

Research on the Construction of the Consciousness of the Chinese Nation Community on the Basis of Theoretical Sources and Practical Approaches

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Abstract

The consciousness of the Chinese nation as a community is the fundamental bond that holds the Chinese nation together with a shared future. This paper aims to construct an interdisciplinary theoretical framework from psychological identity to behavioral voluntariness, from legal norms to cultural mutual recognition, and to propose practical strategies to strengthen this consciousness. On the basis of Jungian psychology's theory of collective unconsciousness, the theory of universal values in natural law, the theory of local will in legal sociology, and historical policy analysis, this paper explores the formation path of the consciousness of the Chinese nation as a community. The study revealed that through the comprehensive application of multiple disciplinary perspectives, the formation and consolidation of the consciousness of the Chinese nation as a community can be effectively promoted.

Keywords

Consciousness of the Chinese nation as a community, Jungian psychology, natural law, sociology of law, global governance, traditional Chinese legal culture

1. Introduction

As far as the literature is concerned, the understanding of the consciousness of the Chinese nation as a community is mainly from the perspectives of political science and sociology. However, systematic discussions on this topic from a multidisciplinary theoretical perspective are still relatively limited. To advance the theoretical research on the consciousness of the Chinese nation as a community to a new level, by applying psychology, law, sociology, historical policy analysis, and global governance theory to analyse traditional Chinese legal culture, a four-dimensional analytical framework of “psychological identity - legal norms - cultural integration - global governance” is established. The aim is to think more deeply about forging the consciousness of the Chinese nation as a community.

2. The Theoretical Origin of the Consciousness of the Chinese Nation as a Community

2.1 Psychological Perspective

The core of the consciousness of the Chinese nation as a community lies in social identity, that is, an individual's sense of belonging and identification with the “Chinese nation” as a superior group.

2.1.1 Jungian Psychology's Theory of Collective Unconsciousness

Jung (2018) proposed the concept of “primitive imagery”, which holds that an individual's conscious desire for belonging is collective unconsciousness. The concept of collective unconsciousness proposed by Jung is very important for our understanding of the consciousness of the Chinese nation as a community. It reveals the psychological basis of belonging in the human subconscious. Under the guidance of Jung's theory, we recognize that the reason why individuals can identify with and integrate into the Chinese nation as a whole is to identify with the collective at the subconscious level, and the emotional components in community consciousness, such as a sense of belonging and empathy, are the basic emotional bonds for maintaining group relations. Research shows that emotional communication can stimulate individual active participation to a greater extent than can purely knowledge-based communication.

Likewise, according to self-determination theory, if a person feels that his actions are in harmony with his self-beliefs, then he is more inclined to those actions. Emperor Taizong of Tang's ethnic policy of “harmony among the six states and unity among the nine provinces” enabled all ethnic groups to identify with “great unification” through “marriage alliances” and “intermarriage between the Hu and Han people”. That is, the consciousness of the Chinese nation as a community, by highlighting “common interests” and “common responsibilities”, evokes the centripetal force of individuals towards the development of the country.

2.1.2 Theory of Self and the Unity of the Community

Jung believes that the central task of “self-nature” is to connect people with the collective. Therefore, the basis for fusing the individual members of each ethnic group of the Chinese nation into the national subject of “pluralism as one” is the “five common psychological processes” proposed by Professor Li Jing, namely, common knowledge, common emotion, common thinking, common memory and common education, which reveal the path of community consciousness at the micro level.

2.2 The Perspective of Natural Law

Emotion is the source of inspiration for morality, universal human values and morality are the objects of concern of natural law, and morality is the universal consensus and agreement of recognition. Therefore, promoting the construction of the consciousness of the Chinese nation as a community, that is, promoting universal values, enhancing moral recognition among each other, promoting mutual learning and understanding among nations, and achieving the realization of the consciousness of the community, is highly important.

2.2.1 Revival and Localization Practice of Natural Law

Buvasthair believes that “reason” is a fundamental element of law (Alexey, 2020). In Chinese history, the Tang Dynasty implemented the policy of “mutual transformation between the Chinese and the barbarians”, which, in the sense of natural law, meant the implementation of the concept of “universal reason”, which was reflected in the law to transform people of different ethnic groups into one group. Although the preamble of the current Constitution has confirmed that “all ethnic groups are equal”, the sense of community cannot exist out of thin air; it can only be truly forged on the basis of its legal basis and institutional roots.

2.2.2 The Sense of Community in the Constitution

The Constitution is the institutional foundation of community consciousness. According to Shao's (2023) research, the revision of the Law on Regional Ethnic Autonomy needs to further strengthen the “commonality” provisions to achieve the principle of justice in natural law, especially to clarify the legal status of the “Chinese nation community”.

2.3 Sociological Perspective

Bourdieu's field theory holds that social action is governed by multiple rules. The consciousness of the Chinese nation as a community shapes individual behavior through the synergy of fields such as education, law and economy.

In a sociological sense, the consciousness of the Chinese nation as a community influences the integration of society, the reconstruction of social relations, the strengthening of cultural identity, and the modernization of national governance. The enforcement of the law is inseparable from the tendencies of society. In other words, in this context, one can consider what the legal guarantee of the consciousness of the Chinese nation as a community is, that is, how to protect the legitimate rights and interests of all ethnic groups in accordance with the law.

Furthermore, from the perspective of local will in legal sociology, the “party building leadership + mass participation” model for the implementation of the consciousness of the Chinese nation as a community in rural revitalization in ethnic areas brings together the forces of the government, entrepreneurs, especially ethnic entrepreneurs, and all sectors of society. For example, in the revitalization of characteristic industries in ethnic minority areas, the government, in collaboration with ethnic entrepreneurs, has jointly developed characteristic industries and promoted win-win economic and cultural interests, adapting to social changes.

2.3.1 The Logic of Community Formation in Rural Society

The “rural will” theory in legal sociology, an interdisciplinary field of law and sociology, suggests that the sense of community stems from common cultural traditions and life practices (Li, 2023). The fusion of the “Fifteen National Customs” in the Book of Songs and the “harmony among all nations” concept in the Book of Documents reflects the unity of local culture and national ideology; since modern times, Fei Xiaotong's “pattern of differential order” has also provided significant enlightenment (*Translation and annotation of the Book of Songs*, 2015).

The logical construction of the consciousness of the Chinese nation community in Fei Xiaotong's “pluralistic unity” theory recognizes ethnic differences and affirms “differences” while placing “unity” in a dominant position. The sociological “theory of social stratification” holds that the solidification of social strata leads to social division. The “consciousness of the Chinese nation as a community” breaks down the structural barriers of “parallel societies” or “ethnic stratification” through “common prosperity” and “leaving no ethnic group behind”, providing equal opportunities for all ethnic groups to receive education and employment.

2.3.2 Practical Cases from the Tang Dynasty

For example, the Tang Dynasty incorporated border ethnic groups into the governance system through the “Hu-Han intermarriage” policy and the “jimi policy”, which demonstrated the interaction between local will and state governance. The legal norms of the “Four barbarians coming to court” in the Tang Code Commentary not only safeguarded sovereignty but also promoted cultural identity.

2.4 From a Global Governance Perspective

2.4.1 Basic Concepts of Global Governance

Global governance refers to a model of cooperation among countries in response to global issues dedicated to building a fair, inclusive and sustainable development path (Pan, 2025). China's participation in global governance and the building of a community with a shared future for mankind will help enhance China's international image and contribute to our efforts in ethnic unity.

2.4.2 Global Governance and China's Practice

In addition to the Tang Dynasty, contemporary Belt and Road economic and trade cooperation and exchanges have also enabled countries along routes to exchange, understand and identify with each other, providing external conditions for the formation of the consciousness of the Chinese nation as a community.

2.5 Historical Policies Analysis

Many of the above cases originated from the will of the rulers and the policies of the ruling class. Historical policy analysis is beneficial for drawing lessons from history and provides a reference for current policy-making. Through the study of historical policies, we can find effective channels to guide the consciousness of the Chinese nation as a community.

2.5.1 The Idea of Ethnic Integration in Ancient Laws

The ancient Chinese legal system was rich in the idea of ethnic integration. For example, the Tang Code Commentary also stipulated the status of ethnic minorities, reflecting the idea of ethnic equality at that time. Another allegory from Han Feizi, “The law does not abate the noble, the rope does not bend,” also explains the issue of fairness in the law.

2.5.2 The Traditional Governance Model that Emphasizes Both Propriety and Law

Throughout history, Chinese governments have emphasized the concept of social governance, which emphasizes both propriety and law. The “Rites of Zhou” and “The Book of Rites” contain some regulations on the etiquette of ethnic interaction and integration, and the regulations on the etiquette of ethnic interaction and integration at that time were legally binding and reflected a certain cultural identity in “The Book of Rites: The Royal System”. The era in which rites and laws were practiced must have been an era of virtuous and benevolent.

2.5.3 The Influence of Confucianism on Law

Confucianism is one of the fundamental characteristics of traditional Chinese legal culture. The ideas of “benevolent governance” and “moral governance” are deeply rooted in people's hearts. “Do not do to others what you do not want others to do to you” is an important guiding ideology of Confucius in handling ethnic relations. It has played a certain role in promoting the progress and development of traditional Chinese legal culture and helping to handle various ethnic relations well.

2.5.4 Ethnic Policies in History

The “commandery-county system” of the Qin and Han dynasties, the “jimi prefecture-state system” of the Tang Dynasty and the “replacing native chieftains with appointed officials” of the Qing Dynasty were important ways of handling ethnic relations in ancient China. These systems were continuously improved in the course of their implementation to form the targeted model of ethnic governance in the “Records of the Grand Historian: The Annals of Qin Shi Huang”.

3. Practical Path of the Consciousness of the Chinese Nation as a Community

3.1 Theoretical Innovation: Interdisciplinary Perspective Integration

A four-dimensional perspective is established with the dimensions of “psychological identity - legal norms - cultural integration - global governance”.

3.1.1 Psychological Aspects

To form the consciousness of the national community for the national community, it is necessary to first construct the individual's identification with the Chinese nation at the psychological level. The construction of the Chinese national community at the psychological level can be achieved through methods such as education and culture. Specific ways to enhance psychological identity can be designed via quantifiable indicators, such as the “community consciousness index”, and bilingual teaching under the “immersive teaching” model of educational psychology can be implemented in ethnic minority areas.

3.1.2 Legal Aspects

The above answers people's satisfaction of the “need for belonging” from Jung's perspective and then analyses it from the “five common” level to determine some of his own corrective measures. Institutional construction in law is also aimed at stabilizing the social situation to a certain extent and enhancing the sense of identity within the nation as a community of the Chinese nation.

From a legal perspective, the system of regional ethnic autonomy can be interpreted on the basis of a full understanding and comprehension of the theory of natural law and the theory of constitution and further improved on the basis of absorbing and integrating the ideas and concepts of strengthening ethnic unity in China's traditional legal culture. For example, protection provisions for “cultural symbols” are added to the

Law on Regional Ethnic Autonomy, protecting dialects, and determining the legal status of traditional festivals.

3.1.3 Cultural Aspects

Culturally speaking, the consciousness of the Chinese nation as a community is rooted in the powerful influence of an individual's psychology on cultural identity, cultural confidence, cultural inheritance and innovation, and social harmony. Chinese culture is a cultural community that is “diverse yet integrated”, and cultural symbols such as Chinese characters, the Great Wall, the Forbidden City, and traditional clothing are concrete manifestations of the consciousness of the community. Cultural symbols are engraved into people's daily lives through historical and cultural memory, thereby enhancing the sense of community. The sharing of traditional Chinese festivals such as the Spring Festival and the Mid-Autumn Festival and the inheritance of red culture, such as revolutionary stories such as “The Alliance at Yi Sea” and “Half a Quilt”, establish common spiritual and emotional bonds in cultural practice.

In addition, culture is inseparable from the first two levels. In connection with the psychology of law and ruling identity, looking back to ancient times, the judicial tradition of “strange beast judgement” in Shan Hai Jing, images such as xiezhi and Bai Ze were incorporated into legal culture by later generations, such as the decoration of the Censor platform with xiezhi in the Tang Law Commentary of the Tang Dynasty, reinforcing the sanctity of judicial authority. The book's accounts of certain mountains and rivers, such as the ban on hunting rhinoceros and si on the “Mountain of Prayer” and sacrificial ceremonies with jade and polished rice, can be regarded as the rudiments of early environmental taboos and resource management laws. The “transgressive-punishment” pattern in the stories of Gun and Erfu provides a mythological basis for later legal ideas such as the “mandate of heaven” and the “divine right of kings”. The legal culture can be said to have a long history. When the legal culture was elevated to a policy system, rational thinking influenced the governance of the state.

According to the concept of rural sociology, different ethnic groups are transformed into different symbols, and through the Confucian “benevolent governance” approach, the goal of identifying with culture has been achieved; this has been an agreement for thousands of years. Today, to better promote cultural integration, “digital cultural platforms” can be designed, using 3D virtual technology to recreate the historical migration and integration scenes of ethnic groups to enhance the interaction of cultural populations. Protecting and revitalizing cultural heritage and transforming cultural resources such as Dunhuang murals and ethnic minority songs and dancing them into digital products through the “Digital Silk Road” can increase both cultural dissemination and economic value.

3.2 Institutional Assurance: The Modern Transformation of Historical Experience

3.2.1 Inclusiveness in Policy Design

The inheritance of institutions implies objective development, drawing on the “Hu-Han integration” policy of the Tang Dynasty, and reinforcing common cultural symbols through education and media, such as the metaphor of “pomegranate seeds”, metaphors can enhance the vividness and imagery of language and highlight the characteristics of ethnic integration. Furthermore, the ethnic policy evaluation mechanism proposed by Pan (2025) could be established, and field research projects could be set up for continuous adjustment and improvement.

3.2.2 Improving the Legal System

A sound legal system cannot be achieved without referring to past laws, such as the provisions on ethnic equality in the Tang Code Commentary, clarifying the concept of the “community of the Chinese nation” in the Constitution, and strengthening the operability of the provisions on ethnic unity. To implement the requirements of the 2025 Report on the Work of the Government of the State Council today is to take the essence and discard the dross. This is an important way to connect the legal systems of ethnic groups throughout history.

3.3 Cultural practice: A dialogue between tradition and modernity

3.3.1 Modern Interpretation of Historical Documents

The “legal elements” in Shan Hai Jing are not written codes but metaphorically created representations of the natural law system through theocratic narratives, spatial order and taboo methods. They are important components of the traditional Chinese legal concepts of “the unity of rites and laws” and “the correspondence between heaven and man”, as well as the cultural genes of the Chinese legal system.

Carrying out the ethnic resource development of the Book of Songs and the Book of Documents, for instance, promotes the development of the “Fifteen National Styles” through digital technology or adopts “bilingual education” to enhance language identity. The phrase “passing on the torch, never ceasing” from Zhuangzi’s “Master of Health Preservation” was used as a metaphor to illustrate the connection between tradition and the present.

3.3.2 Construction of the community of public space

The composition of time and space is history. Traditional festivals such as the Dragon Boat Festival and the Mid-Autumn Festival can be used to strengthen collective memory, and public art projects with the theme of “ethnic unity” can be designed. It is also possible to draw on Li Jing’s “container metaphor” theory, compare the Chinese nation to a “pomegranate”, construct “pomegranate seed” symbol landscapes in community spaces, and design urban theme parks and rural revitalization demonstration bases.

From a different spatial perspective, setting aside the local nature of space and looking at China’s broader territory through the development of the western region, projects such as “Cultural Enrichment of Xinjiang” and “Cultural Enrichment of Tibet” and incorporating the outstanding cultures of all ethnic groups into the narrative of Chinese civilization can not only protect ethnic diversity but also strengthen ethnic integrity.

3.4 Global Governance Practice: Building a Community from an International Perspective

3.4.1 International Exchanges and Cooperation

To go beyond China and to the world, we should participate in the actions of international organizations and promote cultural exchanges and cooperation under the international governance system. The international governance system has a certain connection with culture. One way to enhance the global influence of our nation’s culture through cultural exchange and cooperation is through the international governance system.

With an open mind, he has absorbed the wisdom of other countries around the world. For instance, he has been actively learning in areas such as China’s ecological civilization and scientific and technological innovation. Scholars from the University of Indonesia believe that China’s practice of transforming heavily polluted cities into clean cities is worth learning from. China has also increased its carbon sink capacity in ecological restoration projects to contribute to global climate improvement. Moreover, through interactions with countries around the world in international organizations, such as emphasizing “multilateralism” and “fairness and justice” in the 50th anniversary of China–Eu relations, cooperation between China and Russia under the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the BRICS mechanism is a way to practice the purposes of the UN Charter. On this basis, we propose the strategy of “feedback cultural exchange” and invite overseas scholars to participate in ethnic policy consultation. A two-way exchange mechanism has been formed.

3.4.2 Transnational Cultural Exchange

Third, Chinese culture should be promoted worldwide, the diversity and inclusiveness of the Chinese nation should be demonstrated, and the international influence of the nation and the country should be enhanced. At the same time, it is also conducive to creating a broader vision and greater development space for the consciousness of the Chinese nation as a community, such as Confucius Institutes and cultural festivals, which are manifestations of Chinese culture going global and to the world.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, the formation of the consciousness of the Chinese nation as a community is a long and complex process, and we need to work from different dimensions and integrate multiple theories. By using the perspectives of various theories such as psychology, natural law, and legal sociology, we can observe and understand this process and propose feasible measures. Our future work awaits continuous tracking and observation of the consciousness of the Chinese nation as a community and further exploration of its development.

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Appendix: Explanation of the origin of the proverb

- 1) When people are united, even Mount Tai can be moved: from Xunzi • Wang Zhi.
- 2) The law does not go aigui, the rope does not bend: from Han Feizi, “You Du”.
- 3) Harmony without uniformity, uniformity without disharmony: From The Analects of Confucius, “Zi Lu”.
- 4) By learning from history, one can understand the rise and fall: from the Old Book of Tang, the Biography of Wei Zheng.
- 5) Many hands make light work: A folk saying, a metaphor for collective strength.
- 6) All rivers converge into the sea; only by being inclusive can one be great. From the Book of Documents: Hongfan.
- 7) Passing on the torch, never ceasing: From Zhuangzi: The Master of Health Preservation.
- 8) The world is one family, and the four seas are neighbors: from The Book of Rites: The Book of Rites.

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Conflicts of Interest

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