



## The Spirit of Labor in the Formation and Development of the Chinese Nation

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**Abstract**

The achievements of the Chinese nation depend on the labor of its constituent ethnic groups, yet the relationship between productive practice, material exchange, and the spirit of labor requires clearer sociological explanation. This article examines how labor contributes to the formation and development of the Chinese nation through an ethnological and sociological perspective. It adopts a literature-based conceptual approach, drawing on selected academic publications and official documents published between 2017 and 2026. The analysis distinguishes the production of material conditions, the development of economic interdependence, the expansion of social relations, and the recognition of shared contributions. It argues that labor sustains collective life and cultural transmission, while exchanges of labor products connect differentiated livelihoods and create opportunities for enduring cooperation. These economic connections can promote interactions, exchanges, and integration among ethnic groups when supported by equitable participation, public institutions, and mutual recognition. The spirit of labor is examined through the established formulation of respecting labor, loving labor, working diligently, and working honestly, rather than through an assumed timeless ethnic character. The article concludes that understanding the Chinese nation's achievements requires attention to both the collective creation of material and cultural wealth and the social processes through which such contributions become mutually recognized.

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**Keywords**

Chinese nation; Spirit of labor; Economic interdependence; Interethnic interactions; Cultural inheritance; Ethnology

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## 1. Introduction

The achievements of the Chinese nation rest on work carried out by people of all ethnic groups. This proposition concerns more than the number of communities represented in an account of national history. It concerns the relationship between their contributions. Products must reach people who need them; skills must be practiced and passed on; productive facilities must be maintained. An achievement remains available to later generations because someone

undertakes this continuing work. Labor is therefore relevant both to the creation of wealth and to the persistence of the social capacities on which collective life depends.

The relationship between creation and connection deserves particular attention. A community can produce something valuable without its members having extensive contact with those who eventually use it. Equally, people can trade frequently while sharing few other areas of life. The question is how work performed in different settings becomes part of a common undertaking, and when the resulting economic relationships acquire a wider social significance. Answering it requires following what happens between production and collective identification.

Contemporary official formulations give this inquiry a clear point of departure. Xi's speech at the 2024 national conference on ethnic unity situates the joint creation of Chinese history and culture alongside economic interdependence among ethnic groups (Xi, 2024). The official English report preserves this emphasis on economic interdependence (Xinhua, 2024). Read together, these statements invite an investigation of the practical relationships through which contributions become connected. The broad historical proposition guides the inquiry; the explanation must specify who produces, who exchanges, and how relationships are sustained.

Recent literature supplies several relevant perspectives, although the sources address different questions. The reception of pluralistic unity concerns the relationship between ethnic diversity and the Chinese nation (Liu, 2018). Research on the moral meaning of labor asks how work is evaluated in relation to national life (He, 2022). Neither perspective can simply replace an account of production and exchange. Their relevance lies in bringing cultural affiliation and the value of work into the same discussion. The argument developed here asks how the labor of particular people contributes to achievements understood as common, without assuming that the participants do identical work or hold identical views.

Its central contention is that material exchange gives differentiated labor a significance beyond its immediate place of production. Producers come to depend on capacities located elsewhere, and repeated dealings create occasions for cooperation. The extension of these relationships into common institutions can support interethnic interactions, exchanges, and integration. Recognition matters because people must also be able to understand how their work and the work of others enter shared achievements. The spirit of labor is examined in this setting, as an orientation toward worthwhile and dependable work rather than as an inherited characteristic assigned to an ethnic population.

The inquiry is conceptual rather than a reconstruction of a single historical path. It follows productive contributions into exchange and then examines the durability and normative meaning of the resulting relationships. A product may circulate before its producers receive acknowledgment. Conversely, public praise need not explain how an achievement was made. These differences between activity and recognition delimit the argument.

## **2 Research Perspective and Method**

### **2.1 An Ethnological and Sociological Perspective**

Ethnology draws attention to how ethnic affiliations, cultural practices, and relations between groups develop within wider social settings. Sociology contributes an analysis of labor organization, exchange, institutions, and social recognition. Their combination shifts the research focus from isolated cultural traits to relations among people engaged in practical activities. The unit of explanation is consequently not an ethnic group imagined as an internally

uniform producer. It is a relationship involving workers, households, enterprises, markets, and public institutions, within which ethnicity may become relevant in different ways.

The Chinese nation and its constituent ethnic groups must also remain analytically distinct without being treated as opposing categories. Contemporary debate about the term *minzu* demonstrates why terminology requires care (Ma, 2017). The recent reception of Fei Xiaotong's account of pluralistic unity further highlights the importance of examining diversity within an interconnected national formation (Liu, 2018). Here, pluralistic unity provides a broad research orientation: differentiated contributions should be studied through their connections. It does not authorize attributing an unchanged modern identity to every population or occupational practice in earlier periods.

The expression interactions, exchanges, and integration among all ethnic groups follows the official English formulation of the 2021 Central Conference on Ethnic Affairs speech (Xi, 2021b). The terms direct attention to related aspects of social life. Encounters bring people into contact; exchanges circulate products and experience; more durable relationships allow participation in common institutions. These working distinctions help organize the discussion, but they are not a chronological formula. A workplace, for example, can bring these activities together, whereas a distant commercial relationship may involve exchange with little personal contact.

## 2.2 Sources and Analytical Procedure

The reference window covers the ten calendar years from 2017 to 2026; it does not delimit the history being discussed. Selection was based on relevance to ethnic relations, work, practical learning, exchange, and recognition. The resulting literature is used for conceptual analysis rather than presented as an exhaustive review. In particular, Liu's conference report documents a recent discussion of pluralistic unity, rather than serving as a substitute for Fei's original work (Liu, 2018). Published research and official texts are read according to their respective purposes, with no new interviews, survey results, or historical observations attributed to this study.

The procedure is to separate the claim being examined from the evidence available for it. Official documents establish contemporary formulations; they cannot demonstrate how every earlier productive relationship operated. An observational case can show how commercial and residential arrangements became connected in a particular locality, but it cannot supply a general causal effect. Where the discussion moves beyond these sources, the reasoning is stated as an analytical inference. The aim is to identify the relationships a fuller historical or field investigation would need to examine: how a contribution is made, how it reaches others, and how its significance becomes recognized.

## 3 Labor and the Collective Creation of National Achievements

### 3.1 Producing the Conditions of Collective Life

Consider the labor required for a useful object to remain available. Producing it is only part of the undertaking. Materials have to be obtained, equipment kept usable, and the result carried to a place where it can serve a purpose. These activities can involve different people with no single person directing the whole process. The object nevertheless depends on their work. This elementary observation gives collective creation a specific meaning: a contribution belongs to a wider achievement because other contributions make its production and use possible.

At the level of the Chinese nation, the same reasoning calls attention to how contributions from different communities become connected. It does not require each ethnic group to participate equally in every activity. Nor does it assign particular occupations to ethnic identities. A person's work changes with training, migration, available resources, and access to employment. The analytical task is to establish how people in these changing circumstances contribute to productive undertakings that extend beyond their immediate households. Ethnic affiliation is one part of the social setting in which the work is organized, not an explanation of competence or effort in itself.

This approach alters what an account of achievement needs to record. An invention or a completed work may receive extensive attention while the maintenance that allows its continued use remains unnoticed. Instruction can be similarly difficult to see: its results appear in what another person later becomes capable of doing. Omitting these activities makes the achievement appear more self-contained than it is. Including them reveals a dependence across tasks and generations. The contribution of ordinary workers then enters the explanation through the work required, rather than being added afterward as a general statement that everyone played a part.

Physical and intellectual labor also meet within these practical relationships. A design requires judgment about materials and use; putting it into practice can expose problems that call for further thought. Workers may improve a method while carrying it out. Separating intellectual creation entirely from execution would miss this possibility and obscure where knowledge develops. The point is not that every participant performs every kind of task. It is that the eventual result may depend on information moving between people who know different aspects of the work. Their cooperation can contribute something that none of their activities would supply independently.

The monetary value attached to a task provides an incomplete guide to this contribution. Teaching a successor or keeping a tool in working order may generate little income at the time, yet the continuation of production can depend on it. An analysis of shared achievement should ask what other work an activity enables and what would be lost if it ceased. Such questions recognize differences in contribution without turning the discussion into a ranking of ethnic groups. They also connect the creation of wealth to its continuing availability, which is essential to understanding why labor matters for historical continuity.

### 3.2 Sustaining Historical Continuity

Continuity requires people to do something with what they inherit. Tools can survive while the ability to use them disappears; a technique can remain recorded after people have stopped practicing it. The continued existence of an object or a name therefore tells only part of the story. Work sustains the relationship between an inherited resource and a living capacity. A later generation has to acquire enough competence to use that resource, judge its results, and decide what needs to change. This makes the transmission of productive capacities an important subject for ethnological investigation.

Gibson's discussion of making and learning offers a useful way to approach this subject (Gibson, 2019). Practical knowledge is acquired in activity, where a learner encounters materials, attempts a task, and responds to the result. Applied to the present question, this perspective draws attention to the work of teaching and correction. A successful outcome becomes evidence that someone can act competently, not simply repeat an explanation. Inheritance then depends on relationships in which such competence can be acquired. The contribution of a teacher may

continue through the later work of learners, including work undertaken outside the teacher's own locality.

Changes in the organization of work need not interrupt every connection with an earlier practice. Knowledge learned in a household may be carried into another productive setting; a worker may adapt an established technique to different equipment. The connection has to be investigated through what is retained and how it is used. It cannot be settled merely by observing either change or similarity. For the Chinese nation's development, this directs attention to the active transmission of capacities across changing social arrangements. Continuing labor makes inherited achievements available under new conditions, rather than leaving continuity to depend on the preservation of an unaltered form.

### 3.3 The Transmission of Labor Experience Through Interethnic Cooperation

Transmission across generations is only one part of this process. Cooperation can also carry experience between people from different ethnic backgrounds. To undertake a task together, participants have to make some of their knowledge intelligible to one another. They may demonstrate a method, explain a practical difficulty, or revise how tasks are coordinated. In these situations, knowledge becomes available through the work that participants are trying to accomplish. Learning is connected to a shared purpose, and a technique can acquire a wider range of users without erasing the contribution of those who developed it.

This account is consistent with the emphasis on cultural exchanges and mutual learning in the joint creation of Chinese culture (Xi, 2024). Its relevance to labor is specific: cooperation can make experience acquired in one setting useful to people working elsewhere. Productive capacities are extended through these relationships, while the resulting products can circulate beyond those directly involved. The transition from inheritance to exchange is therefore already present in the organization of work. People need ways both to acquire capacities they do not possess and to obtain products they do not make. Material exchange gives these connections a further social reach.

## 4 Material Exchange and Economic Interdependence

### 4.1 From Differentiated Production to Exchange

Exchange makes the results of one person's work available for another person's use. Where productive activities differ, this can connect needs that cannot be met within a single household or locality. A producer relies on materials or equipment made elsewhere, while others rely on the product that producer supplies. The importance of the relationship lies in this dependence between activities. Goods are not merely evidence that two communities encountered each other; they can enter the work and livelihoods through which those communities continue to exist. The movement of products thus deserves attention as part of the organization of collective life.

The category of labor products is deliberately broader here than means of production. Tools and other productive inputs enter further work; consumption goods meet needs more directly. Both can connect livelihoods across communities. How they are transferred also matters. A purchase, a gift, and a provision made under a public arrangement need not establish the same expectations between participants. Elder-Vass's treatment of gifts and Yan's anthropological discussion make it difficult to assume one universal obligation of return (Elder-Vass, 2020; Yan, 2020/2023). The form of a transfer must be specified before its implications for a social relationship can be assessed.

Economic interdependence concerns the continuation of these connections. A useful question is what happens when a supply or outlet becomes unavailable. If one activity can continue only with considerable difficulty because another has stopped, the relationship involves a consequential dependence. The scale may be local or much wider; personal familiarity is not a prerequisite. For the present argument, this gives material exchange its explanatory weight. The products of different people's labor become part of the conditions under which others work and live. Economic interdependence makes those contributions relevant beyond the setting in which they originate.

#### 4.2 Repetition and Cooperative Expectations

Repeated dealings can make this dependence more manageable. Participants learn whether a partner delivers what was agreed, understands a requirement, or responds adequately when something goes wrong. Knowledge of this kind can influence the next decision to cooperate. Over time, a relationship may carry expectations that are absent from a single completed sale. This is one plausible route from exchange to sustained cooperation. Its evidence would be found in subsequent decisions and conduct, including the reasons participants give for returning to a relationship, rather than in transaction counts alone.

Trust in this setting should not be understood only as personal affection. People can cooperate because contracts, professional standards, dispute procedures, and public regulation make commitments more dependable. Personal familiarity and institutional assurance may reinforce one another, but either can remain limited. This matters for interethnic relations because economic cooperation need not wait for complete cultural familiarity. Fair procedures can enable people to work together while retaining different customs and affiliations. Cooperation then provides further opportunities for understanding, rather than requiring cultural sameness as its initial condition.

Economic complementarity is a possibility that must be socially organized, not a sufficient explanation in itself. Resources in different locations do not generate exchange without transport, information, and arrangements for reaching agreements. Skills do not become accessible to others without opportunities to learn, collaborate, or obtain their products. Intermediaries can connect participants who would otherwise remain apart, although dependence on a small number of intermediaries may also limit participation. These considerations explain why infrastructure and institutional arrangements belong within an account of material exchange. They are part of how productive differences become workable relationships rather than simply existing alongside one another.

#### 4.3 From Market Connection to Wider Participation

Sun and Liu examine this relationship in their study of Uyghur jade traders in Nanyang (Sun & Liu, 2022). Market-related livelihoods brought migrants into continuing contact with the locality. The study follows the connection between commercial activity and residential organization, including the move into government-built public rental housing in 2017. Its value here is the attention to how a livelihood relationship develops alongside a community. Work creates reasons to remain in a place, but the conditions of residence also affect the possibilities for participation there.

This distinction matters to the argument. Employment or trade can establish an economic connection while leaving access to wider social life uncertain. Housing and public services can affect whether people are able to maintain a livelihood and participate beyond it. In this interpretation, institutions are part of the explanation of how an economic relationship develops.

They help determine its reach and durability. Studying them alongside exchange avoids attributing all subsequent relationships to commerce, while retaining the important role of work in bringing people into a shared locality in the first place.

## **5. From Economic Relations to Interethnic Integration**

### **5.1 Interaction and Practical Communication**

The next step concerns how material relationships become relations among people. Exchange creates reasons to meet, communicate, and coordinate. Participants explain needs, negotiate expectations, and respond to the consequences of another person's work. These encounters can make unfamiliar practices intelligible through concrete problems rather than abstract descriptions. Learning why a production schedule matters or how a quality judgment is made can provide knowledge about another person's circumstances. The proposed mechanism is practical communication grounded in interdependence, not the assumption that exposure to any difference necessarily produces understanding.

Repeated cooperation may also alter the terms in which people encounter one another. Someone initially recognized mainly through a broad ethnic label may become known as a skilled worker, reliable partner, experienced teacher, or helpful neighbor. Such relationships do not require ethnic affiliation to disappear. They add social knowledge that cannot be contained by a single categorical description. The importance of labor is that competence and contribution can become observable in joint activity. Whether this changes wider attitudes remains an empirical question rather than an automatic extension of an individual relationship.

Evidence on intergroup contact makes this qualification necessary. Paluck and colleagues' reassessment identifies both supportive findings and important limitations in the available experimental evidence (Paluck et al., 2019). Comparative work on intercultural relations likewise directs attention to the conditions in which groups encounter one another (Berry, 2017). These sources are not direct tests of the historical argument advanced here. They help frame a narrower proposition: opportunities for contact must be assessed alongside the organization, fairness, and continuity of the relationships in which contact occurs.

### **5.2 Cooperation and Shared Social Relationships**

Economic interdependence can support cooperation when participants have reasons to maintain a relationship beyond immediate advantage. Joint problems may require coordination, and dependable cooperation can become valuable to both sides. For example, a general analytical scenario might involve producers and distributors jointly addressing quality or delivery problems. The significance is not the example's particular trade. It is the possibility that shared practical responsibilities generate expectations that extend beyond a completed transaction. Research should then establish who participates in decisions, how obligations are distributed, and whether the relationship remains reciprocal in practice.

Integration becomes a stronger claim when relationships extend across more than one setting. Work-based cooperation may coexist with neighborhood interaction, participation in local associations, and access to common public services. Such overlapping relationships can make a community less dependent on a single transaction or intermediary. They also make disagreement more manageable when participants can draw on shared procedures and continuing relationships. The argument is therefore cumulative: material exchange creates connections, repeated cooperation can stabilize them, and wider participation can give those connections a more durable social basis.

Conflict is relevant to this explanation because durable relations are not necessarily free of disagreement. Differences over quality, payment, access, or responsibility can arise within any interdependent arrangement. What matters is whether participants can address them through procedures regarded as credible and whether disagreements remain specific rather than becoming judgments about whole ethnic groups. Fair dispute handling may preserve cooperation and demonstrate the value of common rules. Unresolved exclusion can have the opposite effect. A sociological account of integration must therefore examine the handling of ordinary problems as closely as it examines successful transactions or public celebrations of cooperation.

### 5.3 Recognition and Identification With Chinese Culture

Connections alone do not explain how particular contributions are recognized as part of the Chinese nation's achievements. Recognition involves interpretation. Workers, communities, educators, and public institutions identify whose labor made an outcome possible and how that outcome relates to broader collective life. Accounts of common achievements become more convincing when they identify concrete contributions and relationships rather than presenting unity as an unexplained conclusion. In this respect, historical and cultural interpretation is not an alternative to material analysis. It explains how people understand the significance of material relationships in which they participate.

This relationship gives identification with Chinese culture a practical dimension. People can encounter shared inheritance as something to which their own families and communities have contributed, and which others have also helped sustain. Such recognition need not erase specific memories, techniques, or affiliations. It can place them within an account of interconnected creation. The proposed connection between labor and identification thus has two requirements: contributions must be materially connected, and their significance must become understandable across communities. Neither an object alone nor an official label can establish both requirements without further social processes.

These connections also explain why the common character of an achievement does not begin only when it receives national recognition. Cooperation may already unite contributions from different settings within the production and use of a good. Public interpretation can make that relationship visible and place it within a wider historical understanding. The distinction between practical connection and recognized connection is therefore useful: the former concerns how an achievement is produced, while the latter concerns how its contributors understand and evaluate their relationship to it. Studying both keeps the analysis grounded in productive activity while explaining the importance of shared recognition.

## 6. The Spirit of Labor as a Shared Normative Orientation

### 6.1 A Clear Definition

In the official English text, Xi (2021a) defines the spirit of labor through "working with pride, enthusiasm, diligence, and honesty" (Section 30). The corresponding Chinese formulation concerns respect for labor, love of labor, diligent labor, and honest labor. That definition is retained here. The same passage distinguishes the spirit of labor from the spirit of model workers and the spirit of workmanship; their related purposes do not make them interchangeable.

The definition establishes what conduct is valued. How people come to value it remains a separate question. A worker may encounter these standards in instruction, in expectations

attached to a task, or in judgments about a completed result. Shared work can give them a practical reference: another person's diligence affects what one can accomplish, while an honest account of materials or performance makes cooperation more dependable. These are settings in which the standards can acquire significance. They do not demonstrate that all participants interpret work identically or that the contemporary formulation describes every earlier period.

## 6.2 Respecting Labor and Recognizing Contributions

Respect for labor begins with recognizing productive activity as necessary and socially valuable. In the present argument, it must also include attention to workers whose contributions are less visible or less publicly celebrated. Recognition of collective achievement becomes incomplete when it honors the final result but neglects those who cultivated materials, maintained equipment, taught skills, or performed routine services. An account centered on the contributions of all ethnic groups should therefore examine the distribution of recognition, rather than assume that the language of shared achievement already guarantees equal respect.

He connects moral understandings of labor with questions about the nation and state in contemporary China (He, 2022). This provides a relevant caution: the public value attached to labor and the experience of particular workers need not coincide. Applied to the present framework, respect should be investigated through both representations and relationships. Researchers can ask whose work is acknowledged, who can participate in decisions, and whether workers experience fair treatment. These questions preserve the affirmative importance of labor while preventing moral praise from concealing differences in actual recognition.

## 6.3 Valuing Diligent and Honest Work

An orientation of love for labor cannot be reduced to celebrating hardship. Its social content concerns whether people can understand their activity as meaningful, develop competence, and see its contribution to others. Continuing participation in useful work can connect personal effort with collective needs. However, this orientation is difficult to sustain where contributions are dismissed or opportunities remain restricted. The argument therefore links the cultivation of positive attitudes toward labor with the organization of work and participation, rather than treating an attitude as an individual quality detached from social circumstances.

Diligent labor concerns sustained and conscientious effort. In interdependent production, that effort matters beyond an individual's immediate task because delays, mistakes, and careful improvements affect others. Honest labor concerns the reliability of what people do and claim: accurate information, dependable performance, and the avoidance of deception. Both qualities can become practically intelligible through cooperation. People experience why another person's diligence or honesty matters to their own work. This does not establish a universal historical origin for these values. It explains a plausible social setting in which their significance can be learned and reinforced.

Normative expectations should apply to organizations as well as individual workers. A request for honest work is weakened if information about compensation or obligations is misleading. A demand for diligence is incomplete if workers lack the resources or preparation needed to perform adequately. Studying the spirit of labor therefore requires examining whether the surrounding organization supports the conduct it praises. This is especially important when participants enter cooperation with unequal experience or access to information. Shared standards gain credibility when they govern the relationship itself, rather than functioning only as expectations imposed on those with the least influence over its conditions.

#### 6.4 From Practical Standards to Shared Recognition

The relationship between practice and spirit is consequently reciprocal, but not circular. Labor supplies situations in which standards can be learned, tested, and evaluated. Public recognition and teaching can then express those standards more explicitly and guide subsequent conduct. The two processes require separate evidence: an account of cooperative work demonstrates a practical relationship, while statements, evaluations, and patterns of recognition demonstrate its normative interpretation. Keeping them distinct allows a researcher to investigate how a shared spirit of labor develops instead of assuming its presence whenever productive activity is observed.

A shared standard concerns what participants can reasonably expect of one another. It can remain meaningful when their occupations, affiliations, and local practices differ. In this respect, the spirit of labor need not be explained as a quality inherent in a population. Its social significance can be examined in the way contributions are evaluated and dependable work is recognized across those differences. This connects labor's normative meaning to the article's central problem: people contribute through particular activities, but those activities can sustain a common undertaking. Recognizing that relationship gives the value of work a reference beyond individual accomplishment.

### 7. Discussion and Research Implications

The argument identifies a material basis for interethnic connection without reducing social integration to economic calculation. Production creates what people need; exchange relates differentiated activities; cooperation can stabilize expectations; broader institutions can expand participation; recognition can make the significance of contributions understandable. Each relationship adds something that the preceding relationship alone cannot supply. This explains why labor and the exchange of its products are central to the argument while institutions, communication, and cultural interpretation remain necessary. The sequence is an analytical explanation of connected processes, not a universal chronology imposed on every historical setting.

Its principal implication for ethnology is to examine contributions relationally. Instead of compiling separate lists of what each ethnic group created, research can follow how people, skills, products, and institutions became connected. For sociology, the implication is to investigate how economic relations extend into social participation and moral recognition. These perspectives converge on a common problem: the relationship between differentiated contribution and shared achievement. They also provide a way to connect discussions of national continuity with ordinary productive practices, without assuming that continuity means the absence of historical change.

The institutional conditions require particular attention. Equal participation, protection of legitimate rights, fair exchange, accessible public services, and credible dispute resolution influence whether economic connection supports durable cooperation. The argument does not suggest that moral exhortation can replace these arrangements. Nor should the spirit of labor be used to classify some communities as inherently diligent and others as deficient. Such judgments would undermine the relational approach. A stronger analysis examines how opportunities and recognition are organized and how people from different backgrounds can contribute to and benefit from collective development.

Further empirical work should compare settings in which exchange produces different degrees of social connection. Interviews, observation, and the analysis of organizational records could

trace entry into work, repeated cooperation, dispute handling, skill transmission, and participation beyond the workplace. Longitudinal evidence would be particularly useful for distinguishing an initial commercial encounter from a durable relationship. Investigators should also examine workers' own understandings of contribution and belonging. Such research would test the proposed mechanisms rather than simply collect favorable examples. The present article supplies an analytical framework, not numerical estimates or newly collected findings.

The proposed sequence also suggests distinct indicators. Dependence on goods or skills concerns the material relationship; repeated dealings concern continuity; joint problem solving concerns cooperation; participation in common institutions concerns social extension; and accounts acknowledging others' contributions concern recognition. These should not be merged into a single measure of integration without justification. A setting may show strong commercial dependence but limited social participation, or extensive personal contact but little recognition of shared contributions. Comparing such configurations would reveal where the connections proposed here hold and where additional explanations are necessary. It would also make the framework open to revision through evidence.

## **8. Conclusion**

The labor of all ethnic groups contributes to the Chinese nation's achievements through relationships that extend beyond a particular task or locality. Continuing work keeps productive capacities available to later generations. Exchange allows products made in different settings to enter other people's livelihoods, establishing economic connections that can develop into cooperation and wider social participation. This is the material basis on which the article connects labor with interethnic interactions, exchanges, and integration. The connection requires attention to its institutional conditions; neither the circulation of a good nor the assertion of a shared achievement explains the entire process.

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The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

## **Ethics Statement**

Not applicable.

## **Data Availability**

The data supporting this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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