the downstream sector are typical cases of industrial coordination and cultural trust between the Hui and Han ethnic groups. Due to the different cultural traits and market demands of the two groups, they have established a division of labour. Division of labour and cooperation can be employed to distribute resources and share income more fairly, and at the same time, respect for different cultures and a spirit of cooperation can be expressed.

In the slaughtering and processing industry, the Hui and Han ethnic groups have created an industrial cooperation system based on differences in consumer groups, forming a division of labour pattern where the Hui are responsible for the main processing and the Han provide essential support services. Only a few people are qualified to operate the main processing equipment. To meet the demand for high-quality products in the market, lamb slaughtering has been standardised. The Han people generally have relatively simple food requirements and thus meet the basic consumption needs of the masses in primary meat processing and initial processing. They have good prices and are fresh, so they sell products to their own Han community and the surrounding area. Division of labour is employed to allocate resources and meet demand more precisely, thereby achieving good economic integration for both Hui and Han people. Respect for the different cultures of the two groups has laid a foundation of trust for cooperation.

Due to their different positions in the market, the Hui and Han ethnic groups have cooperated on the front line of market sales and distribution. Through division of labour, the Hui will be responsible for the high-end market channel, and the Han will expand in the mass-retail sector; thus, both will have good market coverage and interests. The Hui lead the high-end market and bulk trade of lambs, and promote the cross-regional movement of lambs. It is because the Hui have family and work

relationships. At the same time, Han has also added more retail and local channels to the new circulation routes of e-commerce. This will fill the gap left by the Hui in the local mass consumer market, and they are gradually exploring sales channels for the national market. Both sides have their own strengths and work together to distribute the goods. They can pursue the common economic interest of sales channel integration and full utilisation of market complementarity, build a foundation of mutual trust through long-term purchasing cooperation and market collaboration.

From the above, it can be seen that the cooperation between the Hui and Han ethnic groups in the links of the sheep industry chain in Jingyuan County at all stages is rooted in their ethnic lives. Together, they have formed a good cycle of complementary division of labour, resource recycling and risk sharing. Over time and through all sorts of cooperation, cultures have been shared, and this trust has created a stable environment for the operation of the industry chain. Generally speaking, the cooperation of all links in the industry chain is not simply the sum of the links; rather, it is an active response by the Hui and Han ethnic groups to practical circumstances. The cultural traditions and technical skills of the Hui people are strengthened by the production resources and practical wisdom of the Han people, and vice versa. It can be seen that the economic integration of all ethnic groups has gone well and fostered cultural confidence among them.

2. Economic Integration: A Community of Shared Interests Formed by Sporadic Transactions and Coordinated Industry Chains

Economic integration among different ethnic groups is an indispensable way to address structural economic disparities and achieve common prosperity for all. The division of labour between the Hui and Han ethnic groups in the upstream, midstream and downstream links of the industrial chain is not random. Rather, the three main reasons are division of labour, shared interests and culture; together they constitute a community of common interest. The community is a basic economic link in the construction of rural revitalisation and promotes all-round interaction, exchange and integration of all ethnic groups in Jingyuan County.

In the early days of the development of breed improvement and forage production, both the Hui and Han ethnic groups used a three-dimensional mechanism of "division of labour, sharing of interests and culture" to achieve resource integration and cost sharing. It will not be done by a single group; rather, by linking all the links in the industry chain, a considerable cost reduction can be achieved. Hui have introduced improvements in breed selection and the introduction of foreign breeds for purebred breeding, and Han have adapted breeding based on their own farming experience. The division of labour between technology and practice will improve breeding quality, increase the adaptability of improved breeds, reduce the risk of breed introduction, and at the same time, by sharing in the benefits, mutual trust will also be established to provide a foundation for cultural identity. Forage supply, the Han people have built a resource-recycling model of trading straw for Hui sheep manure. Therefore, the first problem for both sides, the increase in fertilizer and fodder costs, has been solved. The division of labour spreads the idle resources and thus reduces the unit costs for all enterprises. To maximise the use of resources and strengthen the consensus for cooperation, this will bind interests and promote the integration of culture.

According to the three-dimensional structure of "division of labour, sharing of interests and culture", the Hui and Han ethnic groups have built a coordination and technology-sharing model to solve the traditional problems of a long breeding cycle and high loss rate in the middle and downstream links of livestock farming and epidemic prevention. The Hui manage the herds in livestock farming, and the Han people are responsible for breeding and fattening captive cattle. Together, they have set some general health standards for lambs and common farming practices. This will help to better utilise the natural resources available for production and integrate the interests of all parties in the process to achieve common prosperity. To prevent epidemics, both sides have combined and shared their own practical ways and local customs of the Hui and Han peoples. Therefore, cross-ethnic "grassroots veterinarians" have been established to spread knowledge in a two-way manner. Thus, the proportion of sheep and goat deaths will be reduced, and the parties can share risks and profits as well as learn from each other's technology.

At the lower links of slaughtering, processing and sales, the three-dimensional mechanism of "division of labour, shared interests and culture" will be used to cover all markets and avoid dependence on a single channel by creating different positions and channel complementarity for the Hui and Han ethnic groups. Using their own ethnic culture and trade network, the Hui masters'

slaughtering and processing techniques have spread to various places and established an irreplaceable advantage that the Han people cannot replicate. The Han concentrated on the mass-consumer market, served the local people with altruism and self-sales, and at the same time explored a remote-retail model to meet the demands of many consumers. The division of labour will bring stable returns to both sides in their own markets and create mutual benefits, and by adapting to different consumer demands culturally, we can deepen cultural trust and identity through market cooperation.

Generally speaking, the first economic contact among different ethnic groups is a trade of goods for mutual consumption needs and the reallocation of surpluses and deficits. These exchanges are based on the differences in natural resources of the concentrated residential areas of different ethnic groups, and with the formation of their respective industrial advantages, specialization in production has also been achieved^[7]. As inter-ethnic interaction, exchange and integration have advanced, and along with the development of specialised divisions of labour, both the frequency and depth of economic interaction between ethnic groups continue to increase, forming a normalised and universal trend. This will help promote the long-term and healthy development of all ethnic groups. The Hui and Han people of Jingyuan County have established cooperative relationships in the sheep industry chain. With the advantages of cooperation and mutual respect for different cultures and beliefs, they have developed from being simple cooperative partners into a close-knit community with shared interests. It will offer an economic basis for strengthening the mutual trust of all ethnic groups. As they have many common interests, they will work together to promote cultural exchange and mutual learning.

3. Cultural Mutual Trust: The Upgrade of Identity from Coexistence in Difference to Symbiosis and Co-prosperity

Economic integration has provided the material basis for the cooperation of the Hui and Han ethnic groups, and mutual cultural trust has offered a soft basis to stabilize this cooperative network. With the active participation of all parties at every stage of the development of the sheep industry in Jingyuan County, the Hui and Han peoples have moved from passive cultural respect to active mutual integration and achieved a significant three-level improvement in cultural trust, which includes basic tolerance, joint rule-making and emotional identification. It can be taken as an example to promote the building of the Chinese national community.

Cultural mutual trust starts with cultural tolerance in the division of labour for economic development and gradually turns into active cooperation. Han farmers are handling the raw materials and production process of the upstream forage supply segment. The Hui have led the development of the downstream lamb slaughtering industry by using their traditional knowledge and have also adapted some aspects of Hui culture and food habits to meet the demands of external sales channels. In short, the tolerance for culture is really about common interests in life and society. Help the Hui and Han people move from a state of caution due to the fear of conflict to one where initial trust can be established and cultural exchange promoted actively.

With the progress of economic integration and the construction of full-chain coordination, the Hui and Han ethnic groups have established a joint rule-making mechanism based on technology sharing, and cultural trust has developed from an informal, tacit understanding to an institutionalised form of trust. This progress is due to the common interests of the economy, and efficiency has been improved through rules and integration has been deepened by technology. For example, in the middle period of the epidemic prevention and control work, the Hui developed experience-based disease prevention methods, and the Han recorded local customs. Through exchange and learning, the two groups taught each other about disease prevention, and thus "veterinarians" were established in the Hui and Han communities and won their trust. Both sides have agreed to establish some necessary rules together in the improved breed breeding sector, such as lamb marketing regulations and minimum prices, and have replaced the old system of informal verbal agreements with standardised negotiations. Thus, the mutual trust of cultures has been formalised as rule-based trust.

The economic community will ultimately promote emotional identification and the integration of daily life to make the Hui and Han people members of a common society rather than industrial partners. When economic integration reaches the stage of a community of shared interests, the mutual trust of cultures will no longer be confined to the industrial sector but will extend to daily life. In production, the Hui engage in Han agricultural cultivation, and the Han visit the Hui farms to learn about lamb breeding. In terms of life customs, this interaction is even deeper: Han families are invited to Hui weddings, and they even learn how to make youxiang and sanzi as wedding gifts; the Hui participate in

Han weddings and funerals, offer gifts according to Han customs, and also visit Han families during the Spring Festival to present mutton as gifts. These are not only people; they are also close friends of the families concerned. Cross-ethnic marriage is the most elevated form of emotional identification between the two groups. Long-term contact as a result of the cooperation in trade has given young Hui and Han people more opportunities to meet and fall in love. A culture of harmony among all the groups is being promoted in these blended families. Cultural integration at the family level has raised the level of trust between the Hui and Han communities on cultural issues from the results of industrial cooperation to a basic need for life in society, thus achieving a full-fledged leap from coexistence based on difference to symbiosis and joint prosperity.

In short, the development of cultural mutual trust between the Hui and Han ethnic groups in Jingyuan County is actually the result of the all-round development process of "economic integration - shared interests - emotional identification". There has been high tension and demand at every link of the sheep industry, so both sides have set up institutions to build trust through joint rule-making and mutual learning. The cohesion of this group with common interests has spread the culture of mutual trust among us in daily life and ultimately formed a stable emotional bond.

4. Conclusion

Cooperation between the Hui and Han communities in the sheep industry of Jingyuan County has formed a good cycle of "specialisation - integration - mutual trust"; Specialisation provides the foundation for integration, integration requires trust, and therefore continued specialised cooperation needs continuous trust. Together, they will promote the development of the economy and serve the needs of the people. Fully utilize the ethnic diversity of the area and develop all kinds of activities at all stages of the industrial chain to boost the economy of multi-ethnic regions and promote the harmonious coexistence of different ethnic groups.

Therefore, Fei Xiaotong's idea of "the pattern of diversity in unity of the Chinese nation" can also be applied to industrial collaboration. Here, "diversity" refers to the different ethnic endowments of the Hui and Han groups in terms of resources, skills, culture, etc., and "unity" is achieved by building an economic and cultural community together through cooperation. Therefore, the Hui-Han partnership in Jingyuan is a good case that promotes the construction of the Chinese national community and provides both theoretical ideas and practical experience for rural revitalization in multi-ethnic areas of northwest China that are based on special-product industries.

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