

Analysis of the influencing factors of cultural integration in intermarriage: A case study of Hui-Han intermarriage in China

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Abstract: The multi-ethnic changes in Chinese history have determined the intermarriage relationship between ethnic groups, and the intermarriage between the Hui and Han peoples is especially important. With the development of the times, Hui-Han intermarriage faces many challenges. This paper introduces the historical background, development, and social impact of Hui-Han intermarriage, analyzes the influence mechanisms of society, culture, institution, and economy on Hui-Han intermarriage, discusses the difficulties and challenges faced by Hui-Han intermarriage through investigation and research, and proposes suggestions based on actual situations. This study aims to enrich and improve the theoretical system related to the cultural integration of Hui-Han intermarriage, provide scientific reference for formulating multicultural integration policies, promote ethnic unity and social stability, enhance social inclusiveness towards Hui-Han intermarriage families, and boost economic development.

1. Introduction

1.1. Research Background

From a historical perspective, China has been a multi-ethnic country since ancient times, among which the Hui ethnic group, namely the Muslim ethnic group, also migrated from the Middle East to China due to factors such as trade, wars, and dynastic changes in history. With the booming economic development brought about by China's reform and opening up, the connections between regions have become closer due to the improved transportation system, which has led to increasingly frequent cross regional exchanges between populations and widespread contact and communication between ethnic groups[1]. In addition, the development of the economy has also brought better educational opportunities, changed people's lifestyles and values, broadened the horizons of the Chinese people, and enabled more and more people to choose spouses of different ethnicities across cultural and religious boundaries. Besides, the Chinese government also adopts policies to encourage exchanges and cooperation among ethnic groups, safeguard the freedom of marriage of all ethnic groups, and promote unity among ethnic groups. The open and diverse social

environment has made more intermarriage between Hui and Han possible, but at the same time, it has also brought challenges of cultural integration and conflict.

1.2. Research Significance

The phenomenon of Hui-Han intermarriage has gradually increased with the development of the times. According to the seventh population survey of China in 2020, the intermarriage rate between the Hui and Han ethnic groups is as high as 11.85%[2]. However, most of the current research on Hui-Han intermarriage is limited to ethnic relations, religious influence, and other aspects. However, there is still a lack of comprehensive research on the various factors that affect Hui-Han intermarriage. This paper provides a systematic overview of the phenomenon of cultural integration between the Hui and Han ethnic groups, as well as its influencing factors. It analyzes the mechanisms by which these factors affect the intermarriage between the Hui and Han ethnic groups from multiple perspectives and reveals the problems and challenges faced by intermarriage through field interviews and investigations.

2. Overview of Hui-Han Intermarriage Factors

2.1. Overview of Hui-Han Intermarriage

Hui-Han intermarriage refers to the cross ethnic marriage and union between the Han and Hui ethnic groups in China. The Han ethnic group is the largest ethnic group in China. According to the seventh national census of the People's Republic of China, the Han ethnic group has a population of 1.28 billion, and the Han ethnic group was named after the Han Dynasty in history. The Han people have their own traditional culture and believe in Chinese folk religions, as well as Han Buddhism and Taoism. As the third largest ethnic group, the Hui ethnic group has a population of nearly 11.38 million. The term Hui first referred to the Uyghurs living in western China during the Northern Song Dynasty, and was used to refer to the Semu people during the Yuan Dynasty. Later, it was widely used to refer to the Muslim community living in China during the Ming and Qing Dynasties. Today's Hui people mainly believe in Islam[3]. There are many differences in cultural customs and values between the two sides. For example, the festival celebration methods, living customs, and dietary habits between the Han and Hui ethnic groups are significantly different. The Han ethnic group does not have significant restrictions on diet and daily routines, but the Hui ethnic group can only consume clean food as stipulated in Islamic law (such as not eating pork), and must pray five times a day; in some areas, especially in Hui ethnic areas, influenced by traditional beliefs, there is a relatively conservative and resistant attitude towards intermarriage between ethnic groups, fearing that Hui-Han intermarriage will lead to the loss and eventual disappearance of traditional ethnic culture. However, the Han ethnic group is open to inter-ethnic marriage, because they do not have many restrictions on marriage.

2.2. Impact of Han Chinese Intermarriage

The impact of intermarriage between the Hui and Han ethnic groups is multifaceted, as it may bring opportunities for multicultural integration and enhanced communication, as well as challenges related to religion, family, and other aspects. From an economic perspective, Hui-Han intermarriage promotes the sharing and complementation of economic resources in different regions, which helps to expand the scope of the labor market and broaden the breadth of the consumer market. Through marriage, people from different regions are more likely to engage in cross regional mobility, promoting economic development. From a social perspective, intermarriage between the Han and

Hui ethnic groups deepens communication and integration, ensures respect for the traditions of the Hui ethnic group, expands the social network of individuals and families, enhances the influence of families in different social fields, promotes the improvement of the marriage legal system, and helps promote regional social harmony and stable development. From a cultural perspective, Hui-Han intermarriage promotes mutual understanding and tolerance of each other's cultures. The cultural traditions of different ethnic groups can be inherited in daily life, which contributes to cultural diversity and prosperity. However, at the same time, Hui-Han intermarriage may face pressure from family and society, communication of religious beliefs, and compromise of lifestyle habits. For example, there has been a weakening of Islamic faith in the southeastern coastal areas and some scattered areas, but some western Hui ethnic settlements may develop ethnic identity and exclusionary sentiments towards themselves[4]. Overall, Hui-Han intermarriage helps promote cultural integration, economic development, and social progress, and has a positive and significant impact on the sustainable development of society.

3. Analysis of the Influencing Factors and Mechanisms of Intermarriage Phenomenon

3.1. Analysis of the Social Factors on Hui-Han Intermarriage

Social factors have a significant impact on marriages between people from different cultural backgrounds. On the one hand, social changes and modernization have promoted Hui-Han intermarriage. With the advancement of China's urbanization process, including the development of the Internet and new media, and the more convenient and extensive exchanges between them, provide more possibilities for cross ethnic marriage. Specifically, urbanization has attracted young people from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds to come to cities for employment and live in mixed conditions in urban areas. This effectively breaks the previous lifestyle dominated by settlement in rural areas, increases communication among young people, and promotes marriage between Hui and Han ethnic groups. On the other hand, social biases and stereotypes can influence decisions regarding Hui-Han intermarriage. The recognition and support of society and family have a significant impact on intermarriage, and certain traditional biases may have inherent views towards different ethnic groups, leading to opposition to cross ethnic marriage and bringing pressure and challenges to marriage. From the perspective of Hui-Han intermarriage, the Hui people's belief in Islam, different dietary habits, and the international community's connection with Muslims and terrorists have deepened Han people's fear of the Hui ethnic group, leading to the disagreement on Hui-Han intermarriage[5]. In summary, the Hui-Han intermarriage is influenced by social factors, including social recognition, acceptance, and modernization changes. It is still necessary to strengthen cross-cultural communication and understanding to promote mutual integration between different ethnic groups.

3.2. Analysis of the Cultural Factors on Hui-Han Intermarriage

Cultural factors play an important role in Hui-Han intermarriage, covering various aspects such as religion and customs, and have a profound impact on the formation of marriage and family life. In terms of religious beliefs, the Hui ethnic group mainly believes in Islam, while the Han ethnic group is influenced by Confucian culture. Differences in religious practices may lead to differences in lifestyle habits and ideological concepts, which may result in cultural conflicts during intermarriage between the Hui and Han ethnic groups and become a challenge in marriage. For example, Islam emphasizes devotion to faith and deities, as well as assistance among believers, which makes the Hui ethnic group more united and exclusive. People are unwilling to have too much contact with foreigners, reducing the chances of Hui-Han intermarriage. Traditionally, the

Hui and Han ethnic groups have different dietary habits, festival activities, and wedding customs[6]. Hui people usually follow Islamic rules, while Han people pay more attention to traditional etiquette. These differences may affect the harmony of intermarriage and family life. The differences in language, customs, festivals, and other aspects of inter-ethnic marriage mean that both parties need more tolerance and understanding, which affects the acceptance level of both families and the adaptability of marital life[7]. In summary, cultural factors have a multifaceted impact on intermarriage between the Hui and Han ethnic groups. With the progress and openness of society, it is important to respect each other's cultural traditions while finding a suitable marriage model for both parties, in order to achieve harmonious cultural coexistence.

3.3. Analysis of the Institutional Factors on Hui-Han Intermarriage

The impact of institutional factors on intermarriage between Hui and Han involves multiple aspects, including laws, religion, and social welfare policies. Firstly, the law has clear regulations on Hui-Han intermarriage, ensuring the freedom and rights of marriage. The legal system stipulates the basic principles of ethnic marriage, prohibits discrimination and restricts marriage freedom, and provides legal protection and norms for Han Chinese intermarriage. According to Article 1046 of the PRC Civil Code, marriage should be fully voluntary for both men and women, and it is prohibited for either party to force the other or for any organization or individual to interfere[8]. Secondly, social policies have created a relatively friendly social environment for Hui-Han intermarriage. Ethnic minorities enjoy a certain degree of preferential policies in terms of childbirth, and their offspring enjoy welfare policies in education and employment, which to some extent affect their marriage choices; At the same time, ethnic policies advocate friendly exchanges between ethnic groups, which helps to reduce social barriers in intermarriage between Hui and Han. Finally, the religious system was a factor that hindered intermarriage between the Hui and Han ethnic groups. From the perspective of Islam, Hui families need to inherit Islamic beliefs, adhere to Hui customs, and follow traditional values. Intermarriage with other ethnic groups will weaken the bond between Hui families and their traditional religion and culture, and religious differences will have an impact on the acceptance and practice of marriage. Overall, the legal and policy environment provides support and protection for Hui Han intermarriage, but the influence of religious customs remains an important factor. With the development of society and the improvement of laws, the conditions and environment for Hui-Han intermarriage have gradually improved, and the recognition of multiculturalism has gradually increased.

3.4. Analysis of Economic Factors on Hui-Han Intermarriage

The marriage relationship of Hui-Han intermarriage involves individuals from two different ethnic groups and economic backgrounds, and economic factors have a significant impact on marriage choices. From the perspective of regional economy, the economic differences between the Hui and Han ethnic groups provide opportunities for intermarriage, but also bring huge challenges. The areas with a large Hui population are mainly distributed in the northwest and remote areas, while the Han population is more concentrated in the eastern coastal areas and cities. The regional economic differences have led many Hui people to migrate eastward to big cities in search of employment opportunities, and the mixed living status within cities provides opportunities for intermarriage and interaction between Hui and Han people; however, the marriage between Han people in economically developed areas and Hui people in economically relatively underdeveloped areas may face challenges due to differences in lifestyle, consumption concepts, and other factors caused by economic disparities[9]. From the perspective of family economy, marriage usually requires a certain economic foundation, and Hui-Han intermarriage may involve differences in the

economic backgrounds of both families, which can become obstacles to marriage in some cases. There is a significant gap in economic strength between Han Chinese families who are relatively wealthy in some cities and Hui ethnic families who work in cities, which may lead to different attitudes towards marriage among families; the cost of the wedding and dowry customs are also important economic considerations for marriage. The differences in marriage customs and economic requirements among different ethnic groups may affect marriage decisions. In summary, economic conditions not only affect the formation of marriage, but also the stability and happiness of marriage. This is an important practical issue that Hui Han intermarriage needs to face in real life.

4. The difficulties and challenges of Hui-Han intermarriage

This paper uses a survey questionnaire analysis method to create a survey questionnaire on "Issues and Challenges of Hui-Han Intermarriage". Among them, 53 survey questionnaires were collected, of which 38% were male and 62% were female; The Hui ethnic group accounts for 66%, while the Han and other ethnic groups together account for 34%; The proportion of Hui-Han intermarriage is 30%, while the proportion of non Hui-Han intermarriage between is 70%.

4.1. Family Conflicts and Contradictions

The conflicts and contradictions in the Hui-Han intermarriage mainly focus on the pressure within the family. Both Hui and Han families have different expectations and requirements for marriage, especially family members' opposition to cross ethnic marriage, which leads to conflicts within the family. For example, Han families hope that Hui daughters in law can follow the Han lifestyle and even change their dietary habits to eat pork, while Hui families also hope that their Han sons in law can accept Hui customs and even convert to Islam. Hui and Han families hold a conservative attitude towards many family matters and are unwilling to change or compromise for the addition of new family members. According to survey data, 15% of respondents believe that family conflicts are the main challenge for Hui-Han intermarriage. Among them, 88% of respondents consider differences in lifestyle habits and religious values to be the main challenges faced by Hui-Han intermarriage. 12% of respondents believe that family members' opposition and language communication barriers are the reasons for conflicts. In summary, the persistence and different beliefs of both the Hui and Han ethnic groups towards traditional lifestyles have led to conflicts and contradictions within the families of intermarriage.

4.2. Cultural Differences and Conflicts

Cultural differences and conflicts are also challenges faced by intermarriage between the Hui and Han ethnic groups. There are significant differences in culture, religion and customs between Hui and Han. Hui people generally believe in Islam, and Islam is especially unique in religious ceremonies and festivals. Han families have no fixed religious beliefs, and there are traditional festivals such as the Spring Festival and Mid-Autumn Festival. Different religious beliefs may lead to conflicts in marriage due to differences in lifestyle habits, holiday customs, and religious rituals. For example, a Han Chinese daughter-in-law who marries into a Hui ethnic group needs to understand Islam and abide by its rules, such as praying five times a day and fasting during Ramadan, while weakening the status of Han culture in her life. Han family members may find it difficult to accept these lifestyle habits. In the survey questionnaire, 53% of respondents believed that cultural differences were the main difficulty faced by Hui-Han intermarriage. All respondents linked the cultural differences and conflicts between Hui and Han to religious differences. 33% of respondents believed that challenges were directly generated by religious values, and 67% of

respondents believed that differences in social etiquette, customs, and dietary habits were additional products of religion. In summary, the cultural differences and conflicts between the Hui and Han ethnic groups have posed great challenges to intermarriage between them.

4.3. Social pressure and bias

The pressure caused by social prejudice also poses a challenge to Hui-Han intermarriage. As one of the ethnic minorities in China, the Hui ethnic group has formed boundaries with other ethnic groups due to its unique beliefs. Different attitudes towards Hui-Han intermarriage may bring additional social pressure to marriage. The living habits of many Hui people are vastly different from those of other ethnic groups, leading to prejudice against them at the social level. For example, in some conservative communities, Hui-Han marriage can lead to criticism from those around the man and woman, which can have an impact on the psychological and emotional well-being of both parties involved in the marriage. 9% of respondents believe that social pressure and prejudice are the main challenges faced by Han Chinese intermarriage. Among them, 80% of respondents believe that the social acceptance of cross ethnic marriage (mainly reflected in religious and cultural discrimination) has caused intermarriage pressure, while 20% of respondents believe that it is a challenge caused by general social environmental pressure. In summary, the lack of understanding of Islam has exacerbated the mainstream public's discrimination and even panic towards the Hui ethnic group, and the ultimate result is an escalation of resistance to Hui-Han intermarriage.

5. Conclusion

The Hui-Han intermarriage has become a microcosm of the ethnic changes and integration in China since ancient times. In today's society, intermarriage between ethnic groups faces many challenges. Hui-Han intermarriage is a cross ethnic marriage between the Hui and Han ethnic groups, which has a profound impact on the cultural diversity of Chinese society, but it is also restricted by social, cultural, institutional, and economic factors. Culturally, there are significant differences in living habits between the Hui and Han ethnic groups due to their different religious beliefs, especially the Hui's adherence to Islam; on the institutional level, the differences in family values between the two ethnic groups, as well as conflicts with traditional beliefs and modern laws, have an impact on inter ethnic marriage; in terms of socio-economic development, the new population migration caused by uneven economic development and population distribution has also brought new possibilities for intermarriage between the Hui and Han ethnic groups. This paper uses a survey questionnaire to understand the difficulties and challenges faced by intermarriage between the Hui and Han ethnic groups. Survey data shows that cultural differences are the main problem faced by Hui-Han intermarriage, with religious etiquette and customs being the most significant challenge in culture; the contradictions in the family arise from the differences in expectations and perceptions of the family between the Hui and Han ethnic groups; the pressure in society is also projected onto individuals who intermarry, which brings great difficulties to intermarriage.

Based on the current difficulties and challenges faced by Hui-Han intermarriage, and combined with actual research, this paper proposes the following suggestions. To begin with, enhance mutual respect and understanding between the Hui and Han ethnic groups, which can be achieved through religious doctrines to deepen understanding of each other's beliefs, organize cultural exchange activities between the Hui and Han ethnic groups, and promote mutual understanding and respect; in addition, promote the integration of customs within the Hui and Han family, try to integrate with each other, respect each other's dietary taboos, make dishes that are in line with both cultures, preserve the traditions of both cultures, and enhance the relationship between family members; last of all, establish communication channels between Hui and Han ethnic groups, encourage

intermarriage families to regularly open up and have frank conversations, establish community support service teams, promote communication and friendship among residents from different cultural backgrounds, and enhance social recognition and support for Hui-Han intermarriage families.

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