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ETHNICITY AND URBAN RENEWAL IN HUI NEIGHBORHOODS

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Abstract

Though much of the international attention given to China's ethnic politics focuses on minority groups' resistance to the Chinese state, relations between the state and ethnic Hui Muslims are not marked by resistance, separatism, or violence. Why don't the Hui rebel? This study investigates China's ethnic politics by examining the politics of Hui identity in "quiet times" outside of the moments of activated ethnic salience which are frequently the subject of studies on ethnic politics. To do so, it will utilize the theoretical framework of everyday ethnicity to examine how daily practices maintain ethnic boundaries in Hui enclave communities undergoing of urbanization. I find that in the context of urbanization, interactions between groups of Hui from different regions, classes, levels of education, professions, and religious orientations raise the salience of intragroup boundaries, as these groups articulate different understandings of which daily practices define the boundaries of Hui identity. These processes renew contestation of Hui identity, and create a multiplicity of definitions of Huiness. The resulting intra-ethnic debate minimizes resistance to the state itself, as potential inter-ethnic conflict is effectively defused by way of continuous intra-ethnic boundary contestation. Thus, by focusing contention on internal boundaries, the state is able to exert control and effectively manage ethnic politics.

1. Introduction: Modernization and Ethnicity in Urban China—A Case Study of Hui identity

On a gray, cold day in late November in Jinan's Hui Quarter, I sat and watched out the window as snowflakes floated to the ground and onto the street in front of the small shop owned by my respondent, a local Hui Muslim businessman in his 50s. Wisps of steam swirled up from the cup of strong, green tea he handed me. As I took a long sip from the piping hot cup, he opined about the future of the neighborhood. Waving his arm out in the direction of the massive, 300-meter-tall, tower of the recently completed *Lüdi* Center (绿地广场) that stood just across the street from the Hui Quarter's (*Huimin Xiaoqu*, 回民小区) entrance, he lamented the changes that would be imminently be visited upon the neighborhood. He remarked, "the government feels that this neighborhood is too *luan* (乱, chaotic). They're going to build new *gaolou* (高楼, tower-style apartment buildings)." He was not the first to make such claims. Other residents with whom I spoke in my nearly two months in Jinan made similar pronouncements about the fate of the neighborhood. Following up, I inquired of him, "So, what will happen to the residents of the neighborhood?" In a resigned tone, he answered, "Some residents will be able to come back, but the prices for apartments will be higher. Some won't be able to afford it. They'll have to go somewhere else. For instance, those migrant Hui from *Xibei* (西北, colloquial term for Northwest China) will just go home. Others will move farther away and the Muslim quarter will get smaller." We continued to sit and watch the snow fall. I posed yet another follow-up question. "How will this change the neighborhood?" I asked. In reply, he thoroughly described the centrality of

the mosque to community life, and the changes that moving the community away from the place of worship would bring:

For we Muslims, it's best to live near a mosque. But if the government wants to chai qian (拆迁, literally, "demolish and replace", a style of urban renewal), you can't count on that. There's nothing to do about it; it's inescapable. We don't want to agree to leave, but there's nothing that can be done. If the government wants to demolish the houses there's nothing that can be done. We'll have to move. But for us, it's different. Living near to the mosque is important. You can go to pray easily; you can buy halal meat. It's easier. But If we can't afford the new apartments we'll have to leave and more farther away from the mosque. Han don't understand this.¹

Elsewhere, in ethnic minority enclaves throughout China, such dramatic programs of urbanization frequently arouse distrust, scorn, and resistance. Harrell note, throughout China's history, the state used projects of urbanization that moved people and altered landscapes as part of a mission of assimilation which it saw as "civilizing."² In many ethnic Uyghur, Tibetan, and Mongolian communities, the policies which promote the demolition of enclave neighborhoods and the influx of migrants into the community provoke fears of cultural erasure, and often serve as flashpoints for solidifying ethnic consciousness in resistance against the state. Such grievances lie at the heart of the ethnic riots in Lhasa in 2008, Urumqi in 2009, and Xilingol in 2011.³

¹ Interview, JN43112415

² Stevan Harrell, "Introduction: Civilizing Projects and the Reaction to Them," in *Cultural Encounters on China's Ethnic Frontiers*, ed. Stevan Harrell (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1996), 3–36.

³ June Dreyer Teufel, "China's Vulnerability to Minority Separatism," *Asian Affairs: An American Review* 32 (July 2005): 69–86, doi:10.3200/AAFS.32.2.69-86; Blaine Kaltman, *Under the Heel of the Dragon: Islam, Racism, Crime, and the Uighur in China*, 1 edition (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2007); Elizabeth Van Wie Davis, "Uyghur Muslim Ethnic Separatism in Xinjiang, China," *Asian Affairs: An American Review* 35, no. 1 (April 1, 2008): 15–30, doi:10.3200/AAFS.35.1.15-30; Colin Mackerras, "Tibetans, Uyghurs and Multinational 'China': Han-Minority Relations and

The residents of Jinan's Hui Quarter, however, offered no inclinations toward such active resistance. Many residents expressed a sense of inevitability about the fate of the neighborhood. Many cited the government's intentions to develop the Hui Quarter, which stands at the heart of the "Old City" (老城区, "Old City"), as part of a broader project of revitalization for the city center.⁴ As road-widening began along *Gongqingtuan lu* (共青团路) on the north side of the Hui Quarter in early November of 2015, one woman who served as an *ahong* (阿訇, imam) at the local women's mosque remarked that further demolition would probably begin "within the next five years." When asked if she was sure, she remarked, "It's not totally certain, but it's been planned."⁵ Some residents even welcomed the changes, claiming it would improve the quality of life in the neighborhood. Speaking of the new buildings to be built on site of the neighborhood, a Hui restaurateur in his 60s remarked, "they're obviously an improvement for people's lives aren't they? I think they're fine."⁶ Beyond Jinan, the Hui (a Chinese-speaking minority, distinguished from Han Chinese almost solely on the basis of their Islamic faith, and often referred to as "Chinese Muslims"), stand in

State Legitimation," in *Chinese Politics: State, Society and the Market*, ed. Peter Hays Gries and Stanley Rosen (New York, NY: Routledge, 2010), 222–42; James Leibold, "Ethnic Policy in China: Is Reform Inevitable?," *Policy Studies.*, no. 68 (2013): 1–14; Åshild Kolås, "Degradation Discourse and Green Governmentality in the Xilinguole Grasslands of Inner Mongolia," *Development and Change* 45, no. 2 (March 1, 2014): 308–28, doi:10.1111/dech.12077; Isabelle Côté, "The Enemies Within: Targeting Han Chinese and Hui Minorities in Xinjiang," *Asian Ethnicity* 16, no. 2 (April 3, 2015): 136–51, doi:10.1080/14631369.2015.1003688.

⁴ Interviews JN17100615, JN21101215, JN40111415, JN54120715

⁵ Interview, JN54120715

⁶ Interview, JN55120815.

contrast to their Tibetan and Uyghur counterparts. Despite a history of Hui uprisings in the 18th and 19th centuries, no prominent overtly separatist groups exist in the contemporary Hui community. Rather, both China's domestic media, and international news outlets frequently invoke the Hui as examples of China's "other", less restive, "peaceful" Muslims, often painting the Hui as part of a dichotomy in contrast to their Uyghur co-religionists.⁷ Too often, however, these accounts attribute these differences solely to the actions of the state, and fail to fully examine Hui communities themselves. Such an oversight leaves open the important question of why resistance is less common in Hui communities. Put simply, why don't the Hui rebel?

This study examines this question by exploring the politics of Hui identity in "quiet times" outside of the moments of contentiousness and resistance which are frequently the subject of studies on ethnic politics. To do so, it will examine the process of ethnic boundary formation in Hui communities in the context of urbanization. I find that in the context of urbanization, interactions between groups of Hui from different regions, classes, levels of education, professions, and religious orientations re-open the contestation of Hui identity as these groups articulate different understandings of which daily practices define the boundaries of Hui identity, and what level of importance which ought to be assigned to observing them. Despite the ruling Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) attempts to harden the boundaries of ethnic Hui identity around a single, politically correct, state-sanctioned form, such renewed contestation creates a

⁷ Andrew Jacobs, "Light Government Touch Lets China's Hui Practice Islam in the Open," *The New York Times*, February 1, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/02/world/asia/china-islam-hui-ningxia.html>; "The Hui: China's Other Muslims," *The Economist*, October 8, 2016.

multiplicity of definitions of Hui identity, and increases the salience of internal boundary markers. Though the state fails to control and limit the expression of ethnic identity, the resulting intra-ethnic debate minimizes resistance to the state itself, as potential inter-ethnic conflict is effectively defused by way of continuous intra-ethnic boundary contestation.

Understanding these dynamics requires an in-depth examination of how ethnic politics unfolds in “quiet times,” –those moments outside of activated ethnic consciousness, mobilization, or resistance. Focusing solely on moments of ethnic minority resistance to the state and its policies paints a picture of ethnic politics which overlooks those instances where states—especially those with authoritarian governments—successfully exert control over the management of ethnic politics. Further, examining only cases of activated ethnic resistance, or contentious ethnic politics risks reifying or essentializing ethnic identity. Viewing both the state, and ethnic minority groups as monolithic actors misses important opportunities to understand how intragroup differences may exert a profound influence on the course of ethnic politics. Examining quiet politics provides an important window into the daily operation of ethnicity in authoritarian contexts.

Examining everyday ethnicity provides a way forward for understanding ethnic politics in the context of authoritarian states. By focusing on daily habits and practices rather than moments of resistance or mobilization, and examining ethnic politics from a popular rather than elite perspective, everyday ethnicity allows for the observation of the dynamics of non-contentious ethnic politics. Drawing on the insights of the growing body of scholarship on everyday ethnicity, this study attempts to fill these important

gaps in the literature on ethnic politics and state-society relations. It will assess how policies of the state influence the ethnic significance of ordinary practices and daily habits, and thus impact processes of ethnic boundary formation and maintenance. Examining the everyday politics of ethnic Hui communities in the context of China's rapid urbanization will allow for further theoretical insights on the politics of ethnicity in quiet times. The remainder of this chapter will lay out a study of everyday ethnicity in the context of urban renewal in Hui communities. It will begin with an introduction to the Hui, and to the case sites selected for fieldwork. Then, it will provide a brief review of the literature on everyday ethnic politics, and explain how everyday ethnicity helps to better illuminate the politics of ethnicity in "quiet times." Next it will briefly examine why urbanization provides an ideal background against which to study everyday politics, and articulate a methodological approach for studying everyday ethnicity in this context. Lastly, the chapter will provide a brief summary of the rest of the study.

Quiet politics among China's Familiar Strangers: The case of the Hui

The Hui present an ideal case for examining the ethnic politics in quiet times. Unlike the more publicized Uyghur and Tibetan cases, where active separatist movements heighten the salience of ethnic difference and reify and harden boundaries between minority groups and the majority Han, an examination of the Hui case allows for examination of subtler political processes. In fact, the absence of a major Hui

separatist movement, along with the sociocultural heterogeneity of the Hui community, provides an opportunity to break new ground in the study of ethnic politics.

One of China's largest ethnic minority groups, the Hui are often the most prevalent minority group in the Han-dominated, eastern, coastal regions of the country. The 1990 census indicated a total Hui population of over 8.6 million dispersed throughout China.⁸ Several aspects of Hui identity mark the group as notably different from other groups designated as nationality minorities in China. Dru Gladney remarks, "The Hui are unique among the fifty-six recognized nationalities in China in that they are the only one for which religion (Islam) is the sole unifying criterion of identity."⁹ Indeed, amongst the ten different Islamic minority groups recognized by the Chinese government¹⁰ most possess some other unifying marker of identity, such as language, which differentiates them from the majority Han Chinese. The status of the Hui as a Chinese-speaking ethnicity (*hanyu minzu*, 汉语民族)—a quality they share with only the majority Han—also sets them apart from the rest of China's minority groups.¹¹

The Chinese Communist Party's ethnic propaganda frequently exhorts the Hui model patriots, whose contributions to the construction of the current Chinese state evidences their devotion to the unity of all of China's nationalities. The Chinese state frequently invokes historical examples, like that of Zheng He, the legendary Muslim admiral of the Ming Dynasty who sailed voyages on the Indian Ocean, as testament to

⁸ Chuanbin Zhou and Xuefeng Ma, *Development and Decline of Beijing's Hui Muslim Community* (Chiang Mai, Thailand: Silkworm Books, 2009).

⁹ Michael Dillon, *China's Muslim Hui Community: Migration, Settlement and Sects* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 1999), 154; Dru C. Gladney, "Islam in China: Beijing's Hui and Uighur Challenge," *Global Dialogue* 9, no. 1/2 (Winter 2007): 92.

¹⁰ For a list of Islamic populations in China, see; Zhou and Ma, p. 1

¹¹ Gladney, "Islam in China," 92–94.

the longstanding devotion of the Hui. Hui mosques throughout the country contain state propaganda imploring the Hui to “*ai guo, ai jiao*” (爱国爱教, “love your country, love your faith”), rhetorically placing devotion to the state on equal footing with devotion to Islam. As a result, many Han regard the Hui as essentially assimilated. This perceived closeness of the Hui to the state, and the notion that the Hui receive favorable treatment by the state as a reward, earns scorn among others of their co-religionists. Isabelle Côté remarks that Uyghurs frequently use the word “watermelon” as a slur against the Hui, maintaining that the Hui are “green (i.e., Muslim) on the outside but red (i.e., communist) on the inside,” and implying their loyalties lie first and foremost with the state rather than with Islam.¹²

Such depictions of the Hui sweep aside a much more complicated historical picture. Throughout the 19th century, sectarian conflicts between Hui groups led to violent unrest in both the northwest and southwest, ultimately resulting in forceful, bloody suppression by the armies of the ruling Qing Dynasty.¹³ More recently, the Shadian Incident of 1975 saw the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) clash with Hui in southwestern Yunnan province in a bloody conflict that left hundreds dead.¹⁴ In fact, despite the large degree to which they have been assimilated into Chinese society, as

¹² Côté, “The Enemies Within.”

¹³ For further discussion of these events, see; Jonathan N. Lipman, *Familiar Strangers: A History of Muslims in Northwest China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1998); Hodong Kim, *Holy War in China: The Muslim Rebellion and State in Chinese Central Asia, 1864-1877* (Stanford University Press, 2004); David G. Atwill, *The Chinese Sultanate: Islam, Ethnicity, and the Panthay Rebellion in Southwest China, 1856-1873* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2005).

¹⁴ Alice Su, “Harmony and Martyrdom Among China’s Hui Muslims,” *The New Yorker*, June 6, 2016, <http://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/harmony-and-martyrdom-among-chinas-hui-muslims>.

descendants of foreign Muslims the Hui have never been truly accepted as countrymen by their Han counterparts. Instead, the group's arrival at their current designation as "Hui" (*huizu*, 回族) with the implied meaning of "Chinese Muslims," is the final product of a cultural evolution which began with the Hui being conceived of as foreigners (*fanke*, 番客). Now, as Lipman contends, the Hui have become "familiar strangers," an institutionalized "other".¹⁵

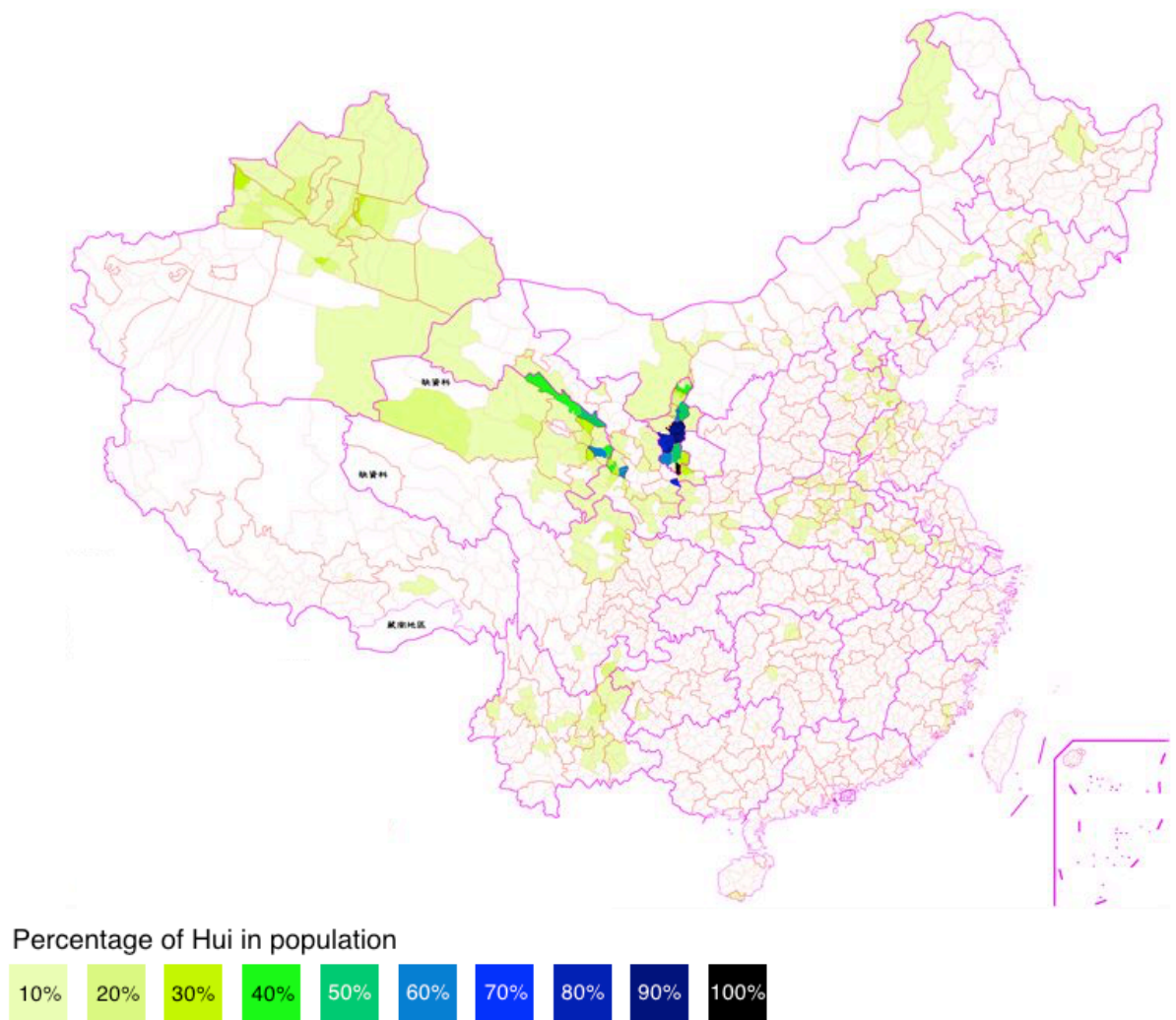
The state's picture of the Hui as happily integrated patriots distorts not just understandings of the complicated past, but also presents a skewed portrait of the present by presenting Hui culture as if it were monolithic. Beyond this whitewashing of the past, such depictions of the Hui neglect the high levels of sociocultural diversity within the Hui community, itself. Despite sharing a common Islamic faith, Hui communities throughout China are marked as much by their differences as their similarities. Unlike others of China's ethnic minority groups, the Hui do not share a common territorial homeland. As descendants of Muslims who blended into Chinese society through generations of intermarriage, Hui claim ancestry from a number of different places. Lipman describes several waves of Muslim arrival in China, with some arriving at port cities in eastern China via sea trading routes from Persia and the Arabian Peninsula, and others coming into western China from Central Asia on the trade routes of the ancient Silk Road. Others still settled in China as part of the conquering armies of the Mongol Yuan dynasty.¹⁶ Because of these disparate points of origin, Hui communities may be found throughout China. Though the northwest, in

¹⁵ Lipman, *Familiar Strangers*, 38.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 25–57.

particular the provinces of Qinghai and Gansu and the Autonomous Regions of Ningxia and Xinjiang, hold the most numerous populations, Hui communities exist in all corners of the country. Figure 1.1 below illustrates the dispersal of Hui throughout China. Further, such diverse origins lead to a wide array of cultural practices being incorporated into Hui lifestyles.

Figure 1.1: Distribution of Hui Population Throughout China¹⁷



¹⁷ According to “Sixth National Population Census of the People’s Republic of China, 2010,” Census (Beijing: National Bureau of Statistics of the People’s Republic of China, 2013).

Other markers of division between Hui communities revolve around the use of a common language. Some Hui theologians attempted to rectify Islam with Chinese culture by producing a body of Islamic texts in Chinese translation, and by explaining Islamic theology in Confucian or Daoist terms.¹⁸ Though they are ostensibly a *hanyu minzu* who speak the local dialect of Chinese, pockets of Tibetan and Mongolian speaking Hui exist in small communities western China. Hillman's study of a Hui community in the northwestern part of Yunnan rediscovering their Islamic roots examined a group of thoroughly Tibetanized Hui who had taken Tibetan surnames, wore Tibetan clothes, and spoke a Tibetan dialect.¹⁹ Further, sectarian differences divide Hui communities. In Linxia Hui Autonomous Prefecture in southern Gansu, Hui belong to a plethora of different Sufi lineages, while only a few hours away in Xining, the majority of Hui identify as belonging to the strictly non-Sufi, Yihewani (伊赫瓦尼, *Ikhwan*) sect.

As a result Hui from different locations may share few common practices outside of a basic Islamic heritage. Gladney's 1991 analysis of four Hui communities from disparate regions of the country illustrates these differences quite clearly. While the northwestern Hui communities Gladney visited observed regular prayer, and maintained Islamic practices like reading the Qur'an in Arabic, the communities he visited in the southeast of China knew next to nothing of their Islamic heritage, save for

¹⁸ Zvi Ben-Dor Benite, *The Dao of Muhammad: A Cultural History of Muslims in Late Imperial China*, Harvard East Asian Monographs 248 (Cambridge, MA. ; London: Published by the Harvard University Asia Center : Distributed by Harvard University Press, 2005).

¹⁹ Ben Hillman, "The Rise of the Community in Rural China: Village Politics, Cultural Identity and Religious Revival in a Hui Hamlet," *China Journal*, no. 51 (2004): 53–73.

the religion's prohibition on consuming pork.²⁰ Such great differences in understanding what it means to be Hui are illustrative of the great diversity of Hui.

Case Selection: Examining everyday ethnic practices in urban Hui enclaves

Hui neighborhoods provide an ideal case for studying the impact of daily ethnic politics in the context of urbanization because, in many Chinese cities, Hui neighborhoods function as important loci of interaction and boundary setting for the group. The neighborhood itself provides the group with social resources necessary for the reproduction of the imagined community. Close proximity to other group members imparts a sense of comfort and convenience to those who reside in such communities. In interviews in amongst members of the Hui community in Lanzhou, interviewees informed Zang Xiaowei that they felt it was “easier to live next to co-ethnic neighbours than next to Han neighbours.”²¹

The proliferation of Hui enclaves in cities occurs largely to accommodate the observance of Islamic lifestyle habits. Gladney's account of the Hui community on Niu Jie (牛街, Oxen Street) in Beijing found that the concentration of co-ethnics within the same neighborhood enabled Beijing's Hui community to maintain their Islamic identity by keeping a halal diet, opening business which sold ethnic goods, find partners from

²⁰ Dru C. Gladney, *Muslim Chinese: Ethnic Nationalism in the People's Republic*, Harvard East Asian Monographs 149 (Cambridge, Mass: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University : Distributed by Harvard University Press, 1991).

²¹ Xiaowei Zang, “Ethnic Differences in Neighbourly Relations in Urban China,” *Asian Ethnicity* 7, no. 2 (June 2006): 197, doi:10.1080/14631360600736298.

within the group with which to marry, and send their children to Islamic schools.²² The streets adjacent to Niu Jie Mosque—the largest and most famous mosque in Beijing—are lined with halal grocers, department stores, bakeries and restaurants, reinforcing the importance that ethnicity plays in resident’s daily lives.²³

Similarly, Suzette Cooke’s examination of the Hui community of Xining, provincial capital of Qinghai province, reports that the city’s Hui enclave allows for members of the group to continue the groups traditional role as traders and entrepreneurs, and had spawned a number of Hui restaurants, hostels, and transportation businesses.²⁴ Such “ethnopreneurship”²⁵ is not limited to Xining. The popularity of the Islamic noodle dishes served in Islamic, *halal* restaurants is mark of incredibly successful branding on the part of the Hui, and a diffusion of Hui culture into mainstream Chinese society.²⁶ Michael Dillon notes that the typical green signs adorned with Chinese Islamic calligraphy used by Hui restaurants make them instantly recognizable throughout China.²⁷ Even in heavily Han Chinese eastern cities, like Shandong province’s capital, Jinan, Hui neighborhoods are often clearly distinguished by their ethnic businesses and places of association. Jinan’s Muslim Quarter (known locally as the 回民小区, *huimin xiaoqu*) encircles the Great Southern Mosque (*Jinan qingzhen Nandasi*, 济南清真南大寺), one of the oldest and most important in East

²² Gladney, *Muslim Chinese*, 171–228.

²³ Field observations, August 2013.

²⁴ Suzette Cooke, “Surviving State and Society in Northwest China: The Hui Experience in Qinghai Province under the PRC,” *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 28, no. 3 (December 2008): 401–20, doi:10.1080/13602000802548060.

²⁵ I borrow this phrase from John Comaroff and Jean Comaroff’s outstanding *Ethnicity, Inc.*; See Comaroff and Comaroff (2009)

²⁶ Gladney, *Muslim Chinese*, 173.

²⁷ Dillon, *China’s Muslim Hui Community*, 153.

China. the local populace knows the neighborhood mostly as a place to eat barbecued mutton. Indeed, Jinan’s taxi drivers, when asked to transport passengers to the neighborhood, frequently confirm that passengers want to go to “the place where you can eat barbecue.”²⁸ Cooke concludes that these enclaves, “project a strong sense of Hui self-identity on-site,” and provide a space wherein the Hui may “maintain their social values and practices,” thus making them ideal locations in which to study the politics of everyday ethnic practices.²⁹

I took careful steps to ensure my fieldwork sampled a broadly representative and theoretically relevant collection of Hui communities. I conducted in-depth case studies in four cities—Beijing, Jinan, Xining, and Yinchuan—over the course of a year between July 2015 and July 2016. These sites were chosen with care and precision following preliminary field research conducted between July and August, 2014. In addition, observations were also conducted in Nanjing, Weizhou township in Tongxin County in Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, Linxia Hui Autonomous Prefecture in Gansu Province, and Xunhua Salar Autonomous County and Hualong Hui Autonomous County in Qinghai Province. In total, I conducted 152 semi-structured interviews (See Appendix A for details). These sites were selected because they each meet a set of common criteria. Each city is a provincial capital or province-level municipality, and thus may be considered urban centers. Further, in each community, the Hui have a strong historical presence and are the second most populous ethnic group behind the

²⁸ Field observations, August 2009-March 2011; cab drivers often referred to the neighborhood as “吃烧烤的地方(*chi shaokao de defang*).”

²⁹ Cooke, “Surviving State and Society in Northwest China,” 414–16.

majority Han.³⁰ Additionally, each city is home to a notable and important mosque around which the Hui community has traditionally been centered.³¹

These cases present variation in several key aspects. First, the selected cases vary in terms of demographic configuration, falling into one of three categories: isolated Hui communities, Titular Autonomous Hui communities, and multi-ethnic communities. Isolated communities are those in which the Hui represent the only substantial minority ethnic group, and comprise less than 5% of the total population. In these communities, Hui culture is implicitly held up as other against the majority Han culture, and Hui cultural visibility remains low. In Titular Autonomous communities, however, the state affords Hui limited ability to make preferential policies on the basis of ethnicity. In these communities, the state affords prominence of place for public (if superficial) displays of Hui culture, privileging Hui identity vis-à-vis other groups, especially the Han. In Multiethnic communities where the Hui are one two or more ethnic minority groups that comprise greater than 5% of the total population, contrasts are drawn not just between Hui and Han, but between Hui and other ethnic groups. In these communities, the Hui may be group in with others as a part of a highly visible, broadly construed, generalized “minority” in opposition to the majority Han. The cases selected for study fall in to one of these three categories.

In Beijing, the heart of Hui community lies on Niu Jie.³² The neighborhood attracts Hui from throughout China who have come to the capital to conduct business,

³⁰ “Sixth National Population Census of the People’s Republic of China, 2010.”

³¹ Mosques in these communities include Beijing’s Niu Jie Mosuqe, Jinan’s Great Southern Mosque, the Great Mosque at Najiahu, and Xining’s Dongguan Mosque.

³² Jingyu Liang, *Niu Jie: Yi Ge Cheng Shi Hui Zu She Qu de Bian Qian (Niu Jie: Changes in an Urban Hui Neighborhood)*, 1st ed., Min Zu Xue Yu She Hui Xue Bo Shi

dagong (to do temporary work, 打工), or work in the government. Other historically Hui communities like Ma Dian and Douban Hutong declined in recent decades as residents moved away in the wake of urban redevelopment. Respondents in these neighborhoods note that the axis of Beijing's Hui community now tilts strongly in the direction of Niu Jie.³³ Likewise, in Jinan, the Hui Quarter (*Huimin Xiaoqu*, 回民小区) represents the city's only substantial, concentrate, ethnic minority population center. Historically additional pockets of Hui residences stood in Dikou Zhuang in the northwest of the city, but development undertaken in the last 30 years dispersed these populations.³⁴ Though small pockets of ethnic minorities exist throughout the city, the ethnic majority Han comprise the overwhelming majority of the city's population.³⁵ As such, the concentrated concentrated Hui on enclaves in Niu Jie in Beijing and the Huimin Xiaoqu in Jinan stand in isolation as islands of ethnic difference in a sea of traditional Han culture. In Jinan, a far less cosmopolitan city than the national capital, Beijing, the Hui Quarter provides the only space in which majority Han residents encounter non-Han culture.

In Yinchuan, by contrast, the Hui comprise roughly one third (36.8%) of the total population.³⁶ As the capital city of Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, the Hui ostensibly retain some rights self-governance, and to set some policy. In in minority

Wen Ku (Beijing: Zhong Yang Min Zu Da Xue Chu Ban She, 2006); Zhou and Ma, *Development and Decline of Beijing's Hui Muslim Community*.

³³ Interviews: BJ0308115, BJ07090615, BJ14092415

³⁴ Interview, JN26101915

³⁵ Jinan Municipal People's Government, "Population of Jinan," *Jinan Shi Renmin Zhengfu Men Hu Wang Zhan (The Official Website of the Jinan Municipal People's Government)*, August 22, 2015, <http://english.jinan.gov.cn/col/col2235/index.html>.

³⁶ "Sixth National Population Census of the People's Republic of China, 2010."

cadres cooperating in the creation of policies that would accommodate local ethnic or religious tradition. Rather, critics assert, minority cadres are expected to tow the party line. Bulag contends that the relationship between these minority cadres and the central government reflects the state's need for constant affirmation of loyalty and patriotism from the periphery. Such relationships, Bulag argues, present an example of "centripetalism", characterized by Bulag as "a political desire for a gravitational orientation from the margin to the centre."³⁷ Thus, Yinchuan's autonomous status allows the city to act as a showcase for Hui culture. Visible markers of Hui identity in the form of monuments or street signs are dispersed throughout the city, but often in superficial, patriotic ways.

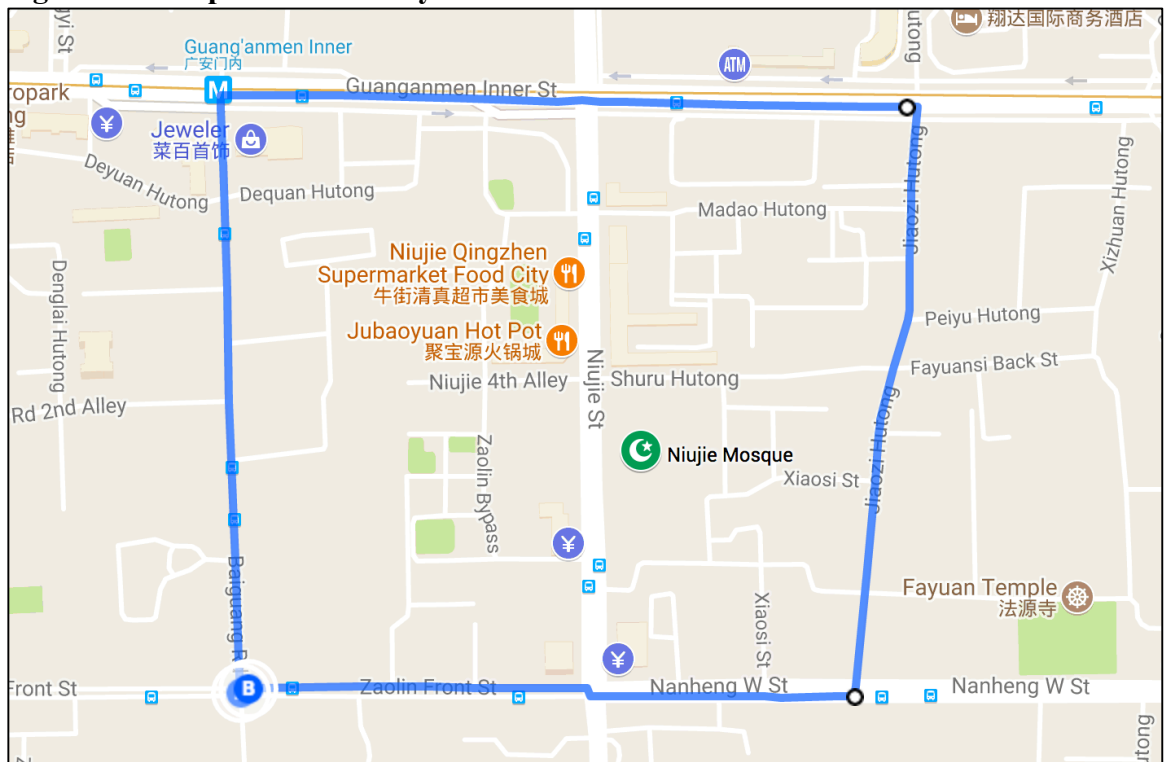
Farther west, in Xining, the dynamics of interethnic relations become more complicated, as a multiplicity of ethnic groups stand in contrast to the Han majority. Perdue notes that the diversity and economic vitality of trade-route cities in the northwest, like Xining, ensured that the region "was not a remote, isolated region but the crossroads of the Eurasian continent, and it had a decisive impact on all the settled societies around it."³⁸ Thus, while the interethnic relations in Jinan and Yinchuan primarily comprise interactions between Han and Hui, Xining presents an ethnic mosaic with many different components, creating a more complex and diverse picture. In addition to its sizable Hui community, Xining is also home to communities of the Tibetan, Salar, and Tu (Mongour) ethnicities, as well as the majority Han. The city's

³⁷ Uradyn E. Bulag, "Seeing Like a Minority: Political Tourism and the Struggle for Recognition in China," *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs* 41, no. 4 (2013): 135.

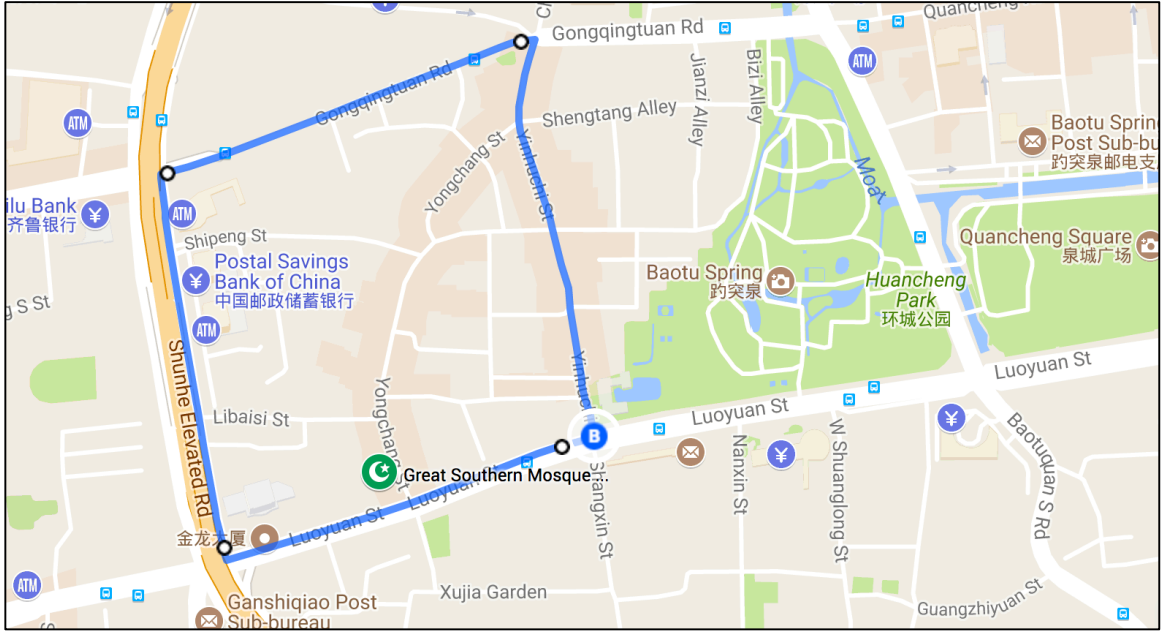
³⁸ Peter C. Perdue, *China Marches West: The Qing Conquest of Central Eurasia* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005), 1–11.

eastern Chengdong District not only contains a prominent Hui Quarter centered around the Dongguan Mosque, but is also home to a small Tibetan enclave, and Qinghai Nationalities University.

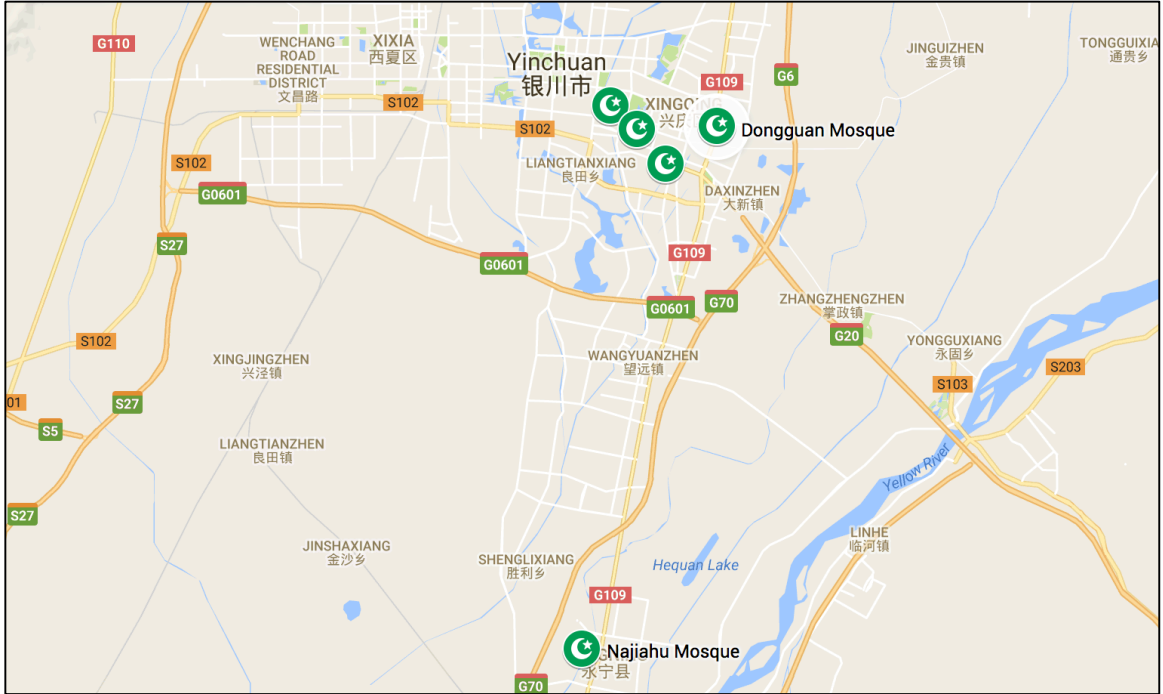
Figure 1.2: Maps of Case Study Sites



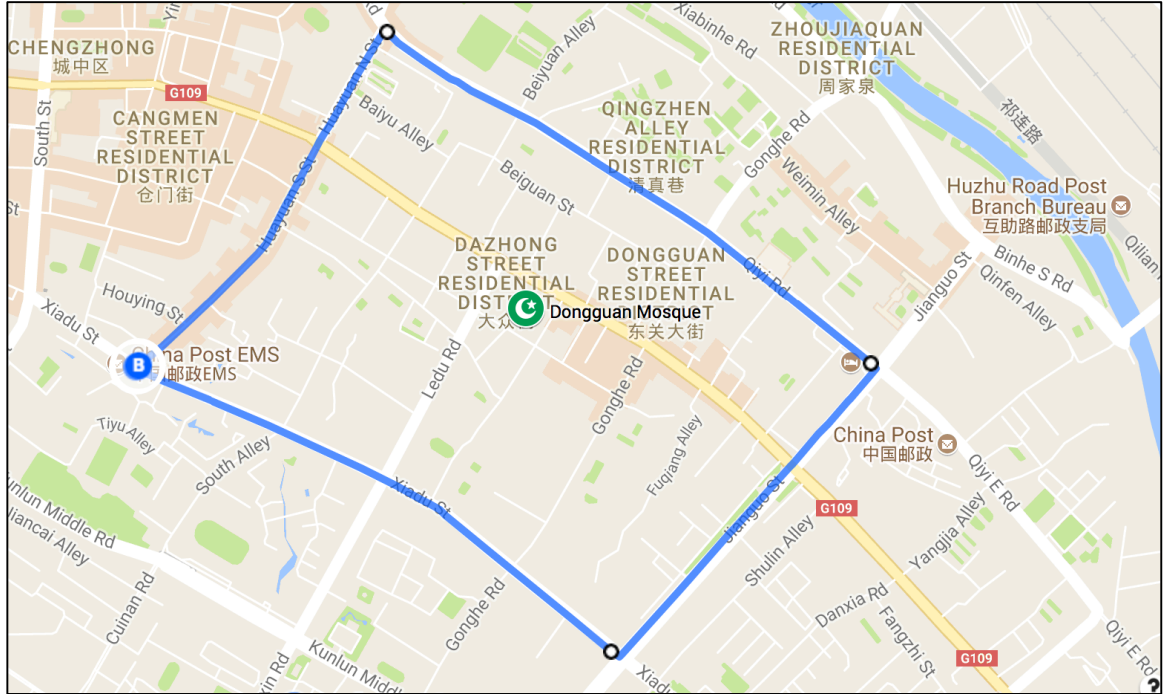
Beijing's Niu Jie (牛街) Community



Jinan's Hui Quarter (回民小区, *Huimin Xiaoqu*)



Yinchuan and Najiahu



Xining’s Hui Quarter in ChengDong District (城东区)

In addition to demographic diversity, the selected case sites also provide substantial geographic variation between east and west China. Historically, Chinese ruling dynasties regarded the west as not just peripheral in physical distance from the coastal provinces, but also as culturally distant. Lipman explains, “the geographic progression of core:periphery:steppe forms the model for Han cultural perceptions that divide the world into civilized:partially-civilized:uncivilized zones. Civilization, of course, is measured by degree of adherence to Han ways.” Cities in the peripheral west, Lipman notes, became important sites for the extension of Chinese civilization and interaction with non-Chinese others. Due to proximity and frequent interactions on these cultural frontiers, Lipman remarks, “only the theoretical boundary between Han and non-Han can be drawn in the metropolitan conceptions of the elite in distant

cities.”³⁹ Thus, east and west are still often read, even in contemporary China, as markers for closeness to Chinese civilization. The case sites exhibit a range from cities in China’s eastern heartland to cities in the western periphery.

The cases of Jinan and Beijing are eastern Chinese cities. The earliest of China’s ruling dynasties, and many of the most frequently cited touchstones of traditional Chinese culture traces their origins to the lower reaches of the Yellow River, which flows to the north of Jinan. Shandong province, of which Jinan is capital, plays a particularly important role in traditional Chinese culture as home to the sacred Daoist mountain, Taishan, and the birthplace of Confucius. The area surrounding Henan and western Shandong has therefore long been seen as the heart of Huaxia (华夏), or Chinese civilization.⁴⁰ More recently, the province grew rapidly during the last thirty years, becoming one of the country’s most economically developed, wealthy, and cosmopolitan. Bowland-Crewe and Lea argue that in the years since the beginning of *Gaige Kaifang* (改革开放, Reform and Opening) in 1978, Shandong has “become one of the more progressive provinces of China.”⁴¹ Though the city’s population is overwhelmingly Han, Jinan is also home to a longstanding Hui community, and, at the

³⁹ Jonathan N. Lipman, “Ethnicity and Politics in Republican China: The Ma Family Warlords of Gansu,” *Modern China* 10, no. 3 (1984): 285–316.

⁴⁰ For further description of geography and Chinese conceptions of civilization, see; John King Fairbank and Merle Goldman, *China: A New History, Second Enlarged Edition*, 2nd Revised & enlarged edition (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press, 2006), 1–23.

⁴¹ Tara Boland-Crewe and David Lea, *The Territories of the People’s Republic of China*. (London: Europa Publications, 2002), 178, <http://www.tandfebooks.com/isbn/9781135356125>.

turn of the 20th century, produced important Islamic scholarship.⁴²

By contrast, Yinchuan is located in Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region between the central plains (中原, *Zhongyuan*) and the northwest (西北, *Xibei*). The city stands just inside the far western reaches of the Ming Dynasty Great Wall, close the beginning of the Mongolian steppe. As such, cultural interchange between China and Inner Asia defined the city's culture. Fairbank and Goldman observe that "Chinese culturalism arose from the difference in culture between China and the Inner Asian 'barbarians'," encountered on the northern and western borders.⁴³ As such cities like Yinchuan, located at the edges of the two cultural spheres, served as important centers of interchange. Boland-Crewe and Lea note the Hui Autonomous Region's unique position, "straddling the central area of Chinese civilization and the wild, nomadic north, as the Huang He (Yellow River) loops north beyond the Great Wall into the Nei Mongol (Inner Mongolia) desert."⁴⁴ Similarly, Garnaut's history of the introductions of the Jahriyya Sufi Islamic sect into China emphasizes Ningxia's role as, "the point of dialogue between the various communities and traditions, Communist and Chinese Muslim" that claim the region.⁴⁵

⁴² Huaizhong Yang and Zhen'gui Yu, eds., *Yisilan Yu Zhongguo Wenhua (Islam and Chinese Culture)*, 1st ed. (Yinchuan: Ningxia Renmin Chubanshe, 1995); Muzhi Yi, *Jinan Yisilan Jiao Lishi (Islamic History of Jinan)* (Beijing: Zhongguo Dang'an Chubanshe, 2006).

⁴³ Fairbank and Goldman, *China*, 25.

⁴⁴ Boland-Crewe and Lea, *The Territories of the People's Republic of China.*, 214.

⁴⁵ Jingyu Liang, *Niu Jie: Yi Ge Cheng Shi Hui Zu She Qu de Bian Qian (Niu Jie: Changes in an Urban Hui Neighborhood)*, 1st ed., Min Zu Xue Yu She Hui Xue Bo Shi Wen Ku (Beijing: Zhong Yang Min Zu Da Xue Chu Ban She, 2006); Zhou and Ma, *Development and Decline of Beijing's Hui Muslim Community*.

Xining, located in Qinghai province on the edge of Tibetan Plateau, falls in *Xibei*, China's geographic northwest. The region, which encompasses Qinghai, as well as Gansu and Xinjiang, traditionally sat at the edges of the Chinese civilizational and administrative sphere. Well into the Qing Dynasty, the Chinese understood the Ganqing (甘青, a colloquial portmanteau of Gansu-Qinghai) region in which Xining sit as a culturally alien border region. Perdue remarks that throughout much of its history the region sat at a locus point between empires and points of cultural influence. He remarks, "The bewildering fluctuations of a multitude of empires, each ruled by different peoples with different boundaries and institutions, demonstrated the great plasticity of the landscape."⁴⁶ Incorporation of the northwest occurred largely through conquest and annexation. Ma Haiyun argues, "The westward expansion of the Qing empire in the eighteenth century led to the radical redefinition of these regions as administratively part of 'China proper,' and thus the empire's interior territory, rather than part of the differently administered frontier."⁴⁷ Lipman notes that the Qing dynasty viewed the northwest as defined by "Rough wilderness, sparse population, lawlessness, distance from the affairs of the greater" and considered it "the outposts of its civilization."⁴⁸ Lipman observes that Han viewed these boundaries as cultural as well as geographic. He explains that in the northwest, "local variation within Chinese culture is muted, if not overwhelmed, by the fundamental contrast between sedentary agriculture and

⁴⁶ Perdue, *China Marches West*, 20.

⁴⁷ Haiyun Ma, "Fanhui or Huifan? Hanhui or Huimin?: Salar Ethnic Identification and Qing Administrative Transformation in Eighteenth-Century Gansu," *Late Imperial China* 29, no. 2 (December 21, 2008): 2, doi:10.1353/late.0.0015.

⁴⁸ Lipman, "Ethnicity and Politics in Republican China."

pastoral nomadism, between the cultures of Us and Them.”⁴⁹

Accordingly, the geographic range of these cases provides variation in physical landscape, and level of economic development, but also cultural proximity to “civilization” as historically defined by Han scholars and administrators. Figure 1.3 (below) shows these locations within China.



Figure 1.3: Location of Cases Within China

Providing variation on a number of dimensions such as the ones described above allows for a broadly representative, but contextually rich, nuanced account of how the processes of ethnic politics unfolds in the daily lives of residents in Hui enclaves in urban China, and how the processes of ethnic boundary setting are contested in the context of urbanization. Figure 1.4 below illustrates these characteristics and their variance across cases.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

Figure 1.4: Characteristics of case studies

Case	Geographic	Demographic	% Hui (of total population) ⁵⁰	Type of Urbanization
Beijing	East	Isolated	1.74%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>chai qian</i>
Jinan	East	Isolated	< 1%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>chai qian</i> • migration
Yinchuan	Central Plains/Northwest	Titular Autonomous	36.8%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • migration • city expansion
Xining	Northwest	Multiethnic	16.26%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>chai qian</i> • migration • city expansion

These case sites provide theoretically significant variation through which to observe ethnic politics. The variations in social demographics allow for an assessment of whether or not visibility and magnitude of ethnic minorities alters or changes the way in which the state treats minority ethnic actors, and how ethnic actors conduct themselves in relationship to the state. Further, the geographic variation in case sites not only controls for differences in regional culture in expression of ethnic identity, but also accounts for the cultural impact of the proximity of these sites to the traditional centers of authority and Chinese “civilization.” Accounting such differences allows for a full and nuanced picture of ethnic politics in Hui communities to emerge.

⁵⁰ According to “Sixth National Population Census of the People’s Republic of China, 2010.”

Before engaging in such an examination, however, an overview of the literature on ethnic politics is required. In particular, it is necessary to examine the emerging field of everyday ethnicity, and to explain how a focus on the politics of ethnicity in quiet times may better help explain how China exercises control over ethnic politics, and suppresses the potential for contentious politics in Hui communities.

Observing the politics of ethnicity in quiet times: a framework for studying everyday ethnicity

The canonical literature on ethnic politics leaves substantial gaps in understanding the interactions between the state and its institutions—particularly those with authoritarian governments—and ethnic actors in society. The established institutionalist literature emphasizes the ways that states institutionalize and codify ethnic boundaries.⁵¹ More recent institution-focused constructivist scholarship emphasizes the ways ethnic actors strategically select from a menu of identity repertoires defined in relation to institutionalized identity cleavages and their attendant resources, prestige, status, etc.⁵² While these approaches illustrate the importance of tools of the state, like the census, for defining ethnic boundaries, they fail to capture

⁵¹ John Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State*, 2nd ed (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994); Rogers Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany* (Harvard University Press, 1998); Anthony W. Marx, *Making Race and Nation : A Comparison of South Africa, the United States, and Brazil* (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Benedict R. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Revised ed. (London ; New York: Verso, 2006), 167–90; Evan S. Lieberman and Prerna Singh, “The Institutional Origins of Ethnic Violence,” *Comparative Politics* 45, no. 1 (October 1, 2012): 1–24, doi:10.5129/001041512802822860.

⁵² Kanchan Chandra, *Constructivist Theories of Ethnic Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

several crucial aspects of ethnic politics. First, they do little to explain the multitude of groups that do not gain institutional recognition, or the political significance of intra-group diversity that institutionalization elides. Further, they fail to fully explain how, absent interaction with the institutions of the state, actors become ethnic actors. As such these approaches offer little insight into the processes that define ethnic politics outside the highly regulated context of state institutionalism.

Constructivist works emphasize the ways that ethnicity is meaningful as a form of social closure or the production of groupness.⁵³ These approaches assign less importance to the way in which individuals strategically choose ethnic identity, but instead focus on the ways in which groups of individuals enact and reproduce ethnic boundaries to increase social inclusion, or to exclude those identified as “others.” Migdal remarks, “boundaries signify the point at which something becomes something else, at which the way things are done changes, at which “we” end and “they” begin.”⁵⁴ Indeed, while physical boundaries, and their impact on culture and identity formation, are often discussed, social boundaries are no less important in their influence on group formation.⁵⁵ Here again, however, the literature leaves open several areas for further

⁵³ Fredrik Barth, “Introduction,” in *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Cultural Difference*, ed. Fredrik Barth (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1969), 9–38; Rogers Brubaker, *Ethnicity Without Groups* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2004); Andreas Wimmer, *Ethnic Boundary Making: Institutions, Power, Networks* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

⁵⁴ Joel S Migdal, “Mental Maps and Virtual Checkpoints: Struggles to Construct and Maintain State and Social Boundaries,” in *Boundaries and Belonging: States and Societies in the Struggle to Shape Identities and Local Practices*, ed. Joel S Migdal (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

⁵⁵ For a more complete discussion of physical boundaries, see; John Agnew, *Place and Politics: Geographical Mediation of State and Society* (Boston: Allen and Unwin, 1987); David H. Kaplan and Wei Li, *Landscapes of the Ethnic Economy* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006); Hastings Donnan and Thomas M. Wilson, *Borders:*

examination. In observing the formation of ethnic boundaries, these studies tend to make the implicit contrast between minority groups and ethnic majorities. Frequently these discussions center on interactions between majority and minority that occur across institutionally reinforced differential of power. Thus, while these studies provide a great deal of insight in explaining how actors reproduce ethnic boundaries vis-à-vis others, they are similarly constrained by the context of institutionalism. Absent to a large degree in these overviews are any considerations of intragroup dynamics, and interactions that occur outside of the power dynamics of state institutions. In short, these studies have thus far not engaged discussions of how ethnic actors on a daily level outside the influence of state institutions, especially when ethnic minority actors principally deal with co-ethnics or other minorities.

Lastly, much of the literature on ethnic politics presumes a democratic, or semi-democratic setting in which ethnicity is politicized. A number of studies of ethnic politics examine how ethnicity may be mobilized through ethnic outbidding to ensure winning electoral coalitions.⁵⁶ Others still examine how cross-cutting ethnic cleavages or power-sharing arrangement contain such ethnic voter mobilization.⁵⁷ Even

Frontiers of Identity, Nation and State, 1 edition (Oxford: Bloomsbury Academic, 1999).

⁵⁶ Alvin Rabushka and Kenneth A. Shepsle, *Politics in Plural Societies: A Theory of Political Instability*, Merrill Political Science Series (Columbus, OH: Charles H. Merrill, 1972), 62–92; Dr Cathy Gormley-Heenan and Roger Macginty, “Ethnic Outbidding and Party Modernization: Understanding the Democratic Unionist Party’s Electoral Success in the Post-Agreement Environment,” *Ethnopolitics* 7, no. 1 (March 1, 2008): 43–61, doi:10.1080/17449050701846865.

⁵⁷ Kanchan Chandra, “Ethnic Parties and Democratic Stability,” *Perspectives on Politics* 3, no. 2 (2005): 235–52; Thad Dunning and Lauren Harrison, “Cross-Cutting Cleavages and Ethnic Voting: An Experimental Study of Cousinage in Mali,” *American Political Science Review* 104, no. 01 (February 2010): 21–39,

examinations of ethnic mobilization or ethnic patronage networks and resource distribution usually involve some discussion of ethnic competition through electoral mobilization.⁵⁸ These models tell us little about the ways that ethnic politics work in ‘normal’ authoritarian states, where ethnic competition may be constrained or monitored by the state, or altogether non-existent. What, then, may be surmised about ethnic politics in states without elections? In the absence of formal ethno-political mobilization, one is forced to turn to the ways that ethnicity is experienced on a daily basis and how these experiences are folded into a discourse about inter-ethnic relations as well as state-society relations

However, even the literature on state-society relations contains gaps. Especially in studies of state-society relations in authoritarian contexts, the vast preponderance of scholarship focuses on instances of activated, contentious politics. Even those accounts that do not discuss overt, noisy, protest, such as Scott’s classic overview of passive resistance, focus on the politics of conflict.⁵⁹ The vast literature on state-society relations in China offers numerous accounts of the politics of resistance. O’Brien and

doi:10.1017/S0003055409990311; Gormley-Heenan and Macginty, “Ethnic Outbidding and Party Modernization.”

⁵⁸ Robert H. Bates, “Ethnic Competition and Modernization in Contemporary Africa,” *Comparative Political Studies* 6, no. 4 (1974): 457–84; Joane Nagel and Susan Olzak, “Ethnic Mobilization in New and Old States: An Extension of the Competition Model Thematic Issue on Health and Illness: Controlling Deviant Doctors,” *Social Problems* 30 (1983 1982): 127–43; Raphael Franck and Ilia Rainer, “Does the Leader’s Ethnicity Matter? Ethnic Favoritism, Education, and Health in Sub-Saharan Africa,” *American Political Science Review* 102, no. 2 (2012): 294–325.

⁵⁹ Jim Scott, “Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance,” *Journal of Peasant Studies* 13, no. 2 (1986): 5–35, doi:10.1080/03066158608438289; James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*, Reprint edition (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987); James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*, Yale Agrarian Studies Series (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

Li's study of rightful resistance observes protestors' use of the language of the CCP regime to point out its failures of the regime to deliver on its own promises, and to highlight abusive or incorrect usage of state rhetoric to discredit corrupt or unlawful practice.⁶⁰ Cai's analysis of resistance in rural China explains how the use of forceful displays, and rhetorical issue linkage by protestors expand the salience of their cause, and increase leverage against the state.⁶¹ Mertha's studies of popular resistance, both in the case of those peasants protesting hydroelectric dam construction, and those urban residents resisting the demolition of their homes by developers, illustrate how issue framing impacts the success or failure of protests.⁶² C.K. Lee's overview of cellular activist networks in China's industrial northern rustbelt, and southern manufacturing zones petition central government organs against the malfeasance of local government, and thus articulate grievances without threatening the legitimacy of the national ruling party.⁶³

Studies of China's ethnic politics exhibit similar tendencies toward discussing the politics of resistance. To much of the outside world, the contentious politics of resistance defines Chinese ethnic politics. Unrest in China's *shaoshu minzu* (少数民族, minority nationality) communities, particularly in the Tibet and Xinjiang Uyghur

⁶⁰ Kevin J. O'Brien and Lianjiang Li, *Rightful Resistance in Rural China*, 1 edition (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

⁶¹ Yongshun Cai, *Collective Resistance in China: Why Popular Protests Succeed or Fail*, 1 edition (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2010).

⁶² Andrew Mertha, *China's Water Warriors: Citizen Action and Policy Change* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008); Andrew C. Mertha, "From 'Rustless Screws' to 'Nail Houses': The Evolution of Property Rights in China," *Orbis* 53, no. 2 (2009): 233–249.

⁶³ Ching Kwan Lee, *Against the Law: Labor Protests in China's Rustbelt and Sunbelt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).

Autonomous Regions, garners a considerable volume of academic scholarship.⁶⁴

Comparatively less attention has been given over those non-conflictual cases. While these approaches provide a thorough examination of contentious politics, such events are comparatively rare. Absent in these discussions are examinations of daily, quiet politics. Those studies that do engage in observation of non-conflictual politics, tend to do so from the perspective of the state. The growing literature on stability maintenance (维稳, *weiwen*) tactics employed by local governments provides an assessment of how the state manages conflict at a local level, but reveals much less about how non-state actors conduct politics on a daily basis.⁶⁵

Here, a theoretical framework centered on everyday ethnicity provides a way forward. As opposed to theories of ethnic politics that take only moments of ethnic activation as their unies of observation, everyday examines the ways in which ordinary activities help to reinforce and maintain ethnic boundaries in moments of inactivity or low salience of ethnic identity.⁶⁶ As Fox and Miller-Idriss explain, this

⁶⁴ See, in particular, Hillman and Tuttle's excellent recent scholarship; Ben Hillman and Gray Tuttle, eds., *Ethnic Conflict and Protest in Tibet and Xinjiang: Unrest in China's West* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016).

⁶⁵ Chongyi Feng, "The Dilemma of Stability Preservation in China," *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs* 42, no. 2 (June 19, 2013): 3–19; Peter Sandby-Thomas, "Legitimacy and Legitimation: Notes on CPC Power," *China: An International Journal* 13, no. 2 (2015): 88–107; Jonathan Benney, "Weiwen at the Grassroots: China's Stability Maintenance Apparatus as a Means of Conflict Resolution," *Journal of Contemporary China* 25, no. 99 (May 3, 2016): 389–405, doi:10.1080/10670564.2015.1104876.

⁶⁶ Bart Bonikowski, "Nationalism in Settled Times," *Annual Review of Sociology* 42, no. 1 (July 30, 2016): 427–49, doi:10.1146/annurev-soc-081715-074412; Rogers Brubaker et al., *Nationalist Politics and Everyday Ethnicity in a Transylvanian Town* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006); Tim Edensor, *National Identity, Popular Culture and Everyday Life* (Oxford ; New York: Berg Publishers, 2002); Jon E. Fox and Cynthia Miller-Idriss, "Everyday Nationhood," *Ethnicities* 8, no. 4 (December 1, 2008): 536–63, doi:10.1177/14687968080888925; Jon E. Fox and Cynthia Miller-Idriss, "The 'Here and Now' of Everyday Nationhood," *Ethnicities* 8, no. 4 (December

field of study attempts to identify the “ways in which ethnonational idioms – once in circulation – are enacted and invoked by ordinary people in the routine contexts of their everyday lives.”⁶⁷

Two characteristics distinguish everyday ethnicity from other approaches. First, rather than looking to elite action, everyday ethnicity looks to the masses the subject of observation.⁶⁸ In this way studies utilizing everyday ethnicity as a framework gain increased theoretical purchase on explaining how politics operates in informal settings. Rather than focusing solely on formal or institutional politics, everyday ethnicity examines subjects often ignored in political science: performances, rituals, classrooms, and markets. In so doing, everyday ethnicity incorporates the insights from anthropological or sociological studies about the political significance of seemingly non-political subjects like ethnic tourism, ethnic commodification, spectacles or speech.⁶⁹

1, 2008): 573–76, doi:10.1177/14687968080080040103; J. Paul Goode and David R. Stroup, “Everyday Nationalism: Constructivism for the Masses,” *Social Science Quarterly* 96, no. 3 (September 1, 2015): 717–39, doi:10.1111/ssqu.12188; Eleanor Knott, “Everyday Nationalism: A Review of the Literature,” *Studies on National Movements* 3 (2015), <http://snm.nise.eu/index.php/studies/index>; Michael Skey, *National Belonging and Everyday Life* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2011), <http://link.springer.com/10.1057/9780230353893>.

⁶⁷ Fox and Miller-Idriss, “The ‘Here and Now’ of Everyday Nationhood,” 576.

⁶⁸ Goode and Stroup, “Everyday Nationalism.”

⁶⁹ Marjorie Esman, “Tourism as Ethnic Preservation: The Cajuns of Louisiana,” *Annals of Tourism Research* 11 (1984): 451–67; Tim Oakes, *Tourism and Modernity in China*, (Routledge Studies on China in Transition ; 6); Routledge Studies--China in Transition ; 6 (London ; New York: Routledge, 1998); John L. Comaroff and Jean Comaroff, *Ethnicity, Inc* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009); Philip Feifan Xie, *Authenticating Ethnic Tourism* (Clevedon, UK: Channel View Publishing, 2010); Yih-Jye Hwang and Florian Schneider, “Performance, Meaning, and Ideology in the Making of Legitimacy: The Celebrations of the People’s Republic of China’s Sixty-Year Anniversary,” *China Review*, 2011, 27–55.

Secondly, instead of focusing solely on the politics of contention, or periods of intense mobilization of ethnonational identity, everyday nationalism takes the experiences of the masses during relatively “quiet times” when the salience of the national identity might otherwise be low as its subject.⁷⁰ Previous retrospectives and symposia on the impact of constructivist insights on the study of ethnic politics lamented the failure of constructivist scholarship to take its own axioms regarding the fluidity and multiplicity of identity to heart.⁷¹ By only looking to moments of crystallization of ethnic identity, scholars risk reifying ethnic difference, and consequently offering little insight about ethnicity itself. Studies that treat ethnic identity as an independent variable that explains the motivations of ethnic actors miss key opportunities to examine the nature of ethnicity. In focusing on politics in moments of quiet, everyday ethnicity offers a much needed set of insights about how ethnicity is renegotiated and maintained. Ordinary actions, like consumer or dietary habits help sustain ethnic boundaries in these moments of relative stability. In so doing, everyday ethnicity takes up the challenge issued to constructivists to incorporate the logic of constructivism into their own arguments.

Everyday ethnicity enables further discussion of the politics of ethnicity outside of the formal sphere prescribed by state policy, and explains how actors take on ethnic identity outside of institutions. Likewise, by focusing on daily practices, the framework allows for conceptualization of how actors express ethnic identity and ethnic

⁷⁰ J. Paul Goode, “Nationalism in Quiet Times: Ideational Power and Post-Soviet Hybrid Regimes,” *Problems of Post-Communism* 59, no. 3 (May 1, 2012): 6–16, doi:10.2753/PPC1075-8216590301.

⁷¹ Kanchan Chandra, “Symposium: Cumulative Findings in the Study of Ethnic Politics,” *APSA-CP* 12, no. 1 (2001): 7–25.

preferences in authoritarian contexts, absent the usual tools of ethnic mobilization and electoral outbidding. Further, everyday ethnicity offers explanation of how ethnic identity operates outside of moments of activation, and allows scholars to examine the nature of ethnicity itself. Studying the politics of quiet times through the lens of everyday ethnicity provides a way to further understand ethnicity outside of institutional or democratic contexts, and provides important insight into the conduct of ethnic politics in closed regimes.

*Better City, Better Life? Studying everyday ethnic politics in the context of urbanization*⁷²

Urban areas with high concentration of ethnic minority group members act as a forum for contestation of content and the boundaries of group identity, and allow spaces for consumption of, performance of, and participation in the nation. Likewise, the context of urbanization allows for an examination of how ethnic politics unfolds amidst state-led efforts of centralization and control. In China, programs of urbanization take two primary forms: *chai qian* (demolition and relocation, 拆迁) style urban renewal, and through the migration of “floating population” (*liudong renkou*, 流动人口).

The deeply political nature of urbanization makes urban renewal and city planning powerful tools in the hands of the state. Throughout history, centralizing states have frequently implemented such measures as centralizing tools aimed at increasing

⁷² “Better City, Better Life” served as the motto for the 2010 Shanghai World Exposition.

the power of the state to exercise control.⁷³ Studies like Scott's examination of "authoritarian high modernism," illustrate the means by which a state may restructure public space to its own advantage. Rendering a city more "legible,"—a process which Scott defines as "to arrange the population in ways that simplified the classic state functions of taxation, conscription, and prevention of rebellion"—is thus for Scott a "central problem of statecraft."⁷⁴ The ability of programs of urbanization to transform culturally heterogeneous territories into a standardized, uniform imagined national community makes them important instruments in the hands of the state.

In addition to exerting control by reshaping urban space, states may attempt to exert control by reshaping urban populations. Migration, therefore, makes up a second powerfully transformative facet of urbanization. McGarry describes several means by which the state incentivizes migration through economic means. The state, he argues, may provide migrants—especially those moving to minority-majority regions—with

⁷³ See; Eugen Joseph Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1979); James C. Scott, *Seeing like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998); Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*; Mary P. Callahan, "Making Myanmar: Language, Territory, and Belonging in Post-Socialist Burma," in *Boundaries and Belonging: States and Societies in the Struggle to Shape Identities and Local Practices*, ed. Joel S Migdal (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Joel S. Migdal, "The State in Society," in *State Power and Social Forces: Domination and Transformation in the Third World*, ed. Joel S. Migdal, Atul Kohli, and Vivienne Shue (New York, NY: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1994), 7–34; Aimin Chen and Jie Gao, "Urbanization in China and the Coordinated Development Model—The Case of Chengdu," *The Social Science Journal* 48, no. 3 (September 2011): 500–513, doi:10.1016/j.soscij.2011.05.005.

⁷⁴ Scott, *Seeing like a State*. On "legibility" Scott remarks, "Legibility implies a viewer whose place is central and whose vision is synoptic."

incentives in the form of jobs, housing subsidies, and preferential language policy.⁷⁵

Others note that, often, migration result from both strategic choices and structural forces. In these sense, migration occurs neither as a purely strategic, individual choice, nor as the inevitable result of macro-sociological phenomena, but instead because of a combination of of both. Meer highlights the importance of “Mobility capital” in explaining why some choose to migrate while others choose to remain in their place of origin. He remarks that individual choices to migrate occur “in tandem” with larger socio-economic forces, like modernization, that facilitate these choices.⁷⁶

Both of these types of urbanization form a backdrop against which everyday ethnic politics unfold. Understanding how this context inform the conduct of ethnic boundary formation and the practice of daily ethnic politics in China, requires a brief overview.

“Chai Qian” and “Chai Na’er? ”: Processes of urban renewal in China

China’s rapid urbanization has attracted much attention in western journalistic and academic circles in recent years. As China builds modern infrastructure in its cities, increased scrutiny has been given to the means and method of construction. Most frequently, urban renewal comes in the form *chai qian*, in which old or dilapidated

⁷⁵ John McGarry, “‘Demographic Engineering’: The State-Directed Movement of Ethnic Groups as a Technique of Conflict Regulation,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 21, no. 4 (January 1, 1998): 618–20, doi:10.1080/014198798329793.

⁷⁶ Nasar Meer, “Muslim Diasporas and Their Framing(s): Muslim Migration Rethought,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 40, no. 3 (February 19, 2017): 396–400, doi:10.1080/01419870.2017.1249497.

structures are dismantled in order to clear space for new residences or commercial space.

As a result of China's massive push to become a developed, urban society, *chai qian* occurs in nearly every urban center in China. Unsurprisingly, *chai qian* is often one of the first differences mentioned when urban Chinese residents are asked to describe changes in their neighborhoods over the past decade.⁷⁷ Dutton, et al. discuss the ubiquitous presence of the character for demolition, “拆”, or *chai*, claiming that in the post-reform era, “demolition took place at such a rate that, at one stage in the 1990s, Beijing was, like many urban regions of China, a city of *chai*.”⁷⁸ Similarly, Peter Hessler notes in his memoirs of his time in Beijing, that demolition was so prominent during the early 2000s that residents of Beijing began to quip that their country was called “*Chai Na'er?*” (拆哪儿), or “Demolish Where?”⁷⁹

At first, displaced residents from these neighborhoods were relocated in new apartments in a different location. However, as the process of urban renewal became more responsive to market demands, the practice of relocation was abandoned, and replaced by a policy that paid displaced residents a stipend for the purpose of purchasing new homes.⁸⁰ Daniel B. Abramson argues that this shift from relocation to

⁷⁷ Field observations, June-July 2014; In numerous brief, informal discussions on the street, residents volunteered *chai qian* as the single biggest change to their neighborhood.

⁷⁸ Michael Dutton, Hsiu-ju Stacy Lo, and Dong Dong Wu, *Beijing Time* (Harvard University Press, 2010), 10.

⁷⁹ Peter Hessler, *Oracle Bones: A Journey Through Time in China*, Reprint edition (Harper Perennial, 2007), 180.

⁸⁰ Hyun Bang Shin, “Residential Redevelopment and Social Impacts in Beijing,” in *China's Emerging Cities: The Making of New Urbanism*, ed. Fulong Wu (New York, NY: Routledge, 2008), 163–81.

compensation illustrates a larger dialectic between notions of community and of property. Thus, Abramson suggests, the shift away from the state planned policy of relocation toward the market-oriented solution of compensation at market value mirrors the tensions between state planning and market economics present throughout the Chinese economic system.⁸¹

Often, *chai qian* projects are heralded by official propaganda as intrinsically linked to the realization of a better, more beautiful, more livable cityscape. Such slogans often frame the process as one of beautification that requires mutual cooperation, and will yield mutual benefit. For example, a large billboard near a construction site in the northern suburbs of Shandong's capital of Jinan proclaimed, "The purpose of *chai qian* is to allow the construction of a better place."⁸² The residents of redeveloped neighborhoods, however, often lack the financial resources to share or benefit from the "better places" built in place of their former homes. Both He and Wu, and Tian and Wong observe that the compensation that most of the lower-income residents living in redeveloped neighborhoods receive fails to cover the cost of the upscale or luxury residences that replace their old homes. Consequentially, *chai qian* effectively brings about the gentrification and increased economic stratification of the neighborhoods in which it occurs.⁸³ Furthermore, the relocation of poorer residents to outlying suburbs

⁸¹ Fulong Wu, *China's Emerging Cities: The Making of New Urbanism* (Routledge, 2008). 66-86

⁸² Field observations, Jinan, July 19-24, 2014; in the original Chinese: "拆迁是为了更好的地方建设."

⁸³ Ying Ying Tian and Cecilia Wong, "Large Urban Redevelopment Projects and Sociospatial Stratification in Shanghai," in *China's Emerging Cities: The Making of New Urbanism*, ed. Fulong Wu (New York, NY: Routledge, 2008), 210-30; Shenjing He and Fulong Wu, "Neighborhood Changes and Residential Differentiation in

and wealthier residents to redeveloped areas in the urban core results in an increased amount of class differentiation between neighborhoods throughout China's cities.⁸⁴

Increasingly, urban renewal is a flashpoint for social protest. The transformation of old urban neighborhoods into new, modern ones frequently sparks protests among residents unwilling to leave their homes. Resistance to eviction has captured the attention of western scholars and journalist alike. Western "China hands" like Hessler, Michael Mayer and Evan Osnos have covered the stories of these residents, particularly in central Beijing's *hutong* neighborhoods.⁸⁵ Andrew Mertha describes the increasing prominence of "nail houses" (*dingzi hu*, 钉子户)—those houses belonging to citizens resisting their demolition by refusing to vacate, even while foundations for new construction are dug out around them. Faced with no clear legal recourse, Mertha observes, citizens are often forced to take extralegal action to defend their property rights.⁸⁶

Building new cities on China's "Floating Population": Migration and Urbanization

Shanghai," in *China's Emerging Cities: The Making of New Urbanism*, ed. Fulong Wu (New York, NY: Routledge, 2008), 185–209.

⁸⁴ He and Wu, "Neighborhood Changes and Residential Differentiation in Shanghai."

⁸⁵ Michael J. Meyer, *The Last Days of Old Beijing: Life in the Vanishing Backstreets of a City Transformed*, 1st U.S. ed.. (New York: Walker & Company, 2008); Hessler, *Oracle Bones*, 174–87; Evan Osnos, "Can China Deliver the China Dream(s)? - The New Yorker," *The New Yorker*, March 23, 2013,

<http://www.newyorker.com/news/letter-from-china/can-china-deliver-the-china-dreams>.

⁸⁶ Mertha, "From 'Rustless Screws' to 'Nail Houses,'" 234. In particular, Mertha recounted the story of Yang Wu and Wu Ping, who resisted the demolition of their Chongqing home for nearly three years by refusing to vacate it. Mertha remarked, "this case has largely been fought outside proper legal channels. On the one hand, administrative regulations seem to trump legal formulations. On the other hand, Wu Ping and Yang Wu have undertaken spectacular extra-legal measures by mobilizing the media, to leverage the government."

In addition to the physical reshaping of cities through *chai qian*, the state also changed China's urban landscape through movement of people. Over the past forty years, internal migration in China precipitated a massive shift in the country's demographics. By 2011, the percentage of the population living within cities surpassed those living in the countryside for the first time ever.⁸⁷ Such a massive shift of people from small, primarily agricultural villages in the countryside brought with it dramatic socioeconomic changes. Many studies conducted over the last few decades document the challenges posed by the "floating population" (*liudong renkou*, 流动人口) engaged in migration from China's villages to its cities, and its periphery to its coast.⁸⁸ These studies document the struggles of migrants to find places of residence, ensure social service provision, provide for the caretaking of their children, find steady sources of income, and survive on the margins of urban society. However, the subject of migration's impact on ethnic identity in minority communities, from which many migrants originate, remains comparatively unexamined.

Indeed, even though ethnic minorities may constitute a lower percentage of the population than the majority, the propensity of ethnic minorities to migrate is higher than Han in similar circumstances. Iredale and Guo observe that minorities at the lower

⁸⁷ Tom Miller, *China's Urban Billion: The Story behind the Biggest Migration in Human History*, Asian Arguments (London ; New York : New York: Zed Books ; Distributed in the USA exclusively by Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

⁸⁸ Lee, *Against the Law*; Michelle Dammon Loyalka, *Eating Bitterness: Stories from the Front Lines of China's Great Urban Migration* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012); Li Zhang, "Migrant Enclaves and Impacts of Redevelopment Policy in Chinese Cities," in *Restructuring the Chinese City: Changing Society, Economy, and Space*, ed. Laurence J.C. Ma and Fulong Wu (New York, NY: Routledge, 2005), 243–59.

end of income and education spectrums migrate at a higher rather than their Han counterparts. Migration among *shaoshu minzu*, they contend is marked mostly by movement from rural to urban settings, and a shift from the peripheral west to the comparatively developed eastern coast. Mandatory, or state-compelled relocation does not drive minorities to migrate as much as the dictates of the market and the availability of economic opportunities. Moving from rural, primarily agricultural communities to urban spaces where more opportunities to engage in wage labor or entrepreneurship exist, affords minority migrants the promise of upward socioeconomic mobility. Iredale and Gao note that, as they arrive in new, urban environments, *shaoshu minzu* migrants depend upon ethnic networks to secure jobs, housing, and establish themselves in unfamiliar settings.⁸⁹

Once arrived, migrants face difficulties with prejudice and discrimination from locals. Much of this conflict arises from the wealth gap that exists between migrants and locals, and often overlaps with difference in ethnic identification. Isabelle Côté observes that “sons of the soil” conflicts occur more frequently in locations where economic discrepancies exist between locals and migrants of different ethnic groups. In China, she observes, where locals are usually majority Han Chinese, and migrants often belong to ethnic minority groups, migration may lead to conflict between Han and ethnic minority migrants over job opportunities, land rights, cultural status, and government policies.⁹⁰

⁸⁹ Robyn Iredale and Fei Guo, “Overview of Minority Migration,” in *China’s Minorities on the Move: Selected Case Studies*, ed. Robyn Iredale, Naran Bilik, and Fei Guo (New York, NY: Routledge, 2003), 3–32.

⁹⁰ Isabelle Côté, “Horizontal Inequalities and Sons of the Soil Conflict in China,” *Civil Wars* 17, no. 3 (July 3, 2015): 357–78, doi:10.1080/13698249.2015.1100353; Isabelle Côté, “Internal Migration and the Politics of Place: A Comparative Analysis of China

Beyond discrimination, minority migrants also frequently express fear of cultural degradation. After moving to the city many migrants lose touch with cultural institutions, or mother language. Burgjin and Bilik's study of the Mongol communities residing in Chinese Inner Mongolia reflects the cultural dilemmas many migrants face in the wake of urban to rural migration. After cultivation of the pasturelands in order to make it suitable for farming by Han migrants, many Mongols found it impossible to continue to practice traditional herding. As these Mongols moved to the province's cities, most notably the provincial capital of Hohhot, they faced tradeoffs between modernity and Mongolianness. Most notably, these migrant Mongols faced a choice between maintaining Mongol language education or learning Mandarin Chinese to improve chances for employment. Ultimately, the authors report, Mongol language proficiency declined as respondents elected to learn Mandarin to better compete for jobs. The authors note that "in the face of nationwide marketization and opening up of the economy and the increasingly 'superior status' of Chinese and English in social and commercial functioning, Mongolian language education is losing out, especially in urban areas."⁹¹

Both urban renewal and migration exert profound and transformative effects on ethnic identity. Given the importance of the cultural institutions in Hui neighborhoods (e.g. halal butcher, mosques, etc.) for the maintenance of Hui identity, changes in the

and Indonesia," *Asian Ethnicity* 15, no. 1 (January 2, 2014): 111–29, doi:10.1080/14631369.2013.830365.

⁹¹ Jirgal Burgjin and Naran Bilik, "Contemporary Mongolian Population Distribution, Migration, Cultural Change, and Identity," in *China's Minorities on the Move: Selected Case Studies*, ed. Robyn Iredale, Naran Bilik, and Fei Guo (New York: Routledge, 2003).

urban landscape provide an illuminating backdrop against which everyday ethnic politics may unfold. Examining how changes in urban space alter or influence the practices that maintain boundaries will highlight the importance of daily practices for the expression of ethnic identity. Observing how residents respond to such changes will allow for further insight about the conduct of ethnic politics. Hui neighborhoods therefore provide an excellent case for examining the conduct of ethnic politics in the context of urbanization. Observation and analysis of everyday politics requires special considerations for observation of quiet politics.

Methodology: studying China ethnographically

Taking the framework of everyday ethnicity seriously entails reconceptualizing what scholars should observe as a basic unit of observation. Rather than focusing on individual actors, or institutions, everyday ethnicity allows researchers to observe ethnicity as a set of practices. Fox and Miller-Idris envision the nation as, a “cultural construct of collective belonging realized and legitimated through institutional and discursive practices,” such as “talking,” “choosing,” “performing,” or “consuming,” the nation.⁹² Thus, observations of everyday ethnicity seek to specify those practices that maintain ethnic boundaries. Figure 1.5 below lists the kinds of practices associated with each of Fox and Miller-Idriss’ categories.

Figure 1.5: Examples of Everyday Ethnic Practices

<i>Kind of Practice</i>	<i>Type of Observation</i>
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⁹² Fox and Miller-Idriss, “Everyday Nationhood.”

<i>Talking the nation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using Qur’anic/Arabic phrases in daily conversation • Attending Arabic/Qur’anic study group • Literacy in written Arabic • Using Arabic pidgin
<i>Choosing the nation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referring to oneself as Hui (<i>Huizu</i>, 回族) • Marrying a Hui partner • Insisting on non-Hui partner’s conversion to Islam in interethnic marriages • Living in a predominantly Hui neighborhood • Educating children about Islamic/Hui Culture (家庭教育)
<i>Performing the nation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attending Friday prayers • Observing Islamic holidays (e.g. Ei’d al-Fitr), and rituals (e.g. fasting) • Wearing traditional Hui or Islamic costume (white prayer hats, hijab, etc.) • Non-observance of traditional Chinese festivals (Lunar New Year, Mid-Autumn Festival, etc.)
<i>Consuming the nation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shopping at halal groceries, butchers, etc. • Eating at halal restaurants • Abstaining from consumption of alcohol and pork

Following Fox and Miller-Idriss’ studies of everyday nationalism, my observations focused “on the ways in which ethno-national idioms – once in circulation – are enacted and invoked by ordinary people in the routine contexts of their everyday lives.”⁹³ To this end, my fieldwork sought to find the “micro-interactional moments,” and “institutionally embedded and repetitive routines,” that maintain ethnicity in quiet times.⁹⁴ Figure 1.6, below lists the kinds of practices identified during the course of fieldwork as central to maintenance of Hui ethnic identity.

⁹³ John E. Fox and Cynthia Miller-Idriss, “The ‘here and now’ of everyday nationhood,” *Ethnicities* 8, no. 4 (2008), p. 574

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 575

Figure 1.6: Everyday ethnic practices in Hui communities

Category of Practice	Associated Practices
Choosing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marriage, childbirth and citizenship registration
Talking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Studying/Reading Arabic
Consuming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining a <i>qingzhen</i> (清真, <i>halal</i>) diet.
Performing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular prayer attendance • Wearing religious garments

However, when attempting to observe these types of practices, researchers must use caution. Studies that seek to measure the influence of ethnicity on a set of social phenomenon (or vice versa) often suffer from a paradoxical condition: ethnicity is nowhere, and it is also everywhere. The ethnic significance of a particular event may be buried in hidden transcripts that prove difficult to unearth. In these cases, even the most sensitive and careful questioning may fail to yield an understanding of an event’s ethnic significance. Conversely, as Brubaker, et al. caution, “ethnicity is all too easy to find if one goes looking for it.”⁹⁵ Indeed, careless observations may imbue almost any action with ethnic significance.

⁹⁵ Brubaker et al., *Nationalist Politics and Everyday Ethnicity in a Transylvanian Town*, 381. Brubaker, et al. remark, “ethnographic observation remains indispensable for any study that is concerned with everyday life.” During their study of everyday nationalism in Transylvania, Brubaker, et al. employed ethnography to understand the ways in which local residents made implicit or explicit references to the nation. Without such observations, the authors maintain, they would have been “unable to distinguish the standardized formulations that are produced for outsiders,” from the ways in which the nation is ordinarily invoked by residents. “Our fieldwork,” they conclude “enabled us to be critical and selective users of our interview and group discussion data; it enabled us to know when that data was broadly representative, and when it was largely an artifact of the interview or group discussion situation.”

How then must these competing pitfalls be balanced against? Utilizing ethnographic observation as a means of collecting data allows a careful researcher to understand and decode the contextual clues that emerge in interviews and informal conversations.⁹⁶ Though ethnographic studies do not lend themselves easily to standardization or replicability, they do allow for fine-grained conceptualization and specification of concepts.⁹⁷ Calvin Chen argues, “by uncovering the systemic regularities that are intertwined with the particularities of highly diverse settings, ethnographic studies demonstrate how the application of an inductive approach alongside a *deductive* one can enrich social science inquiry.”⁹⁸

Often, it is only through careful observation and close-reading of context that the “hidden transcripts” and contextualized meaning of actors may be discerned.⁹⁹ Especially in a state like China, where responses to sensitive political or social

⁹⁶ Ibid., 384–85.

⁹⁷ Calvin Chen, “The Worm’s Eye View: Using Ethnography to Illuminate Labor Politics and Institutional Change in Contemporary China,” in *Contemporary Chinese Politics: New Sources, Methods, and Field Strategies*, ed. Allen Carson et al. (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 131. In explaining the advantages offered by doing ethnography, Calvin Chen explains that the kinds of data gathered from field observation “cannot be readily represented in the form of standardized variables or easily subjected to replicable methods of empirical analysis.”

⁹⁸ Ibid., 134.

⁹⁹ Lisa Wedeen, “Conceptualizing Culture: Possibilities for Political Science,” *The American Political Science Review* 96, no. 4 (December 1, 2002): 713–28; Benjamin L. Read, “More Than an Interview, Less Than Sedaka: Studying Subtle and Hidden Politics with Site-Intensive Methods,” in *Contemporary Chinese Politics: New Sources, Methods, and Field Strategies*, ed. Allen Carlson et al. (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 150. Read notes that “site-intensive methods” like field interviews and observations are “especially valuable when what we are studying is *subtle* (for example, relationships, networks, identities, styles, beliefs, or modes of action), and when what we are studying is *hidden*, sensitive, or otherwise kept behind barriers that require building trust, waiting to observe unguarded, or otherwise unlocking access.”

questions may be coded and deliberately obscured, ethnography may provide the contextual clues for interpretation a respondent's remarks.¹⁰⁰

For these reasons, ethnographic observations and semi-structured interviews provided the major means of data collection for this study. These approaches advantaged me in my ability to uncover hidden or complex meaning, and aided conceptual specification.

I conducted observations in a variety of official and unofficial spaces where such quotidian replications of the nation occur. I observed local institutions that provide official venues for the maintenance of ethnicity: mosques, schools, and museums. Likewise, I observed informal spaces where practices of consumerism and leisure reproduce and maintain identity: Hui restaurants, department stores, marketplaces, shops and businesses. In these locations I searched for the ways in which ethnicity is invoked in a number of daily practices.

Confirmation of the insights gained from field observations requires additional, targeted conversations with local residents.¹⁰¹ Thus, conducting formal interviews with members of the community are also necessary. Further insight about the impact of urban renewal in Hui neighborhoods depends upon the ability to speak directly with

¹⁰⁰ Chen, "The Worm's Eye View: Using Ethnography to Illuminate Labor Politics and Institutional Change in Contemporary China," 143. Chen maintains that ethnography "offers a powerful and underutilized means of investigating and understanding larger trends and developments in Chinese social and political life that cannot easily be detected or explained through formal models, statistical approaches or broad cross-national comparisons."

¹⁰¹ Brubaker et al., *Nationalist Politics and Everyday Ethnicity in a Transylvanian Town*, 379. Indeed, as Brubaker, et al note, "ethnic nationalism emerges interactionally through the appropriation and transformation of discursive resources made available (in a non-ethnic frame) in the preceding turns of talk."

local elites and important figures in the community. Local government officials, and prominent community figures like imams, heads of local Hui or Islamic Associations, and teachers provide vital perspectives that any complete account must incorporate. Likewise, ordinary residents of the neighborhood, local entrepreneurs and small business owners, and members of the neighborhood's working and professional community also offer unique outlooks on these daily ethnic practices. Satisfactory accounts must therefore represent the wide diversity of opinion and difference in perspective that occurs even within the space of a small neighborhood.

Interviewers must use restraint and caution, in order to avoid asking leading questions that prompt interviewees to respond in ethnic terms. Rather than directly questioning residents about their conceptions of their own ethnicity, or how it is impacted by urban renewal, and indirect approach is required.¹⁰² Elicitation of such information may instead be gained through questions that ask respondents to describe their daily habits, consumer purchases, relationships with neighbors, changes in the neighborhood over time, and other non-ethnic matters. Seeking the way in which ethnic frames are imposed, or not imposed on these discussions yields insight about the role played by ethnicity in the community. Such careful indications allow for a more nuanced and careful account than the kind of rote or overly practiced answers that might be gained through direct questioning.

¹⁰² Ibid., 380–84. Brubaker et al.'s approach to posing interview questions should be emulated. During their studies in Cluj, in an attempt to "let ethnicity emerge spontaneously—to the extent that it emerged in all—in the course of discussion," the authors chose deliberately not to invoke ethnicity in their questions. Rather, the authors asked their respondents questions about daily life and routine in Cluj, and sought to determine the way in which residents "framed their accounts in ethnic or, more often, in non-ethnic terms."

In total, I conducted 152 across all four case sites. Through the use of snowball sampling, in which an initial respondent recommended and put me in contact with further respondents, I was able to speak with a diverse array of respondents from different regions, professions, genders, and age cohorts. These respondents represent a broad sampling of the Hui community and provide a thorough picture of the diversity of the Hui community.

In the following chapters I will describe how each of these categories of everyday ethnic practices unfolds in the context of urbanization. Following the framework developed by Fox and Miller-Idriss, I explore how urbanization impacts and influences the daily practices of choosing, talking, consuming, and performing that maintain the boundaries of ethnic Hui identity. Subsequent chapters will provide a focus investigation into each of these categories, noting which practices residents identify as significant for the maintenance of ethnic boundaries, and assessing how urbanization alters or influences the processes of negotiation of these practices. Presently, I will give a brief sketch of the remaining chapters.

Summary of the chapters

In order to understand the politics of everyday interactions, a background in the China's ethnic politics is required. Chapter 2 provides a brief exposition on the Chinese state's ethnic policies, and the state of Hui-Han relations. The ruling Chinese Communist Party (CCP) attempts to exert tight control over the narrative surrounding

ethnicity within the Chinese state, and limit the forms that ethnic expression may take. Chapter two provides an assessment of the ways in which the CCP invokes a narrative of interethnic cooperation and harmony under the leadership of the party in its legitimating narrative. The frequent invocation of themes of ethnic unity (*minzu tuanjie*, 民族团结) and shared prosperity in regime propaganda illustrate the centrality of interethnic relations to the regime's overall legitimation strategy. While the party claims to be the guardian of stable and equitable interethnic relations, the separateness of ethnic majority Han and Hui communities, and the occurrence of daily experiences of prejudice that this separation begets, undermine and expose the hollowness of the regime's legitimating claims.

After establishing the background of ethnic politics against which this study unfolds, I present focused examinations of everyday ethnic politics in urban Hui communities. Chapters three through six individually examine each of Fox and Miller-Idriss' categories of everyday ethnic practices: choosing, talking, consuming, and performing. Because of the constraints imposed by China's system of ethnic classification on the expression of ethnic identity, this examination must begin by assessing how citizens grapple with choices related to ethnic classification. Therefore, chapter three examines how the inflexibility of the *minzu* system, which only allows citizens to choose on category of ethnic identification, influences choices regarding marriage and childbirth. In linking ethnic identification to static categories determined solely by descent, the *minzu* system loads ethnic significance onto choices of marriage and birth, and turns couples—particularly women—into ethnic actors. Many Hui must

confront questions of appropriateness concerning ethnic intermarriage, or requirements that non-Hui spouses convert to Islam when making marriage choices.

Chapter four continues to explore these categories of ethnic practices by examining the subject of language use in Hui communities. Language is frequently cited as one of the foundational characteristics of an ethnic identity, and many canonical studies of ethnic and nationalist politics cite sharing a common language as critical for the process of ethnic identity formation. However, the Hui present an interesting challenge to these accounts. Though the Hui, as a *hanyu minzu*, do not speak a minority language like other *shaoshu minzu*, Qur'anic Arabic (*jingwen*, 经文) is strongly associated with Hui culture, both by government propaganda and many Hui, alike. Though a system of mosque education (*jingtang jiaoyu* 经堂教育) sustained Arabic literacy in Hui communities in the past, lack of state-sponsored resources for Arabic education in schools makes undertaking this kind of education difficult in contemporary Hui communities. Hui wishing to study Arabic often must do so at the expense of standard school curriculum. Thus, studying the Qur'an often pits desires for cultural and linguistic preservation against employment prospects and economic self-interest. The ability of Hui to read and properly pronounce Qur'anic passages in Arabic becomes an essential marker of Hui identity in the minds of more pious Hui, and a sign of backwardness or poor education for secularized Hui.

While Hui many not conform to traditional conceptions of what attributes are required to form a common ethnic identity, like sharing a common language, other aspects of Hui identity may prove just as important in providing a basis for group identification. Chapter five examines the importance of observing Islamic dietary habits

in promoting a sense of shared Hui identity. For many non-Muslim Chinese, knowledge about Hui culture is limited to awareness of the abstinence from pork, following the dictates of the Qur'an. Thus, maintaining a proper *qingzhen* (halal, 清真) diet provides one of the most visible boundary markers of Hui identity. Chapter five explores habits of consumption, particularly related to the maintenance of a *qingzhen* diet in relation to conceptions of Hui identity. While *qingzhen* restaurants appear throughout China, thanks in part to Hui migrants from the northwest who move to large coastal cities to open them, the lack of state-imposed standards for certifying food and eateries as *qingzhen* leads to ambiguity and disagreement about the how to properly define and observe the term. In particular, lack of consensus over whether or not consumption of alcohol is permitted by *qingzhen* standards divides Hui communities.

The final empirical chapter in this examination of everyday Hui ethnic practices, chapter six examines performance of Islamic ritual as the basic most basic building block for Hui identity. As a heterogeneous group with disparate ancestral origins, and different linguistic backgrounds, the Hui's shared Islamic faith form the most basic attribute held in common by all members. Therefore discussions of how to properly observe and practice the faith are fundamental to the understanding of what it means to be Hui. Chapter six discusses the role that performance of religious ritual plays in maintaining Hui identity. While the CCP makes efforts to support state sanctioned displays of Islam in Hui communities by giving time off to observe Islamic holidays, or helping to provide crowd control for Friday prayers, outside of these state sanctioned displays many Hui face obstacles in practicing the faith. In many communities, prohibitions on wearing Islamic head coverings in the workplace, or inability to leave

work on Fridays to pray for fear of being fired forces Hui to choose between economic self-preservation and faithful adherence to Islam. These choices may result in more pious Hui, to look upon those who do not or can not regularly practice Islam as “Hanified” (*hanhua*, 汉化), while non-observant Hui may view those who wear Islamic garb or faithfully attend prayer as religious zealots.

In concluding I assert that the contact between disparate groups of Hui that occurs in the context of urbanization and migration triggers renewed contestation of the boundaries of Hui identity. Interactions between Hui of different backgrounds activates cross-cutting identity cleavages, and draws internal boundaries within the Hui community. Thus, despite the CCP’s attempts to control or limit Hui identity to a single state-approved form, interaction between these disparate groups of Hui leads to a multiplicity of understandings of what the content of Hui identity contains. The CCP’s attempts to suppress those expressions of ethnic identity it deems undesirable may therefore only inspire a proliferation of further contestation. However, such intra-ethnic boundary contestation focuses contentious debate over ethnic identity on internal boundaries, and effectively defuses interethnic tensions, or contentious politics between the Hui and the state. In this way China is able to manage or mitigate contentious politics among the Hui. However, in adopting such an approach to ethnic politics, the CCP walks an unsteady and capricious line. Should the state attempt to clamp down or limit the forms that ethnic expression may take any backlash that would occur might contribute to destabilizing the stability on which state legitimating claims rest.

2. “God is a Drug”: Han-Hui relations and regime legitimation in the Xi Jinping Era

Across the street from Beijing’s venerable Niu Jie Mosque, a long banner sits atop a high wall and stretches the length of a block. At the far end, in vertical text, white characters that read “The Great United Family of Nationalities” (*Minzu Tuanjie Da Jia Ting* 民族团结大家庭) stand out against the plain blue background. As the banner unfolds down the street, it depicts a man and woman from each of China’s 56 ethnic nationalities (民族, *minzu*) dressed in traditional costumes. Some dance and play instruments. Others hold the tools needed for the time-honored livelihoods of hunting, herding, or harvest. All smile brightly in joyous celebration of a united homeland.¹ Invoking the language of family alongside images of jubilant harmony from all ethnic groups sends the message that contemporary China stands as a vibrant, diverse, and stable, multi-ethnic society under the leadership of the ruling Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Such rosy depictions of ethnic relations closely mirror the State Council’s official rhetoric on interethnic relations:

*Although the origins and histories of ethnic groups in China are different, the overall trend of their development was to form a unified, stable country with multiple ethnic groups. The boundaries and territory of today's China were developed by all ethnic groups in the big family of the Chinese nation during the long course of historical development.*²

Nearly 300 miles away, outside of Shandong Province’s capital city of Jinan, a message on another wall displayed a very different picture of interethnic relations. In

¹ Field Observations, Beijing, August 2015.

² “China’s Ethnic Policy and Common Prosperity and Development of All Ethnic Groups,” White Paper (Beijing: Information Office of the State Council of the People’s Republic of China, September 9, 2009).

Laozhai (老斋村), a small, majority ethnic Hui suburban village, located on the edge of the city's Tianqiao District, the words "God is a drug," (*renzhu duyì*, 仁主毒一), appear in crudely scrawled black spray-paint characters on the side of a home (shown in Figure 1 Below). The contact leading me through the village drew my attention to the graffiti, making sure to explain its significance as a bit of anti-Hui ethnic chauvinism. The phrase, he explained was meant as a homonym to the commonly used Islamic maxim "There is but one God" (*renzhu duyì*, 仁主独一). In altering these words of praise, the graffiti belittled the Muslim Hui. Such an act, my contact reasoned, could only have been made by Han from the neighboring community. Instances like these were common, he remarked. Frequently competition between the predominantly Hui residents of Laozhai and Han from neighboring villages, usually over contracting or land-use rights, sparked antipathy between the groups, sometimes resulting ethnically motivated vandalism.³

Figure 2.1: Vandalism in Laozhai Village containing the anti-Islamic slur, "God is a Drug" (仁主毒一)

³ Field Observations: Laozhai, December 2015



Rhetorical claims about the unity and indivisibility of the Chinese state, like those depicted on the mural, and made on official record by the State Council, form a critical piece of the legitimating strategy employed by the ruling Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Proclaiming stable and familial relations for all of China's ethnic groups allows the CCP to position itself as the guardian of China's growth and prosperity. However, the persistence of inequality between the Han and minority groups, Han chauvinism, and the kind of bigotry that gives rise to the anti-Hui graffiti found in Laozhai belies the hollowness of these claims. The failure of the regime to deliver on the promises of ethnic equality, unity, and shared prosperity illustrates how proclaiming such a narrative actually threatens the CCP's legitimating strategy.

The remainder of this chapter explores the shortcomings of the regime's legitimating strategies through a case study of Han-Hui relations. I first present a brief examination of the literature on the CCP's legitimation strategies under Xi Jinping's leadership. After abandoning Maoist ideology as a source of legitimacy at the start of Reform and Opening, the regime adopted a performance-based legitimation strategy rooted in touting the party's role as a provider of stability (稳定, *wending*) and development (发展, *fazhan*). I pay particular attention to centrality of ethnic relations to this strategy, as indicated by regime's rhetorical emphasis on maintaining *minzu tuanjie* between the 56 Chinese nationalities (中华民族, *zhonghua minzu*). Regime propaganda in ethnic Hui enclave communities frequently invokes the shared commitment of all of China's ethnicities to build a strong prosperous China. Following this overview, I present a case study of Han-Hui relations to illustrate the ways in which daily, lived experience undercuts the regime's legitimating claims. I start this case study by examining how state propaganda portrays the Hui as a model minority. Following this overview, I argue that lack of substantive associations between Han and Hui causes a breakdown in interethnic relations between the groups. Ordinary Han-Hui interactions are marked by physical and cultural separation that often results in stereotyping, discrimination, and resentment that highlights the hollowness of the CCP's policies, and subverts its legitimating claims.

Ethnicity and authoritarian legitimation in the Xi Jinping Era

As the body of scholarship on the workings of authoritarian governance expands, legitimacy under authoritarian regimes garners increased scholarly attention. Scholarly discussions of legitimacy typically draw on Max Weber's conception of legitimacy as derived from either charisma, rationality, or tradition.⁴ However, in recent years scholars have sought to revise Weber's troika to better describe authoritarian governance. Feng notes that as scholars attempt to better explain the workings of authoritarian regimes, the traditional Weberian sources of legitimacy have been revisited and now include a range of other avenues through which regimes may claim legitimacy, including order, justice, security, fairness, efficiency, and economic growth.⁵

In response to this ever expanding list of sources, Sandby-Thomas argues that rather than focus on attempting to observe and measure legitimacy, a concept fraught with difficulties in both conceptualization and operationalization, a focus on strategies of legitimation, and the practices the regime pursues in pursuit of legitimacy, may yield insight into authoritarian rule.⁶ Following the end of the Mao Era, common wisdom asserted that maintaining steady economic performance replaced Maoist ideology as the linchpin of the CCP's legitimation strategy. However, such explanations fail to capture a more complicated legitimating claim. While economic performance remains the cornerstone of the regime's legitimating claims, Laliberte and Lanteigne argue that the regime also invokes its role as guardian of social stability and national unity to bolster

⁴ Max Weber, *Politics as a Vocation* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1919); Max Weber, *Economy and Society*, vol. 1 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978).

⁵ Feng, "The Dilemma of Stability Preservation in China," 11–12.

⁶ Sandby-Thomas, "Legitimacy and Legitimation."

its arguments for rightful control. Crucial to such claims are the CCP's insistence that it alone holds together the order that allows for China's prosperity.⁷ Feng observes that since the start of the reform era, the CCP has linked stability and prosperity together, posing each as the necessary precondition for the other. Such logic, Feng remarks, is best expressed through the slogan that positions "development as an unyielding principle and stability as non-negotiable responsibility."⁸ Laliberte and Lanteigne explain the CCP's legitimation strategy quite simply, explaining that the party's legitimating claims rely upon the its self-presentation as, "the only political actor with the ability to govern China; oversee its economic growth; maintain social stability; and ensure state coherence."⁹ Moreover, the regime links its position as guarantor of societal stability and economic growth to the restoration of China's position as a world power.¹⁰

While the regime construes stability broadly, any understanding of stability necessarily encompasses proper maintenance of stable ethnic relations. By officially investing the state with the power to classify ethnicity, the CCP attempts to harness the capabilities of minority collective action, and downplay ethnic resentments. The CCP invokes the term *zhonghua minzu* to promote the image of a unified nation of nationalities, and implying multiculturalism, harmony, and equality under the party's

⁷ André Laliberté and Marc Lanteigne, "The Issue of Challenges to the Legitimacy of CCP Rule," in *The Chinese Party-State in the 21st Century: Adaptation and the Reinvention of Legitimacy*, ed. André Laliberté and Marc Lanteigne (New York, NY: Routledge, 2008), 10.

⁸ Feng, "The Dilemma of Stability Preservation in China," 7. Feng provides the original Chinese as "发展是硬道理，稳定是硬任务."

⁹ Laliberté and Lanteigne, "The Issue of Challenges to the Legitimacy of CCP Rule," 2.

¹⁰ Vivienne Shue, "'Legitimacy Crisis in China?'" in *Chinese Politics: State, Society and the Market*, ed. Peter Hays Gries and Stanley Rosen (New York: Routledge, 2010), 60; Shouren Wang and Wenshu Zhao, "China's Peaceful Rise: A Cultural Alternative," *Boundary 2* 33, no. 2 (June 2006): 117–27, doi:10.1215/01903659-2006-005.

leadership. Inclusion in *zhonghua minzu* makes minorities into citizens of the Chinese state rather than subordinates of the majority Han nation.¹¹ Since beginning of its Opening and Reform period in 1979, China has made great effort to encourage people to identify as minority nationalities, and revive the perpetuation of minority ethnic culture through public displays of inclusion.¹²

These metaphors of a “family” of *zhonghua minzu* are reinforced by extensive government “ethnic propaganda” (*minzu xuanchuan*, 民族宣传) campaigns, which emphasize the indivisibility of the ethnic peoples of China, and downplay notions of ethnic conflict.¹³ In this way, the CCP uses “cultural management” in an attempt to mitigate the ability of cultural tensions to adversely affect China’s socio-political stability.¹⁴ Posters in public spaces urge cooperation and harmony in relations amongst China’s many ethnic groups. In Qinghai province’s Tibetan and Hui community of Lusha’er (鲁沙尔) outside of Xining, such signs boldly proclaimed, “Ethnic minorities cannot be separated from the Han, and the Han cannot be separated from ethnic minorities. All minorities are mutually inseparable.”¹⁵ Similarly, a billboard behind Lanzhou’s Great Western Mosque proclaimed, “a unified homeland revitalizes

¹¹ One should not take this to mean that all groups awarded *minzu* status are content in being citizens of the Chinese state. Indeed, there are notable ethnic fissures in the unity of the PRC that result from the dissatisfaction of minority groups groups, Tibetans and Uighurs principle among them.

¹² Dru C. Gladney, *Dislocating China : Reflections on Muslims, Minorities, and Other Subaltern Subjects* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 20.

¹³ Anne-Marie Brady, “‘We Are All Part of the Same Family’: China’s Ethnic Propaganda,” *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs* 41, no. 4 (2013): 159–181.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Field observations, Lusha’er, July 2014; in the original Chinese: “少数民族离不开汉族, 汉族离不开少数民族, 各民族互相离不开。”

China.”¹⁶ By tying together the unity of China to its prosperity, the CCP is able to position itself not only as the guardian of the state’s borders and its people, but also their economic well-being. A billboard near the Dongguan Mosque in Xining emphasized the necessity of ethnic unity for continued prosperity, stating “All nationalities strive together in unity, and develop together prosperously.”¹⁷ The message being conveyed is clear: without the CCP to maintain a unified China, prosperity and economic growth could not occur. China’s wealth and safety relies on the continued participation of minorities in the state under the leadership of the party. To hold together this diverse family of Chinese peoples, official propaganda implores citizens to build “ethnic unity.” Various signs throughout the ethnically diverse city of Xining announce, “Ethnic unity builds a better home,” “Let everyone follow the model of ethnic unity and allow the flowers of ethnic unity to blossom everywhere,” and “Let the blossoms of ethnic unity eagerly bloom.”¹⁸

Though slogans promoting equality and harmony attempt to shore up the CCP’s stabilizing leadership, persistent prejudice and unequal treatment in the daily inter-ethnic relations hollows out these claims and potentially undermines the party’s legitimation strategy. The presence of such messages near potentially sensitive sites—such as mosques—belies a cultural divide that lies beneath the surface. Though the PRC Constitution establishes the equality of all Chinese citizens, critics assert that such

¹⁶ Field observations, Lanzhou, July 2014; in the original Chinese: “统一祖国振兴中华”

¹⁷ Field observations, Xining, April 2016; in the original Chinese: “各民族共同团结奋斗，共同繁荣发展。”

¹⁸ Field observations, Xining, July 2014; in the original Chinese: “民族团结共建美好家园,” “人人争做民族团结模范处处开民族团结之花,” and “让民族团结之花竞相绽放,” respectively.

guarantees are inflected with the “haughty, even racist” mentality of the majority Han.¹⁹ In assessing the efficacy of the regime’s stability management (维稳, *weiwēn*) tactics, Feng remarks that the CCP’s paranoia about losing legitimacy spurs the party to use a heavy hand in employing stabilizing measures, often violating the law in the process. As Feng notes the more the regime enforces stability maintenance, the more unstable society becomes.²⁰

The party’s attempt to manage inter-ethnic relations produces a similar dilemma. As the regime expends more effort in trumpeting a message of *minzu tuanjie*, harmony, and family-like relations, the more the daily experiences of prejudice and discrimination undercut the regime’s legitimating claims. Gordon W. Allport’s “Intergroup Contact Theory” asserts that the roots of prejudice lie in lack of knowledge or understanding between two groups. Direct contact between them, Allport asserts, may result in a reduction of prejudices as interaction replaces the generalizations the groups make about one another with greater understanding.²¹ When such contact occurs through regular, associational channels, inter-group contact may provide a means for mitigating instances of conflict between them. Where contact between the groups is limited or negative, however, relations between groups may indeed worsen.²² The CCP’s rhetoric and policies surrounding ethnicity do not foster such positive associational contact, and instead foster feelings of prejudice and instances of discrimination. By laying bare the

¹⁹ Mackerras, “Tibetans, Uyghurs and Multinational ‘China,’” 225–27.

²⁰ Feng, “The Dilemma of Stability Preservation in China,” 7–12.; Feng invokes the phrase “越维稳越不稳.”

²¹ Gordon W. Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice*, 25th Anniversary Ed. (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1979), 260–81.

²² Ashutosh Varshney, *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life: Hindus and Muslims in India* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002).

regime's inability to deliver on its promises of equality and shared stakes in the state's prosperity, such instances of discrimination discredit the state-sponsored rhetoric that proclaims the party's role as a purveyor of prosperity and stability.

In the most extreme cases, the CCP's failures to foster conditions of equality and unity in interethnic relations gives rise to contentious, and occasionally violent political movements, including ethnic-separatism. The well publicized conflicts between the state and Tibetan and Uyghur separatists illustrates this potential quite clearly.

However, even far less contentious cases, disjuncture between the regime's rhetoric and daily realities exposes the failure of the party's legitimation strategy. Though the Hui, more commonly known as Chinese Muslims, may be regarded by some as a thoroughly integrated, "model religious minority"²³ a closer examination of Han-Hui relations indicates a continued, pervasive cultural and physical separateness between Han and Hui. Though some, like Li and Ji assert that "the Hui and Han are getting integrated so much that they are somewhat indistinguishably 'us' in 'you' and 'you' in 'us,'"²⁴ the lack of cultural understanding and persistence of prejudice between them underlines the regime's lack of success in delivering on its promises of promoting *minzu tuanjie*. The following case study of Han-Hui relations demonstrates that mutual ignorance between Han and Hui stemming from lack of substantive inter-group contact creates a disjuncture between Han and Hui that undercuts the party's legitimating claims.

²³ Jieli Li and Lei Ji, "Still 'Familiar' But No Longer 'Strangers': Hui Muslims in Contemporary China," in *Ethnic China: Identity, Assimilation, and Resistance*, ed. Xiaobing Li and Patrick Fuliang Shan (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2015), 154.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 167.

Han-Hui relations provide a powerful illustration of how the regime's campaigns utilizing a platform of interethnic harmony and stable interethnic relations as a key component of its legitimation strategy actually undercut the regime's credibility. While the late Qing and Republican eras saw intermittent uprisings and rebellions led by charismatic Imams from communities of Chinese speaking Muslims in the northwest,²⁵ after the founding of the current People's Republic, the CCP made great efforts to coopt Hui leadership into collaboration with the state,²⁶ and tout the Hui as a model Islamic minority.²⁷ Lipman asserts such high levels of assimilation amongst the Hui resulted in the Han regarding them as, "familiar strangers," who are not easily distinguished from the Han.²⁸ In recent years, the relationship between Hui communities and the state garnered increased attention in international media, particularly as a contrast to the more restive or conflictual relations between the PRC and Uighur communities.²⁹ The regime's frequent citing of the Hui as an example of an Islamic minority living contentedly and cooperatively under the leadership of the CCP illustrates the

²⁵ For further discussion concerning Islamic rebellions in the late Qing, see; Jonathan N. Lipman, "The Border World of Gansu, 1895-1835" (Dissertation, Stanford University, 1981); Haiyun Ma, "New Teachings and New Territories: Religion, Regulations, and Regions in Qing Gansu, 1700-1800" (Dissertation, Georgetown University, 2007).

²⁶ Dillon, *China's Muslim Hui Community*, 87–88.

²⁷ Élisabeth Allès, Leïla Chérif-Chebbi, and Constance-Hélène Halfon, "Chinese Islam: Unity and Fragmentation," *Religion, State and Society* 31, no. 1 (March 1, 2003): 12, doi:10.1080/0963749032000045837.

²⁸ Lipman, *Familiar Strangers*.

²⁹ Jacobs, "Light Government Touch Lets China's Hui Practice Islam in the Open"; "China's Other Muslims," *The Economist*, accessed October 9, 2016, <http://www.economist.com/news/china/21708274-choosing-assimilation-chinas-hui-have-become-one-worlds-most-successful-muslim>; Alice Su, "Meet China's State-Approved Muslims," *Foreign Policy*, November 2, 2016, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2016/11/02/meet-chinas-state-approved-muslims-hui-linxia-beijing-compromise/>.

importance of the Hui to the CCP's legitimating strategy, both domestically and abroad. Gladney notes that the Hui occupy a unique position on the civilizational spectrum between the two poles of Islamic and Chinese civilizational spheres.³⁰ As an imam in Xining explained, "Hui culture is like the child of two major cultures Chinese Culture and Islamic Culture. Chinese culture is our mother culture, and Islamic culture is like our father culture. Even if we are currently closer to mother culture, the father culture is most important. We can't forget this father culture."³¹ Such a unique position makes the Hui symbolically important to the CCP as cultural envoys to the larger Islamic World.

Given the linguistic and cultural similarities of the Hui to the Han, and the centrality of the Hui to the party's claims of providing ethnic unity, an thorough examination of Han-Hui relations provides an ideal case for assessing the regime's legitimation tactics. While the prominent ethnic separatist movements for Tibetans, Uighurs and Mongolians certainly indicate failures of the CCP's ethnic policies, the persistence of ethnic chauvinism and discrimination towards the Hui demonstrates the CCP's failure even among those supposedly integrated ethnic communities. If relations with the Hui, who share many ascriptive and cultural traits with the Han, fail to deliver on the promises of equality, and display a lack of real interethnic association, the failures of the regime's claims of acting as the guardian of social stability will be laid bare.

"Hanzu" and "Minzu": ethnic categorization and social control under the minzu system

³⁰ Gladney, *Dislocating China*, 99–103.

³¹ Interview: XN150061516

Interethnic relations in China occur in the context of a Stalinist system of ethnic categorization that regulates the expression ethnic identity, referred to as the *minzu* system.³² Under this system fifty-six groups are officially recognized by the state as *minzu* (民族, ethnic nationalities).³³ *Minzu* status is defined through the use of Stalinist criteria, which demands that an ethnic group possess the “four commons”: a common language, a common territory, a common economic life and a common “psychological make-up,” which has been reinterpreted by the state to mean a common culture.³⁴

The *minzu* system is the culmination of a longstanding effort to incorporate minorities into the Chinese state.³⁵ Officially China uses the term *zhonghua minzu* (中华民族, translated loosely as “Chinese nationalities”) to invoke the image of a unified nation of nationalities.³⁶ Starting as early as the late Qing Dynasty, the state struggled

³² Gladney, *Dislocating China*, 9. *Minzu* status is defined through the use of Stalinist criteria, which demands that an ethnic group possess the “four commons”: a common language, a common territory, a common economic life and a common “psychological make-up,” which has been reinterpreted by the state to mean a common culture.

³³ Louisa Schein, *Minority Rules: The Miao and the Feminine in China's Cultural Politics* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000), 81–83.

³⁴ Gladney, *Dislocating China*, 9.

³⁵ Thomas S. Mullaney, “Critical Han Studies: Introduction and Prolegomenon,” in *Critical Han Studies: The History, Representation and Identity of China's Majority*, ed. Thomas S. Mullaney et al. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 1–22; Sanping Chen, *Multicultural China in the Early Middle Ages*, 1st ed, Encounters with Asia (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012); Dru C. Gladney, “Representing Nationality in China: Refiguring Majority/Minority Identities,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 53, no. 1 (February 1, 1994): 92–123, doi:10.2307/2059528; Kai-wing Chow, “Imagining Boundaries of Blood: Zhang Binglin and the Invention of the Han ‘Race’ in Modern China,” in *The Construction of Racial Identities in China and Japan*, ed. Frank Dikötter (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997), 34–52; James Leibold, *Reconfiguring Chinese Nationalism: How the Qing Frontier and Its Indigenes Became Chinese*, 1st edition (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

³⁶ For further discourse on the evolution and origins of this term, see; James Leibold, “Competing Narratives of Racial Unity in Republican China From the Yellow Emperor to Peking Man,” *Modern China* 32, no. 2 (April 1, 2006): 190–91, doi:10.1177/0097700405285275.

to establish the unity of the *zhonghua minzu* to justify consolidation of the frontier.³⁷ Initially believing that these separate groups could be “‘smelted together in the same oven’ (熔液为一炉, *rongye wei yilu*) with the Han majority to fashioning a new corporate, yet equally pure, *zhonghua minzu*,”³⁸ leading intellectuals called for “minzu spirit” (*minzu jingshen*, 民族精神) as a means for increasing the national consciousness and saving the state.³⁹ During and after the Chinese Civil War, the CCP promised minorities that the party would put an end to “Han Chauvinism” (*DaHan Zhuyi*, 大汉主义), and offer minorities autonomy under CCP rule.⁴⁰ The party took great strides to recruit minority youth hoping these new cadres would become “the new minority elite.”⁴¹ Since beginning of its Opening and Reform period in 1979, China has made great effort to encourage people to identify as minority nationalities, and revive the perpetuation of minority ethnic culture through public displays of inclusion.⁴²

The implementation of the *minzu* classification system allows the CCP regime to control conceptions of both the other and the Han majority. Through interaction with this fixed, minority “other,” the boundaries of Han identity become more clearly defined. Inclusion of these categories of ethnicity in the state has allowed China to

³⁷ Ralph A. Litzinger, *Other Chinas: The Yao and the Politics of National Belonging* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000), 5.

³⁸ Leibold, “Competing Narratives of Racial Unity in Republican China,” 190–91.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 185–6.

⁴⁰ Mullaney, “Critical Han Studies,” 10–11; Litzinger, *Other Chinas*, 4–8.

⁴¹ Litzinger, *Other Chinas*, 7–8.

⁴² Gladney, *Dislocating China*, 20.

harness to positive capabilities of minority collective action. Minorities are made into citizens of the Chinese state rather than subordinates of the Han nation.⁴³

James Leibold notes that maintaining the vast, and diverse—both territorially and ethnically—geobody of the former Qing Empire requires the current CCP regime to invoke a larger notion of Chineseness. The CCP stakes its claim as the successor of the former empire in benevolently presiding over this family of ethnicities. The ultimate result, Leibold contends, is a “mestizo like” notion of Chinese civilization.⁴⁴ Schein argues that in strictly classifying ethnic identity, the state aims for “the establishment of certain permissible forms of difference, together with the occlusion of all other sorts of unruly heterogeneity.”⁴⁵ Gaining control over official expression of the content of a group’s identity also allows the state to control the territory these groups inhabit, a matter of crucial importance to state security and survival.⁴⁶

“Love your Country, Love your Faith”: Han-Hui relations through an official lens

Understanding the disconnect between the CCP’s legitimating claims and the lived experiences of Hui citizens requires a brief examination of the picture of Han-Hui

⁴³ One should not take this to mean that all groups awarded *minzu* status are content in being citizens of the Chinese state. Indeed, there are notable ethnic fissures in the unity of the PRC that result from the dissatisfaction of minority groups groups, Tibetans and Uighurs principle among them.

⁴⁴ Leibold, *Reconfiguring Chinese Nationalism*.

⁴⁵ Schein, p. 73

⁴⁶ Thomas Heberer, *China and Its National Minorities : Autonomy or Assimilation?* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1989), 16; Siu Keung Cheung, Joseph Tse-Hei Lee, and Lida V Nedilsky, eds., *Marginalization in China*, 1st ed.. (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 12.

relations presented by the CCP. State propaganda paints a picture of the Hui as eager and patriotic participants in the Chinese state. Signs at mosques throughout northwest China encourage patriotic behavior amongst the Hui. A mural at the Great Mosque of Najiahu implores its congregants to “Love your country and love your faith.”⁴⁷ In Xining, a banner at a small mosque to the north of the city’s Hui quarter urges residents to be a bulwark against terrorism, by beseeching “Don’t let terrorism destroy ethnic unity and society stability!”⁴⁸ Such messages that emphasize the Chinese citizenship of the Hui as coequal to their membership in the Islamic *umma* suggest that in the official, PRC-sanctioned understanding of Hui identity, the group’s religious and civic identities overlap, and do not conflict. In this sense, the government presents the Hui as a compliant, exemplary group, not prone to religious extremism or separatist tendencies.

Likewise, official sites of Hui culture strive to portray the Hui as key contributors to the development of modern China, and the establishment of the PRC. At the Ningxia Provincial Museum, an English language explanatory sign states that the Hui “are just as patriotic as they once were with their beliefs remain unchanged!” In the same exhibit, another sign proclaims, proclaims “we welcome and embrace this group with firm belief and with striking characteristics, which, in the time honored process of development has well blended with the age-old Chinese civilizations,” suggesting widespread assimilation is a natural outcome of development.⁴⁹ The Hui Culture Park (中华回乡文化园) in Najiahu, a predominantly Hui suburb to the south of Yinchuan,

⁴⁷ Field observation, Najiahu, July 2014; In the original Chinese, “爱国爱教.”

⁴⁸ Field observation, Xining, July 2014; In the original Chinese, “不让恐怖行为破坏民族团结，社会稳定的局面!”

⁴⁹ Field observations, Ningxia Provincial Museum, February 2016. In the original Chinese: “他们的信仰依然不改，他们的爱国情怀依然不变.”

devotes two of its five exhibit halls to presenting displays related to “Contributions of the Hui ethnic group to Chinese Civilization.” The English language introductory signs to these exhibits proclaim, “The Hui ethnic group’s progress and development is consistently associated with the fate of the Chinese nation.” Further, the sign remarks, the Hui “defended their national dignity courageously,” and were “devoted to rejuvenating the Chinese nation.”⁵⁰ Signs bearing these claims are placed next to displays which feature prominent Hui revolutionaries who fought alongside the CCP in its campaign against the Japanese and Nationalist armies, and Hui thinkers who contributed to the consolidation of the current PRC. In Xining, the former residence of the Ma Bufang, the last KMT-aligned, Hui warlord of the clique to serve as governor of the Northwest has been preserved as a museum since it was abandoned by its former tenant in 1949. The rooms in the house are meagerly furnished, and the signs outside the buildings do not delve deeply into Ma's biography. Any discussion of Ma's Hui identity is all but absent from the museum.⁵¹ Like other sites of Hui culture, these museums side-step the historical tensions and political ambiguities of the Hui as members of Chinese society. As Susette Cooke observes, “the state has not yet resolved how to deal with this legacy.”⁵² Instead, in both museums, such troubles are pushed aside, and the Hui are presented as willing and eager participants in the founding of the new Chinese state.

Such characterizations of the Hui buttress claims that the Hui are integrated into Chinese society, politically and culturally. Unlike other recognized minzu, who speak

⁵⁰ Field observations, Najiahu Hui Culture Park, July 2014.

⁵¹ Field observations, Ma Bufang Mansion, Xining, May 2016.

⁵² Cooke, 416.

minority languages, the Hui are a *hanyu minzu* (汉语民族), or Chinese-speaking nationality, making them linguistically and culturally closer to the majority Han than other Islamic minorities.⁵³ In the minds of many Han, the assimilation and Sinicization of the Hui is all but complete. A Han university student studying Chinese Islamic architecture in Yinchuan remarked that Han-Hui relationships were relatively free of tension as, “the Hui have already been Han-ified.”⁵⁴

Han ignorance and Hui stereotypes: the Hui as caricatured in daily interactions

General ignorance of the Islamic faith, and its influence on daily lifestyles often clouds Han perceptions of Hui culture. Han tourists visiting the Hui Culture Park questioned the young Hui woman serving as their tour guide about the observance and purpose of the Ramadan fast. Later, at the park’s replica prayer hall, a young Hui man giving an introductory talk explained the reasons that Muslims abstained from pork to Han guests. “Han visitors often ask me why we Hui do not eat pork,” he remarked, adding that they often want to know if it is because “pigs are the Hui’s ancestors.”⁵⁵

Museum displays reinforce such caricature. At the Hui Culture Park’s Museum, a mock-up of a “traditional” Hui peasant’s home occupies the core of the museum’s exhibit on Hui daily life. Inside, visitors find a rustic home complete with a wood burning stove, and basic kitchen. Across the hall, a mannequin Hui woman prays in her

⁵³ Gladney, “Islam in China.”

⁵⁴ Personal communication, Yinchuan, July 2014; in the original Chinese, “他们回族人已经被汉化了。”

⁵⁵ Field observations, Najiahu Hui Culture Park, July 2014.

rudimentary bedroom. When visitors arrive at the lobby of the museum, they are treated to a 20-minute film that provides an introduction to the Hui. Throughout the film, the Hui are portrayed as a rural, pastoral people. The traditions, food, ceremonies, and music portrayed in the film are all those of Hui living in the countryside and little attention is given to urban Hui communities.⁵⁶

Han interaction with Hui culture beyond these official museum displays, displays a similar lack of substance. Due to increased rates of internal migration from less prosperous western China to the wealthier eastern coastal regions (often referred to as “floating population”, 流动人口, *liudong renkou*), nearly every city in China boasts restaurants serving *qingzhen* (清真, *halal*) cuisine, usually serving bowls of the famous Hui cuisine, *niurou la mian* (牛肉拉面, hand-made beef noodles). For many Han, eateries like these provide the most common point of contact with Hui culture. Representations of Hui culture in these *qingzhen* restaurants often depict the Hui as ethnic caricatures (For examples, see the images in Figure 2 Below). In Jinan, at a *la mian* shop in the Hui Quarter (*Huimin Xiaoqu*, 回民小区), a series of posters depicts Hui cartoon cooks preparing noodles. The men in the posters, who all wear traditional white Islamic prayer caps (known as *baimaozi*, 白帽子), happily stretch the dough for noodles, slice beef, or pour water for the soup’s broth. Some of the cartoons are elderly men who wear long, wispy white beards.⁵⁷ At another *qingzhen* restaurant inside the WanDa Plaza Mall in Yinchuan, a noodle and tea shop lures customers with two life-size mannequins of a Hui man and woman wearing the “official” traditional ethnic

⁵⁶ Field observations, Najiahu Hui Culture Park, July 2014.

⁵⁷ Field Observations, Jinan, November 2015

costumes of the Hui depicted in state propaganda, and sitting cross-legged on a carpet, eating noodles and drinking tea.⁵⁸

Figure 2.2: Caricatures of the Hui in restaurant advertising from Jinan (top) and Yinchuan (bottom).



⁵⁸ Field Observations, Yinchuan, March 2016

Depictions of the Hui like the ones found in restaurants offer little education about Hui culture, or Islamic dietary law. Instead, they present a cartoonish and one-dimensional view of the Hui as pork-abstaining, bearded, noodle-makers in white hats. Such bizarre mischaracterizations about Hui culture and the tenets of Islamic faith suggests that the *absence* of associational or quotidian interaction reduces Hui identity to highly stylized caricatures. While many Han understand that the Hui adhere to a dietary code which prohibits common foodstuffs like pork, many misunderstand the foundations of these restrictions. A 26 year old Han woman in Jinan, simply remarked, “We (Han) eat pork and they (Hui) don’t eat pork, and so this leads to a lot of difficulties.”⁵⁹ Another respondent, a 32 year old Han master’s student in Yinchuan explained that, prior to visiting a Hui suburb for a class field trip, she did not understand the differences in lifestyle between Han and Hui. Only after speaking with residents did she come to realize that Islamic law provided the foundation for such differences.⁶⁰ Similarly, a dive bar in Yinchuan advertised itself as a *qingzhen* (清真), or “halal” bar. When asked how an establishment that served alcohol (which is expressly prohibited by Islam) could be considered *qingzhen*, the Han owner explained that the bar could be considered *qingzhen* because it was a place that was quiet and tranquil (*qing*, 清), and served only “real” (*zhen*, 真) imported beer from Europe and Singapore. Further questions revealed that the owner lacked any knowledge of the religious significance or specific meaning of *qingzhen*, and saw no problem with appropriating it to advertise his establishment.⁶¹

⁵⁹ Interview, JN39111115; in the original Chinese: “我们吃猪肉他们不吃猪肉光这一点会导致很多矛盾。”

⁶⁰ Interview, YN106032616

⁶¹ Field observations, Yinchuan, February 2016.

Ignorance of even these most basic aspects of Hui lifestyle can lead to feelings of disrespect and potential for conflict. A Jinan Hui respondent in his 50s explained:

They (Han) only understand a little bit, and aren't really clear (about the Hui). And if they're not really clear, it's really easy to offend Hui, or show disrespect to Hui. For example, if you're all eating together, you shouldn't eat pork, but they share it with everyone. Stuff like that really easily starts fights.⁶²

“Han people rarely come to this part of the city”: separation and prejudice in Han-Hui relations

Physical separation contributes to this sense of cultural distance between Han and Hui. Hui neighborhoods often stand apart from the remainder of a city. A 28 year old Hui teacher from Jinan described her experience growing up in a small village on the edge of the city. She explained that a road that ran through the village divided it between east and west, with the western half being inhabited exclusively by Hui and the eastern half by Han.⁶³ In the town of Weizhou in Tongxin County, south of Yinchuan, residents estimated that Hui comprised 95% of the population, and claimed that Han residents in the community were infrequent and stayed for only short durations.⁶⁴

In urban centers, such physical separateness between Han and Hui stands out even more clearly, as historically Hui neighborhoods stood apart from the core of cities.⁶⁵

Often such separation occurred as a result of the tendency of the Hui to build

⁶² Interview: JN32103115, in the original Chinese: “他们也就了解一点吧，不是很清晰，不是很清晰的话，有一些容易冒犯回族，有一些对回族不尊重。比如说在一个桌子上吃饭，你应该就是不吃猪肉，他非得给人家吃，这样就容易造成打仗，吵架。”

⁶³ Interview, JN22101315.

⁶⁴ Field observations, Weizhou, February 2016.

⁶⁵ Piper Rae Gaubatz, *Beyond the Great Wall: Urban Form and Transformation on the Chinese Frontiers* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1996).

communities in which homes and businesses clustered around a central mosque.⁶⁶

Often, the insularity of these Hui enclaves makes them impenetrable to non-Muslim outsiders. In Jinan, on Dikou Street (a large avenue near the city's central train station), Han residents are almost completely oblivious to a Hui enclave surrounding a small mosque. Han residents living on nearby Wansheng Alley claimed to be unaware of the existence of the mosque, and uncertain that any Hui people lived nearby.⁶⁷ Elsewhere, as in Xining, the city's Hui Quarter was historically separated from the core by city walls making the community segregated physically, as well as by habit or custom.⁶⁸

Though the walls which separated Xining's Hui community may have been razed, the boundaries which they once demarcated still remain salient. Most residents still recognize the city's Chengdong District as the Hui Quarter. A Hui graduate student in anthropology remarked that these neighborhood configurations still influence the course of daily life in Xining. While walking down Dongguan Da Jie, the large boulevard that lies at the core of Xining's Hui quarter, he remarked that, despite close proximity between Xining's many minority groups, interactions between them continue to be rare. "Han people rarely come to this part of the city," he remarked.⁶⁹ Those Han that do live in the area, he explained, often attempt to find somewhere else to live. The Han tenants who previously rented the apartment in which his parents lived, he noted, had been eager to leave the predominantly Hui enclave. To the west of Dongguan Da Jie, the Hui population becomes scarce. "You rarely see people wearing white prayer

⁶⁶ Zhou and Ma, *Development and Decline of Beijing's Hui Muslim Community*.

⁶⁷ Field observations, Jinan, July 2014.

⁶⁸ Gaubatz, 54–62.

⁶⁹ Interview, BJ11091715; In the original Chinese, "汉族人平常不来这里。"

hats or hijabs outside of this neighborhood,” he observed.⁷⁰ Another Xining resident, a 43 year old Hui woman who worked as a professor of sociology, remarked that to non-Hui, the city’s Hui Quarter was looked on as poor and dirty. She remarked:

The Chengdong District is a very old one, because it’s the Hui Quarter, the Muslim Quarter. It gives people, especially us Hui, a feeling of closeness. But to other nationalities? They feel that the place is dirty and disorderly; that the people are uncouth and of low quality; that it’s chaotic and such. And because they feel that it’s such low quality, taxi drivers don’t agree to go there. If they (potential passengers) are Hui, especially if they’re Hui women like the middle aged women who wear headscarves, they (the drivers) won’t agree to stop the car for them, because they’re afraid that they’re so uncouth that they’ll argue about the fare.⁷¹

Respondents elsewhere also echoed these claims that the Hui were stigmatized as poor and backward. One Beijing Hui respondent in his 70s grumbled that Hui in the community were looked down upon. “The Hui are an ethnic minority,” he explained, “and ethnic minorities are all poor, including the Hui. You can see that the jobs Hui have are all really bad. They all have small carts that sell *nian gao* (年糕, a kind of sweet snack) for 1-2 *kuai* a slice. This isn’t good work. You can’t earn money.”⁷²

Likewise, in Jinan, Han residents described the Hui Quarter, as a “dirty, disorderly, and dilapidated” (脏,乱,差; *zang, luan, cha*) place. One Han respondent, a 30 year old English teacher from Jinan remarked that her discomfort going into the city’s Hui

⁷⁰ Interview, BJ11091715; In the original Chinese, “这个小区外你很少看人穿白帽子, 包巾。”

⁷¹ Interview, XN117041616; in the original Chinese: “东区是非常老的一个区, 因为是回族区, 穆斯林区, 给人一点, 本民族来说的话亲近一点, 但是其他民族呢? 就是觉得那地方又乱又脏人又不文明, 素质又差, 就是这样的混乱, 脏。然后素质很差, 出租车司机都不愿意打的, 如果有回民, 尤其是回族的阿娘, 就像中年妇女戴盖头的, 他们都不愿意停下来, 给她们停车, 因为他们素质差会吵架”

⁷² Interview: BJ30102415; in the original Chinese: “回族就是少数民族。少数民族都很穷, 包括回族。你会看, 他们的工作都不好。他们都有小卡车, 卖年糕, 1-2块钱一块。这样的工作不好, 不能挣钱。”

quarter came close to physical disgust. “The Hui don't eat pork, and instead they eat lots of mutton. The smell of mutton really disgusts me, and so I feel that the Hui Quarter is just dirty and disorderly,” she explained.⁷³

Due to a lack of substantial knowledge and interaction, differences in culture are frequently interpreted by the Han as a kind of condescension or disdain from the Hui. The 26 year old Han woman explained that, in her eyes, the Hui treated the Han with high-handed contempt. Though she admitted to not truly understanding the reasons for the Hui's lifestyle differences, she cited them as a sign of Hui self-importance. “I just feel that the Hui are naturally a little arrogant. Which is to say, ‘I'm Hui; I'm a minority,’ they have that kind of attitude,” she explained.⁷⁴ The Han teacher echoed, “In my view, Hui aren't very friendly, especially toward Han. Hui are very friendly to other Hui, but in my view, Hui act a little superior.”⁷⁵ Often these Han cited government policies favoring the Hui and other minorities as responsible for creating and promoting such a feeling of superiority and entitlement. A middle aged Han man who had grown up in Yantai, to the east of Jinan, described Han-Hui relations as marked by a unique form of dislike stemmed by governmental policies:

Outside of Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, Gansu, Xining, and a few Hui areas of Henan, most Han really exclude the Hui. This kind of exclusion isn't like the way Tibetans are excluded. It's completely different from that kind of exclusion. This kind of exclusion in my opinion is done with a lot of enmity. As opposed to Tibetans who are excluded because of cultural misunderstanding. I feel like Han reserve that kind of

⁷³ Interview, JN41112015; in the original Chinese: “因为回民他们不吃猪肉，他们吃的是羊肉。我对于那个气味很反感，首先我觉得回民小区乱，脏”

⁷⁴ Interview, JN39111115; in the original Chinese “我觉得回民其实天生有一种骄傲感的，就是说我是回民是少数民族，会有那样一种感觉。”

⁷⁵ Interview, JN41112015. Remarks in the original Chinese: “回族的人可能就想成是民族的问题，那么就有很多人帮助回民”；“在我观点来看回民不是很友好，尤其对汉族人不是很友好。回民与回民之间很友好，而且我觉得回民有一点霸道。”

*feeling toward the Hui; the exclusion carries a little hostility; I've never experienced that, so I don't know how that hostility comes to be. But I feel like it's possible that some of the reasons comes from the government.*⁷⁶

These resentments, which imagine the Hui as an advantaged, contemptuous “other”, also give rise to notions that the Hui are clannish and unwelcoming. One woman, a Hui factory worker in her mid-40s who lived in the Hui Quarter also described the neighborhood as displaying solidarity because its residents were ethnic minorities. “We who live in this neighborhood are more unified than others because we’re all *shaoshu minzu*,” she boasted.⁷⁷ While such expression of solidarity and unity may strengthen the Hui community internally, outsiders often view such togetherness negatively. Han commenting on Hui unity expressed fear that such tribalism led Hui to gang up on and bully or intimidate the Han. The Hui sense of solidarity, many complained, cause every conflict between Han and Hui to be drawn along ethnic lines. The Han English teacher remarked that whenever conflicts arise between Han and Hui in Jinan’s Hui Quarter, “Hui think of it as an ethnic problem. That neighborhood has a lot of Hui who will come help out other Hui.” Others expressed frustration that Jinan’s Hui Quarter elided many environmental and sanitary regulations because the government feared provoking a response along ethnic lines. Several respondents

⁷⁶ Interview: JN53120515, in the original Chinese: “除了在宁夏回族自治区，除了在甘肃，除了在西宁，然后河南一部分的回民区之外，大部分的汉族人比较排斥回族，比较排斥。这个排斥还不像是藏族的那个方式。不一样，完全不一样的那种排斥，这种排斥在我的感觉，就是很有敌意的那种排斥。而对藏文化，则是那个不了解的排斥。我倒觉得，汉人对于回民，更多得救类似于回族那种感觉，带有一丝敌意的排斥，这我没经历过什么事情，我不知道这个新形成的。但我觉得，也有可能一部分原因是来自于政府吧。”

⁷⁷ Interview, JN18100515; in the original Chinese: “我们这儿比别的地方的人更团结，因为我们这儿都是少数民族”

claimed that the local government neighborhood's dilapidated state because it feared the Hui would resist if the neighborhood was demolished.⁷⁸ One resident in the Jinan Hui quarter lamented that the neighborhood's problems with air pollution from barbecue smoke continued because the government would not dare enforce a ban on open-air grills in the neighborhood, as to avoid an ethnic riot by the Hui.⁷⁹ In both cases, respondents complained that the Hui used intimidating displays of solidarity to gain preferential treatment from local authorities seeking to assuage ethnic tensions. However, such displays of solidarity may also provide a coping mechanism. As one respondent in Jinan explained, "There's really nothing we can do (about prejudice). We can only unify, and deal with this ethnic bullying together."⁸⁰

The conditions of resentment based on the Hui's perceived clannishness and arrogance, and the perception that the Hui receive favorable treatment from the state because of their minority status, creates the potential for ethnically motivated conflict. In Laozhai village, the contact leading me on the tour through the community explained that conflicts between the villages often resulted in anti-Islamic vandalism. The previous year, he recounted, a dispute over contracting rights for the construction of a set of apartment towers between competing Han and Hui construction firms resulted in a pig's head being nailed to the door of the residence of the foreman of the Hui team in the dead of night. In the end, my contact noted, the local party officials intervened to prevent further escalation, siding with the Hui team, much to the chagrin of the rival

⁷⁸ Interviews: JN22101315, JN41112015,

⁷⁹ Interview: JN23101515

⁸⁰ Interview, JN32103115; In the original Chinese, "没有办法, 就只能团结起来, 共同对付那些大一点的民族的欺负."

Han team.⁸¹ In Xining, a Hui respondent explained how Han provoked fights by using the Islamic taboo on pork as an epithet against the Hui:

*(Pigs) are incredibly taboo. For example, some Han will swear at you by calling you “Zhu HuiHui” (literally, “Pig Hui”) or something like that, and maybe you want to strike back, maybe even to the point of fighting. This is maybe a kind of subconscious effect.*⁸²

Instances of bigotry like these stand firmly in contradiction to Li and Ji’s assertions that while the Hui are certainly “familiar”, they are longer “strangers.” Instead, they indicate that the experiences of urban Hui residents remain marked by cultural misunderstanding, separation, and prejudice. While the Han may regard the Hui as assimilated, and essentially “Hanified”, the lack of genuine knowledge and the feelings of resentment toward the Hui held by many Han suggests the Hui remain an “other”. Gaps in understanding continue to perpetuate small resentments and suspicions between the groups. Thus, despite being held up as an integrated, model minority, the Hui remain “familiar strangers” in the eyes of many Han.

Conclusions: the limitations of ethnic unity as a legitimating narrative

As the self-proclaimed guardian of China’s national self-interest, the CCP hangs its legitimating claims to on its ability to serve as a guarantor of prosperity and domestic stability. Providing stable inter-ethnic relations comprises a crucial part of this climate of stability. While the rhetoric of the state may proclaim ethnic unity, and mutual

⁸¹ Field observations, Laozhai, December 2015

⁸² Interview: XN112041216; in the original Chinese: “对这个非常忌讳。汉族人比方说对你就是有时候骂“猪回回”这些，可能就要奋起反击，甚至要打架的这种。这可能就是潜意识的这样一种影响”

benefit for all peoples, the daily interactions between Han and Hui suggest a very different reality. The failure to deliver on the promises of stable, equal, prosperous interethnic relations pose a thorny problem for the regime. Such failures threaten not just the regime's policies on ethnicity, but the legitimation strategy more broadly and suggest that the CCP's own attempts to create such stability through ethnic policy are potentially destabilizing. The CCP's legitimation strategy falls short in two major respects. Firstly, the policies of the state foster Han resentments at perceived minority privilege and special treatment at the expense of the Han. Finally, the promises of unity and prosperity lay bare the discrepancies between Han and minorities.

By actively intervening to attempt to create stable ethnic relations, the CCP's policies on ethnicity work at counter purposes. Perceptions among Han respondents that Hui acted arrogantly or flaunted privilege as minorities suggest that the CCP's ethnic policies only serve to stoke Han resentment. The accounts of Jinan residents who complained about the local party's unwillingness to regulate or interfere in Hui neighborhoods suggest that Han perceptions that the state treats minorities differently may in fact give rise to the kinds of prejudice and ethnic resentments the party seeks to avoid.

Secondly, a lack of positive associative contact between Han and Hui leads to the development of negative associations between the groups. Rather than the equality and togetherness suggested by the regime, separation and prejudice still frequently occur throughout the course of Han-Hui relations. Despite the regime's insistence that all nationalities "develop together prosperously," the stigmatization of the Hui quarters in Jinan and Xining as poor and backward illustrates the unevenness of the benefits of

China's development, and the failure of the regime to deliver on its legitimating promises of stability and development.

More damaging still are the occasional lapses into ethnically-motivated vandalism or violence, like those in Laozhai. If even the Hui, whom many in the party and the public more generally consider to be the model for successful integration, and an exemplary, model minority experience these kinds of discrimination and prejudice, then party's claims that other groups expressing dissatisfaction with the state—notably Tibetans and Uighurs—are extremist outliers loses credibility. These daily experiences of disunity and discrimination mar the CCP's rosy picture of the various ethnicities of China coming together as the larger family of *zhonghua minzu*, and underline the limitations on using a narrative of ethnic unity to legitimate CCP rule.

3. Choosing: citizenship, faith, marriage and Hui identity

“Conversion must come from your heart.”

Sitting in a chair by the window on the fifteenth floor of a sleek, modern, office tower in Yinchuan’s Jinfeng District, my respondent, a 32 year old Han woman who worked as an executive for the creative design company housed on the floor, beamed as she described the production she was set to oversee. As one of the leading cultural productions companies in the capital city of the Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, the company decided to showcase unique aspects of Hui culture by filming a series of documentary programs to air on local TV. The next of these, she explained, would be a traditional Hui wedding. Her excitement stemmed from the fact that the wedding set to be filmed was her own.

As an ethnic majority Han Chinese woman marrying into an ethnic minority Hui Muslim household in a city where such marriages only rarely occurred, my respondent occupied a unique position. When asked whether or not her marriage required her to make lifestyle changes, she remarked that her fiancé’s family expected her to convert to Islam. Doing so entailed a thorough preparatory course. “I’ve got to go to an *ahong* (imam, 阿訇) at the mosque,” she explained, “and the *ahong* will teach me a course that will tell me how to observe matters of the faith after I’ve converted.” She continued to describe the path toward conversion to be completed before the wedding:

(The ahong) will also ask me why I want to convert to Islam, because before I join the faith, everyone needs know if my conversion is voluntary and free. If I was forced to join, he wouldn’t really approve of the conversion. Their requirement is that conversion must come from your

*heart. You must think this faith is good.*¹

The conversion journey my respondent described illustrates the powerful connection between ordinary lifestyle choices like marriage, and cohabitation, and deeply held identity. In choosing marry a Hui man, she also engaged in a voluntary decision to take on a new religious faith, and uphold the lifestyle practices involved in observing it. In so doing, her choice in marriage in conversion carried not only deep personal meaning, but also ethnic significance.

Recent scholarship on everyday nationalism stresses the way that people reinforce and maintain markers that line out an identity by making national choices in their daily lives. By considering matters through the lens of ethnic significance, ordinary people reproduce the boundaries of ethnonational identity.² In this light, choosing who to marry, and under what conditions, becomes imbued with ethnonational weight, especially in cases where institutions of the state attempt to limit or restrict the form ethnic identity may take, and the ability of citizens to choose it.

The remainder of this chapter will explore the ways in which choices about citizenship identification and marriage take on ethnic significance in urban Hui communities. First it will provide a brief overview of scholarship examining how matters of marriage and childbirth become laden with ethnonational significance. In particular, the review will explore the contributions of feminist scholars who remark

¹ Interview: YN108033016; in the original Chinese, “要我去见清真寺里的阿訇，阿訇专门给我上一堂课，告诉我入教以后我要做哪些事情，” and “他也会问我为什么要加入伊斯兰教，因为之前有过沟通，大家会了解加入伊斯兰教是不是自愿自发的，如果是强迫的，他也不大赞同加入进来，他们要求是发自内心的，你觉得这个宗教的好。” respectively.

² Fox and Miller-Idriss, “Everyday Nationhood.”

that women's roles as cultural literal reproducers of the nation tie marriage choices to the formation and maintenance of ethnic identity. Further it will assess the ways in which findings from scholarship on everyday ethnicity about "choosing the nation" may allow for developing further insights about how citizens consider ethnicity when making choices about marriage, particularly when placed under constraints imposed by the state and society.

Following this review, the chapter explores how those living in urban Hui communities assess and assign ethnic significance to choices concerning marriage. China's state imposed categorization of identity constrains ethnic expression and limits choice by considering ethnic identity singular, indivisible and passed on through descent. As such, matters of marriage become ethnic choices. Societal conceptions about the appropriateness of intermarriage and how properly be Hui impose further constraints. Thus Hui rarely marry outside the group, usually requiring a partner's religious conversion to Islam when they do. After establishing these general outlines of marriage choices in Hui community the chapter examines how urban environments impact these decisions. Cities provide unique avenues for sociocultural interchange, and challenges to making ethnic choices. By examining three cities (Jinan, Xining, and Yinchuan) with different ethnic minority-majority demographic configurations, the chapter will explore how and when choices about marriage take on ethnic significance. Finally, the chapter concludes by offering a few remarks about how changes in urban demographics influence the salience of ethnic identity in making these types of choices.

Choosing 'official' ethnicity: citizenship, preferential policy and ethnonational choice

Choices may be made to reflect national or ethnic idioms when framed as being about the group. Even choices which ostensibly have little to do with ethnic or national identity can be structured by institutional framing, thus making future choices also shaped by ethnonational concerns. Fox and Miller-Idriss observe that, while these decisions may be made implicitly, the ethnic significance of the choice may be directly acknowledged in the decision-making process . They remark that “national belonging is implicated – and sometimes explicitly reflected upon, hashed over and debated – in the institutionally mediated choices people make.”³ Matters such as choosing where to live, who to keep as friends or deciding who to marry are not explicitly ethnonational in nature, but the ethnonational logics of institutions may imbue these choices with ethnonational significance.

Choices related to citizenship most strongly exhibit the ways in which citizens choose in a nationally motivated manner. Rogers Brubaker remarks that citizenship obligates members through incorporation into a “region of legal equality” in which the state affords rights to all those who are considered citizens.⁴ As such, citizenship choices imply exclusivity and commitment to one ethnonational identity above others. Categories of identity within citizenship require citizens to make further, often exclusory choices regarding identity. The means by which a state measures and categorizes its citizens often requires them to make numerous choices related to self-identification: gender, race, religion, ethnicity, etc. A considerable body of scholarship

³ Ibid.

⁴ Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany*, 21.

notes the importance of the census as a means through which the state establishes social control.⁵ Frequently states engage in the process of census to limit or control the choices offered to citizens in terms of self-identification. Anderson argues that the census “profoundly shaped the way in which the colonial state imagined its dominion.” By counting inhabitants, pulling them under the state’s influence, and compelling their loyalty, he argues, the state attempts to create a sense of boundedness. Inclusion in a census attempts to reify and fix a group, and allows the state to assert its authority to oversee the process of identity contestation by marking who falls into which category. Under the logic of the census, Anderson contends, “everyone has one—and only one—extremely clear place. No fractions.”⁶

In granting the state the power to identify the categories into which its citizens fall, the census empowers the state to limit or control the forms of ethnic or national identities its citizens may claim. Phillip Roeder remarks that the Soviet system of census and nationality classification sought to defuse problems that could potentially arise from ethnopolitics “by prohibiting all but sanctioned political entrepreneurs from mobilizing their communities.”⁷ Likewise, in controlling the categories into which ethnonational identity may fall, the state gains the ability to favor or disempower certain groups. Charles Tilly argues that the kinds of boundaries established by the census reinforce inequalities and allow for exploitation by the powerful, and the perpetuation

⁵ Philip G. Roeder, “Soviet Federalism and Ethnic Mobilization,” *World Politics* 43, no. 02 (January 1991): 196–232, doi:10.2307/2010471; Marx, *Making Race and Nation*; Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939* (Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 2001).

⁶ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 166, 168–70, 184.

⁷ Roeder, “Soviet Federalism and Ethnic Mobilization,” 203.

of inequality and feelings of superiority.⁸ Similarly, Charles Hirschman argues the categories of identity that the census establishes are “not accidental.” Rather, he argues they provide insight into the way in which states understand ethnicity, and may be used by the state in justification of the supremacy of the dominant group, or to reward certain groups based on ethnic criteria.⁹

Given the state’s ability to limit or control choices surrounding self-identification, the way citizens respond on a census frequently becomes a strategic choice that is constrained by the influence of politics. Census respondents must consider the social, cultural, and (occasionally) material advantages and disadvantages of the choices they make. Citrin and Spears argue that politics “provides incentives for the maintenance and intensification of particular group identifications.”¹⁰ In some cases, the incentives that come attached to self-identification as a member of a particular group may prove strong enough to revive moribund or waning cultures. Cheung, Lee and Nedilsky observe that institutionalized incentives to mobilize around identity create can breathe new life into a community, and prevent the collapse of identity.¹¹

Reproducing the nation: marriage, childbirth, and making ethnic choices

⁸ Charles Tilly, *Durable Inequality* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998), 52–77.

⁹ Charles Hirschman, “The Meaning and Measurement of Ethnicity in Malaysia: An Analysis of Census Classifications,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 46, no. 3 (1987): 555–82, doi:10.2307/2056899.

¹⁰ Jack Citrin and David O. Sears, “Balancing National and Ethnic Identities,” in *Measuring Identity: A Guide for Social Scientists*, ed. Rawi Abdelal et al. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 147–49.

¹¹ Cheung, Joseph Tse-Hei Lee, and Lida V Nedilsky, *Marginalization in China*, 11.

In forcing citizens to select a single, official identity, states turn matters of citizenship into a strategic choice to secure the benefits of preferential policies. As a result, the state's policies reinforce, perhaps unintentionally, commonly held lay understandings about the primordial nature of ethnicity. In treating ethnic identity as singular, indivisible, and permanent, the policies of the state present ethnicity as immutable and rooted in descent. Such a picture of ethnicity may mirror popular understandings held by ordinary citizens. Gil-White's examinations of perceptions of ethnic identity in Kazakh communities in Mongolia suggests that many ethnic actors understand ethnicity in strictly descent-based terms.¹² Such a belief in the primordial nature of ethnicity among ethnic actors may lead ostensibly quotidian matters such as socializing, marriage, and child-bearing become freighted with ethnic significance. When paired with state policies that affect citizenship status, or incentivize identifying as one ethnic identity over another through preferential policy, matters of marriage and birth become inextricably bound up in ethnic significance.

In the past, scholars of ethnic minority groups focused on the importance of endogamy for maintaining ethnic identity. In particular, several studies of ethnic minority nationalities of the Soviet Union explored endogamy using census data.¹³

¹² Francisco J. Gil-White, "How Thick Is Blood? The Plot Thickens...: If Ethnic Actors Are Primordialists, What Remains of the Circumstantialist/Primordialist Controversy?," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 22, no. 5 (1999): 789–820.

¹³ Frank G. Mittelbach and Joan W. Moore, "Ethnic Endogamy-the Case of Mexican Americans," *American Journal of Sociology* 74, no. 1 (July 1, 1968): 50–62, doi:10.1086/224584; Wesley A. Fisher, "Ethnic Consciousness and Intermarriage: Correlates of Endogamy among the Major Soviet Nationalities," *Soviet Studies* 29, no. 3 (1977): 395–408; Brian D. Silver, "Ethnic Intermarriage and Ethnic Consciousness among Soviet Nationalities," *Soviet Studies* 30, no. 1 (January 1978): 107–16, doi:10.1080/09668137808411171; Joseph M. Whitmeyer, "Endogamy as a Basis for Ethnic Behavior," *Sociological Theory* 15, no. 2 (1997): 162–78; Matthijs Kalmijn,

These studies, however, tend to assess the propensity for endogamy and attempt to divine whether or not endogamous relations represent an essential feature of ethnonational identity. In so doing, they offer little assessment of the motivations that inform intragroup marriage as a deliberate ethnonational choice, and the ways in which people weigh and consider these matters, in particular in light of state-imposed incentives or constraints.

In this regard, feminist scholars of nationalism and ethnicity add some much needed perspective to conversations on the matter. Examinations of marriage that consider the role and point of view of women allow for an understanding of the ethnic significance attached to choices of marriage, birthing, and citizenship. By focusing on the role women play as both literal and symbolic reproducers of the nation these studies reveal much about the heavy ethnonational emphasis that many ethnic actors place on marrying within the group.¹⁴ Nira Yuval-Davis argues that the canonical theories which divided society into public and private spheres tended to relegate women to the latter, and treat their contributions to as essentially non-political. However, Yuval-Davis states

“Intermarriage and Homogamy: Causes, Patterns, Trends,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 24, no. 1 (1998): 395–421, doi:10.1146/annurev.soc.24.1.395; Matthijs Kalmijn and Frank van Tubergen, “Ethnic Intermarriage in the Netherlands: Confirmations and Refutations of Accepted Insights / Les Mariages Mixtes Inter-Ethniques Aux Pays-Bas: Confirmations et Infirmités Des Idées Reçues,” *European Journal of Population / Revue Européenne de Démographie* 22, no. 4 (2006): 371–97.

¹⁴ Floya Anthias and Nira Yuval-Davis, “Introduction,” in *Woman-Nation-State*, ed. Nira Yuval-Davis and Floya Anthias (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 1989), 1–16; Cynthia Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches, Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics* (London: Pandora, 1989); Nira Yuval-Davis, *Gender & Nation*, Politics and Culture (London, England) (London ; Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1997); Anne McClintock, “Family Feuds: Gender, Nationalism and the Family,” *Feminist Review*, no. 44 (1993): 61–80, doi:10.2307/1395196; Umut Özkırımlı, *Theories of Nationalism: A Critical Introduction*, 2nd ed (Basingstoke, Hampshire [England] ; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 175–82.

that gender and nation inextricably inform and construct one another, and argues that this fact requires scholars to give more attention to women's roles in the construction of the nation. In this light, the choice of whether or not to have children becomes a choice that women make not just as individuals, but as "members of specific national collectivities."¹⁵ Further, Anthias and Yuval-Davis note, notions of "appropriate" or "proper" maintenance of boundaries govern women's choices concerning marriage. They argue, "very often religious and social traditions dictate who can marry whom so that the character as well the boundaries of the group can be maintained from one generation to another."¹⁶ Yuval-Davis asserts that nations rely on women to reproduce the nation both as literal mothers, and also as "cultural reproducers" who act as "symbolic border guards and as embodiments of the collectivity."¹⁷ In this role choices about marriage and childbirth are linked to the survival of the group and to the transmission of culture.

Others commenting on women's roles in the construction of the nation observe that in many instances women's primary method for gaining citizenship in the comes nation through marriage and birth.¹⁸ Floya Anthias' study of women and nation in Cyprus observes that citizenship is not automatically granted to Greek Cypriot women. Instead, expectations that Greek Cypriot women will marry within the Greek Cypriot community dictate the norms of "appropriate" behavior.¹⁹ Similarly, McClintock,

¹⁵ Yuval-Davis, *Gender & Nation*, 11–22.

¹⁶ Anthias and Yuval-Davis, "Introduction," 9.

¹⁷ Yuval-Davis, *Gender & Nation*, 22–25.

¹⁸ McClintock, "Family Feuds"; Floya Anthias, "Women and Nationalism in Cyprus," in *Woman-Nation-State*, ed. Nira Yuval-Davis and Floya Anthias (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 1989), 150–68.

¹⁹ Anthias, "Women and Nationalism in Cyprus."

noting that for women in South Africa, “citizenship in the nation was mediated by the marriage relation within the family,” examines women’s roles in constructing the nation in African and Afrikaner communities. In the former, she asserts, Afrikaner nationalism placed a demographic importance on motherhood to sustain a system of white supremacy, while in the latter case, African nationalism came to view women as reproducers of culture, and symbolic “mothers of the revolution” against apartheid.²⁰ Indeed, states frequently invoke such symbolic discourses surrounding motherhood as part of campaigns to increase population. Yuval-Davis notes both the Israeli government and Palestinian Authority’s invocations of motherhood as a civic virtue as part of a demographic race in Israel as evidence of the politically and symbolically charged significance of motherhood.²¹

This body of feminist scholarship on women’s roles in reproducing and sustaining ethnonational boundaries does the much needed work of filling in the gaps in the literature concerning the motivations and discourse surrounding issues of marriage, childbearing, and family in relation to ethnic and national identity construction. The focus on a largely macro-level scale, however, leaves room for further study about how individuals negotiate and understand these lifestyle and citizenship choices. Here, taking on a theoretical framework rooted in everyday nationalism may provide insight. Matters related to marriage and association form the core of Fox and Miller-Idriss’ category of “choosing the nation.” They remark that “choosing (or approving) marriage

²⁰ McClintock, “Family Feuds.”

²¹ Nira Yuval-Davis, “National Reproduction and ‘the Demographic Race’ in Israel,” in *Woman-Nation-State*, ed. Nira Yuval-Davis, Floya Anthias, and Jo Campling (Palgrave Macmillan UK, 1989), 92–109, doi:10.1007/978-1-349-19865-8_6.

partners or socializing with friends, while not necessarily explicitly national, can structure the trajectories of future choices in ways that reinforce nationhood as a salient idiom of belonging.”²² Similarly, Landau describes the social and cultural constraints that individuals must weigh when making these decisions, “Individual choice may be restricted either through requiring that a person be bound by group decisions or by demanding that individuals follow the rules accompanying their station in life.”²³

A more focused examination will illustrate the ways in which people make ethnonational choices concerning these matters in their daily lives. Taking a closer look at how China’s ethnonational (*minzu*) classification system imbues choices related to citizenship, marriage, and childbirth with ethnic significance will allow a clearer understanding to emerge.

Choosing to be ‘officially ethnic’: the Minzu System, and ethnonational identity in China

Following the Soviet example, China’s *minzu* classification system groups all Chinese citizens into one of 56 officially recognized ethnic categories. *Minzu* status is defined through the use of Stalinist criteria, which demands that an ethnic group possess the “four commons”: a common language, a common territory, a common economic life and a common “psychological make-up,” which has been reinterpreted by the state to mean a common culture.²⁴ The *minzu* system is the culmination of a longstanding effort

²² Fox and Miller-Idriss, “Everyday Nationhood,” 542.

²³ Ruth Landau, “Religiosity, Nationalism and Human Reproduction: The Case of Israel,” *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy* 23, no. 12 (December 2003): 71, doi:10.1108/01443330310790408.

²⁴ Gladney, *Dislocating China*, 9.

to incorporate minorities into the Chinese state.²⁵ By filtering the identities of its minority populations through the process of strict categorization and census, China has established a fixed and official status for the “other.” Presently, the *minzu* system has allows the state to play a supervisory role over the contestation of identity within its borders. Control over the content of a group’s identity gives the state a position of relative advantage when attempting to minimize separatist urges, and incorporate ethnic borderlands into the state is critical for the state’s survival.²⁶

Indeed the *minzu* system presents China’s citizens with a choice. Because the system does not allow for multi-ethnic identification, nor are citizens easily reclassified once given a designated *minzu* status, the system forces citizens to make ethnic choices concerning their registration. Mullaney argues that because of such rigidity, the *minzu* system “can encompass everyone in China without undergoing any changes.”²⁷ Schein argues that one of the major consequences of China’s institutionalizing ethnicity is that it has encouraged a “progressively more unified content” among minority groups and ultimately has “resulted in the shaping of ethnicity in favor of legitimately recognized formats.” However, in many cases hardening identity involves consolidating subgroups into a single homogenized category for expedience of categorization. Often the attempts

²⁵ Mullaney, “Critical Han Studies”; Chen, *Multicultural China in the Early Middle Ages*; Gladney, “Representing Nationality in China”; Chow, “Imagining Boundaries of Blood”; Leibold, *Reconfiguring Chinese Nationalism*.

²⁶ Heberer, *China and Its National Minorities*, 16; Cheung, Joseph Tse-Hei Lee, and Lida V Nedilsky, *Marginalization in China*, 12.

²⁷ Thomas S. Mullaney, *Coming to Terms with the Nation : Ethnic Classification in Modern China* (Berkeley, Calif: University of California Press, 2011), 123.

of state to create “discrete categories” of identity actually encourage greater variation within identity.²⁸

Such is the case of the Tibetan-speaking Hui (*Zang-Hui*, 藏回) in the Qinghai/Amdo region. Altner makes distinctions between these Muslims, officially classified as Hui, and those Muslims living in Lhasa, referred to as Kachee, who trace their heritage to Kashmir.²⁹ However, locals resist this common label of *Zang-Hui*. Chang remarks that due to the rigidity of the Chinese ethnic classification system, the Tibetan-speaking Hui of Kaligang (卡力岗) in Hualong Hui Autonomous County (化隆回族自治县), “struggle to maintain their ambiguous but substantial self-identity” which blends Muslim and Tibetan cultural traits. Chang notes “despite the Chinese government’s clear-cut distinction of Muslim Hui and Tibetan, the self-identity of the Tibetan speaking Muslims in Kaligang, and the state identification often diverge.”³⁰ Similar ambiguities exist among the Zhuang,³¹ Yi,³² Miao,³³ and various other *minzu* which cobble together several disparate groups under the heading of a single nationality.

²⁸ Schein, *Minority Rules*, 69–86.

²⁹ Diana Altner, “Do All the Muslims of Tibet Belong to the Hui Nationality?,” in *Islam and Tibet: Interactions along the Musk Routes*, ed. Anna Akasoy, Charles Burnett, and Ronit Yoeli-Tlalim (Farnham, England ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011), 339–52.

³⁰ Chung-Fu Chang, “Self-Identity versus State Identification of ‘Tibetan-Speaking Muslims’ in the Kaligang Area of Qinghai—An Ethnographic Analysis,” in *Muslims in Amdo Tibetan Society*, ed. Marie-Paule Hille, Bianca Horlemann, and Paul K. Nietupski (London: Lexington Books, 2015), 67–86.

³¹ Mullaney, *Coming to Terms with the Nation*, 120–34.

³² Litzinger, *Other Chinas*.

³³ Schein, *Minority Rules*.

Such heterogeneity illustrates a fundamental dilemma that China's ethnic minorities face under the *minzu* system. The inability of the rigid system of categories to accommodate intragroup differences, or allow for multiethnic identities groups citizens into one of 56 different, tidy boxes of ethnic self-identification. These categories do not reflect the diversity within groups, but instead reify differences, and harden otherwise blurred ethnic boundary lines. By forcing citizens to select one and only one ethnic identity, the *minzu* system exerts turns the process of ethnic self-identification into an ethnically motivated choice. In not accounting for intraethnic diversity, or allowing for multiethnic identities, the *minzu* system adds heavy ethnic significance to choices concerning marriage and childbirth.

Marriage, and ethnic identity in China

Official categories of ethnicity have encouraged China's ethnic minority communities to engage in intramarriage, and having additional children as attempts at ethnic preservation. Smith argues that in the wake of increased Han migration to Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region begets a self-enforced taboo among Uyghurs on interethnic marriage. Smith also notes that Uyghurs chafe at family-planning policies imposed by the Chinese state. Both issues, she remarks, heighten the salience of the boundaries between Han and Uyghur.³⁴ Goldstein, et al.'s 2002 examination of family planning practices in Tibetan communities identifies competition with Han and Hui

³⁴ Joanne N. Smith, "'Making Culture Matter': Symbolic, Spatial and Social Boundaries between Uyghurs and Han Chinese," *Asian Ethnicity* 3, no. 2 (September 1, 2002): 153–74, doi:10.1080/14631360220132718.

migrants as one of the primary drivers of Tibetans' preferences for having large families.³⁵ Because the *minzu* system allows for no fractions, citizens must weigh matters of ethnic preservation when considering whether or not to marry outside the group.

Previous scholarship on Hui identity notes the importance of intra-Hui marriage for maintaining Hui identity. Zang Xiaowei notes that even in non-majority-Hui urban settings, the Hui are more likely to prefer endogamy to intermarriage. He notes that Hui are more likely to express the idea that religion and ethnic differences put up barriers which make intermarriage difficult if not undesirable.³⁶ Those rare intermarriages between the Han and Hui that do occur almost always result in the adoption of Islam by the Han partner. Ha's ethnography of the Zhengzhou Hui community observes that interethnic marriages like these provide one of the "most important channels for conversion," genuine or otherwise. He reasons that to many Hui clergy, Hui identity is "constitutively gendered," and rooted firmly in patriarchal lineage. Thus the insistence on conversion, especially of Han women to Hui families is "lodged firmly in the patrilineal line."³⁷ Jaschok and Shui report that Hui frown on intermarriage, especially

³⁵ Melvyn C. Goldstein et al., "Fertility and Family Planning in Rural Tibet," *The China Journal* 47 (January 1, 2002): 36, doi:10.2307/3182072.

³⁶ Xiaowei Zang, "Hui Muslim-Han Chinese Differences in Perceptions on Endogamy in Urban China," *Asian Ethnicity* 6, no. 1 (February 1, 2005): 51–68, doi:10.1080/1463136042000309044.

³⁷ Guangtian Ha, "Religion of the Father: Islam, Gender, and Politics of Ethnicity in Late Socialism" (Dissertation, Columbia University, 2014), 8–13, <https://academiccommons.columbia.edu/catalog/ac:188924>.

of Hui women to Han men, as they fear “such a mixed marriage might make Muslim women forget their religious belief.”³⁸

In many rural Hui communities, Gladney remarks, the primary ethnic entrepreneurs are the unmarried young men and women. Endogamy, he maintains, is “a pressing issue for Hui who wish to preserve their ancestral traditions and maintain their Hui community.” Observing that such a preference in isolated, rural communities leads Hui to seek marriage partners in neighboring towns and villages, Gladney asserts that endogamy not only serves the role of preserving Hui lineage, it also plays the important dual role of facilitating increased contact with co-ethnics and strengthening the communities’ experience in dealing with other Muslims.³⁹

These studies link matters surrounding marriage to concerns about cultural survival and heritage preservation. Understanding why and how individuals imbue marriage with ethnic significance requires accounting for these insights while examining the ways in which individuals navigate the constraints placed on them by institutions of the state, and by societal pressure when making these decisions. A closer examination of attitudes towards registration, identification and marriage in Hui communities will illustrate how such choices invoke and reinforce ethnic boundaries.

“My family would not have accepted a non-Muslim”: social pressure and marriage choice

Notions of ethnic identity in Hui communities are often framed in relation to the state’s official categorization of ethnic identity through the *minzu* system. While some

³⁸ Maria Jaschok and Jingjun Shui, *The History of Women’s Mosques in Chinese Islam* (Surrey: Curzon Press, 2000), 143.

³⁹ Gladney, *Muslim Chinese*, 229–60.

respondents cited the incompatibility of the system's rigid categorization with the ambiguity that pervaded lived reality,⁴⁰ several respondents claimed that process of registering an ethnic identity provided the primary means of association with being Hui. As one respondent, a 55 year old Hui retiree from Xining recounted, "The first concept I had (of being Hui), when I was young, with a child's understanding, I just knew I was Hui. Because at that time, when I went to sign up for school, I had a *hukou* (household registration, 户口), and that *hukou* said my *minzu* was Hui."⁴¹

Some respondents' discussions of their own ethnic identification echoed the logic of the *minzu* system, asserting the singularity and indivisibility of the *minzu* system. These respondents connected ethnic registration status as transmitted by descent. One respondent, a 19 year old college student from Jinan, posited that ethnicity transmitted in patrilineal fashion. She remarked, "In China, it seems like this kind of thing goes according to the father. So because my father is Hui, my *hukou* is also Hui, just like my father's."⁴² Others, however, insisted that so long as one partner was Hui, the system would automatically treat their children as Hui. "My little brother and I, our *hukou* are both written down as Hui," explained a 44 year old woman who worked as a bank teller in Jinan, adding "My children are also written down as Hui. My little brother's children are also written down as Hui. But, my spouse is Han. My brother's

⁴⁰ Interview: XN112041316

⁴¹ Interview: XN116041516; in the original Chinese "第一个概念，小时候懂事的时候，就知道是一个回族人。因为那时候到学校去报名的时候有户口，户口本民族就是回族"

⁴² Interview: JN48112615; in the original Chinese, "在中国这个东西好像是跟着爸爸吧，因为我爸爸是回族，所以我户口本上跟着我爸爸是回族。"

wife is also Han. It's that kind of situation."⁴³ As to whether she might register her children as Han, she remarked, that this would be impossible:

*Regarding this kind of situation, there's absolutely no dispute whatsoever. Moreover, when going to write down your hukou, so long as one party is known to be Hui, the public security will take the initiative to ask you whether or not you wrote down Hui.*⁴⁴

Because the *minzu* system imposes these constraints on “official” expression of ethnic identity, and treats identity as singular and indivisible, choices related to marriage become fraught with ethnic significance for many Hui. Several respondents, both married and unmarried, reported feeling that their families expected them marry within the group. One man, a Jinan fitness instructor in his late twenties recalled, “Choosing a Hui partner was my decision. I wanted to marry a woman who was devout and knowledgeable about Islam. But my family would not have accepted a non-Muslim. They would tell me that it's imperative that I find a Muslim girl to marry.”⁴⁵ A nineteen year old college student in Jinan remarked that even when absent such pressure from family and friends, young Hui may consider marriage in ethnic terms. He remarked, “sometimes even though parents don't have many preference, their children do. For

⁴³ Interview: JN27102015, in the original Chinese, “我和我弟弟的户口都是落的回民，我的孩子也是落的回民我弟弟孩子还是落在回民。但是我的对象也是汉民，我弟弟对象也是汉民，就是这样一个情况。”

⁴⁴ Interview: JN27102015, in the original Chinese, “对这种事情上没有任何争执。而且去落户口的时候，只要是有一方知道是回民，像公安那边会主动的问你是不是落在回民。”

⁴⁵ Interview: YN105032316

instance, my little sister, she's like this. My parent's did say, 'you have to marry a Hui,' but she really wants to marry a Hui."⁴⁶

The kind of social pressure that surrounds marriage often leads to public scrutiny from members of the community. Especially in rural communities, this kind of social pressure may dramatically influence marriage choices. Several respondents explained that marriage outside of the group might draw unflattering attention. One woman, a student in Jinan, remarked that in her rural Shanxi hometown, "Han and Hui intermarriage is really rare. Marrying outside of the group is especially rare. In any case, every Hui in the village knows about almost every family's daughter that marries a Han."⁴⁷ In other cases, tradition may prohibit any choice in matters connected to marriage. A respondent in Xining contrasted the environment in the city with nearby Xunhua. "Here (in Xining) people choose who they marry," he remarked, "but in Xunhua people usually don't."⁴⁸

Those who choose to marry outside the group may suffer the scorn of others in the community. The Hui fitness instructor in Jinan expressed his disapproval of those of his friends who had married non-Hui partners, stating he believed choosing such a marriage compromised their identity. "I know some people who got married to a Han person and kept an Islamic lifestyle," he remarked, adding "I don't really get along too well with these people."⁴⁹ Another respondent in Xining explained that marriage to a

⁴⁶ Interview: JN46112515; in the original Chinese, "有一些父母虽然不是特别要求的, 但是孩子, 比如说我有一个妹妹, 她就想。父母不是说必须找回族, 但是她就是要找回族, 有这样的。"

⁴⁷ Interview: JN47112615; in the original Chinese, "回族和汉族结婚的很少, 嫁出去的特别少。几乎每家女儿嫁给一个汉族, 然后反正几乎整个村子回民都会知道。"

⁴⁸ Interview: XN129050116

⁴⁹ Interview: JN56120915

Han might be met with disapproval, reasoning “more traditional Muslims might say it's important to marry a Muslim and wouldn't accept otherwise.”⁵⁰

“If my daughter marries a Han, maybe she'll start to follow his lifestyle”: cultural survival and marriage taboos

Matters of cultural preservation help to explain the rarity of Han-Hui intermarriage. Hui respondents frequently cite cultural distance between Han and Hui as the major obstacle to intermarriage between the groups. A Xining shopkeeper in her forties contended that Hui rarely married Han because, “Most Han are Daoist or Confucian or Buddhist. It's not a good arrangement because of the religious differences.”⁵¹ However, one respondent, a factory worker in his thirties in Jinan, insisted that fear of a loss of tradition and ethnic identity, not a religious concerns, compelled taboo on intermarriage with Han. He scoffed, “It's definitely not because of religious reasons; It's because of ethnic reasons. I've heard a funny explanation; People say, ‘my daughter isn't allowed to marry a Han, because if my daughter marries a Han, maybe she'll start to follow his lifestyle.’”⁵²

Often respondents proclaimed that these differences in lifestyle, particularly regarding cleanliness and diet, made marriage between Han and Hui “difficult” (*bu fangbian*, 不方便).⁵³ In explaining why her parents wouldn't accept a marriage with

⁵⁰ Interview: XN119041916

⁵¹ Interview: XN111041216

⁵² Interview: JN52120415; in the original Chinese, “并不是因为宗教原因, 是因为民族. 我听到一个搞笑的理由, 我的女儿不允许嫁给汉族人, 因为如果我的女儿嫁给汉族人可能生活习惯上跟着他.”

⁵³ Interviews, JN28102215, JN36111015, JN46112515, JN48112615, YN8120416,

Han, one respondent, a 52 year old receptionist in Jinan explained, “In China, the theory is like this: normally you hope your son or daughter can find a partner of the same *minzu*. Firstly, it’s because it makes diet and matters of food and drink easier. There are also a few customs that aren’t alike, just like between you and me there are Chinese and western customs that aren’t alike. So, that’s the reason.”⁵⁴ One Jinan respondent, the child of a marriage between a Hui father and Han mother, recalled the divisions that happened between inlaws because of her parent’s marriage. “Even after they got married,” she remarked “(the two families) would still break out into quarrels, and it was just really hard to deal with.”⁵⁵

These cultural and religious differences, some respondents attested, became especially problematic when dealing with rituals related to death and burial. Respondents expressed concern that choosing a non-Hui spouse might result in the spouse’s failure to observe the Islamic prohibition on cremation.⁵⁶ A twenty-nine year old Hui woman in Xining illustrated this dilemma with an anecdote:

*A friend of mine married a Han woman who converted to Islam. But her parents are still Han. She died suddenly, before she turned 30. Her parents wanted to cremate her, and her husband didn't want to because we Muslims can't be cremated. We have to bury our dead. But her parents didn't care. They said 'We're not Muslims. We have our own traditions and you have yours, but she's our daughter.' And so they cremated her. It was a problem but there was nothing her husband could do about it.*⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Interview: JN28102215; in the original Chinese, “中国理念就是这样，一般希望自己姑娘或者儿子，孩子找同一个民族的，首先就是吃饭方便，饮食方面方便。还有一些习俗，肯定就像你我，咱们中西方习俗不一样，一个道理。”

⁵⁵ Interview: JN48112615; in the original Chinese, “然后还需要去磨合去争吵，就是很难办这个事。”

⁵⁶ Interviews, JN52120415, YN68012016 YN75012616, YN80020416, YN8120416, YN106032616, XN134050716

⁵⁷ Interview: XN134050716

Such gulfs in understanding, and fear of a loss of Islamic tradition drive many Hui to deem marriage to Han undesirable. A woman in her twenties in Xining explained, “Very few people intermarry, and after they get married they’re also more likely to get divorced. This is because lifestyles are just too different, and you’re not used to it if you haven’t lived that way since you were young.”⁵⁸

“They have to become Muslims first. Otherwise it can't happen” : religious conversion and bridging cultural differences in interethnic marriage.

As a solution for bridging the cultural and religious gaps that obstruct and complicate intermarriage between Hui and Han, many respondents noted the necessity of converting to Islam for the Han partner in the marriage. In prior eras, such actions were not considered optional. Noting that intermarriage between Han and Hui occurred more commonly than in previous eras, a Beijing author in his seventies explained the kinds of stipulations typically put on interethnic relationships. Conversion to Islam, he remarked, stood as the minimum requirement for a couple to get married. Further, he remarked that different standards applied to Hui men and women. He described the traditional attitudes regarding intermarriage, stating that “before (the Cultural Revolution) Hui didn't ever marry Han. Or if they did it was a Hui man marrying a Han woman, and she had to accept Islam and learn how to be Muslim. Generally speaking we didn't allow Hui women to marry Han men.”⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Interview: XN128043016; in the original Chinese, “很少，结婚以后离的也比较多。因为生活方式太不一样了，你不习惯，你从小不是这样生活的。”

⁵⁹ Interview: BJ65010716

Though such absolute prohibitions softened in the years since the start of the era of Reform and Opening in 1978, many respondents cited conversion of the non-Hui partner to Islam as a necessity for interethnic couples. One respondent in Xining laid out these terms bluntly, asserting, “Hui can marry Han and Tibetans and Tu, but they have to become Muslims first. Otherwise it can't happen.”⁶⁰

Some respondents saw the imposition of this requirement that a spouse undergo the process of converting to Islam prior to proceeding to marriage as a way in which accommodating parents could support their children while still upholding cultural norms. A respondent in Xining, a teacher in his late forties who was himself the son of a Hui mother and a Salar father, explained how conversion might smooth over any objections that parents might raise to the union. He argued, “It’s just that maybe if two people love each other, then maybe the families won’t oppose. Maybe it’s normally just that the man must convert to Islam, that kind of thing. He’ll go to the mosque and the *ahong* can give him a *jinming* (Islamic name, 经名).”⁶¹ The nineteen year old Hui man studying in Jinan explained his parents’ position on the matter:

*About this problem... If, say, I go home and my girlfriend is Han, if I bring her home to meet my parents, and say we want to get married, my mom and dad certainly won't say that they object, but they also won't say that they consent. If she agrees, then before we get married, we've got to give her some education, it's like that. Education and a conversion ceremony (xili, 洗礼).*⁶²

⁶⁰ Interview: XN122042216

⁶¹ Interview: XN112041316; in the original Chinese, “就是可能两个人相爱了，可能家长不反对，那可能一般讲就是男的有可能要皈依伊斯兰教这种状况，到清真寺阿訇给你起个经名。”

⁶² Interview: JN44112515; in the original Chinese, “关于这个问题，假如说我回家，我女朋友是汉族，我如果领她回家见父母，我说我们两个要结婚。爸妈这一方面肯定不能说不同意，也不是说不能说不同意，如果她同意的话，结婚之前必须给女方进行教育吧就是那个意思。教育和洗礼。”

Choosing to be Hui in the city: urban spaces and attitudes toward interethnic marriage

Urban spaces present particular challenges in regard to making marriage choices. Unlike small and often homogenous rural enclaves, urban settings provide greater opportunities for interethnic interactions, and thus increase the likelihood of inter-ethnic relationships. Cities also provide greater stratification of income, education, profession, and other factors. As such, in these contexts, other dimensions of identity beyond ethnicity which in rural settings seem less salient, may gain importance. Examining how attitudes about marriage choices differ across three cities (Jinan, Xining, and Yinchuan) with very different population configurations provides insight into how such competing concerns are balanced and weighed, and where ethnicity matters most as an ethnic choice.

In Jinan—where the Hui represent the only non-Han population of any size, and comprise only a tiny minority—many respondents reported an ongoing softening in attitudes regarding intermarriage.⁶³ Respondents frequently asserted that while older generations insisted that Hui marry other Hui, younger Hui felt less strongly bound by these norms.⁶⁴ One woman, the owner of a small *guotie* (锅贴, pan-fried dumpling) shop in Jinan, lamented of her adult son's romantic choices, "It would be best to marry a Hui girl. Hui should be with Hui and Han should be with Han, but young people don't really listen."⁶⁵ Another respondent, a 22 year old woman working in the airline

⁶³ Interviews: JN34110415, JN41112015, JN46112515,

⁶⁴ Interviews, JN32103115, JN36111015, JN48112615,

⁶⁵ Interview: JN42112215

industry, similarly explained her family's shifting attitude toward Han-Hui intermarriage:

*My grandparents hope I can find a Hui spouse. Although our family already has two Han members, they still hope this. After all, the need to continue tradition is important. But in my parents opinion... My dad was also previously insistent, and would say, 'you must find a Hui spouse.' It was a rigid rule he gave me, saying 'It's mandatory for you to marry a Hui.' But, my mom talked with him about it afterward, I think, and so he said 'It would be best for you to marry a Hui, but if you can't find a Hui spouse, just find one who will respect you and who will understand our minzu, and that will do.'*⁶⁶

Some Jinan respondents cited the small size of the Hui population as a reason for the lessened resistance to marrying outside the group, claiming it was hard to find Hui partners who were suitable.⁶⁷ One man, an engineer in his fifties, likened the tendency of Hui to marry only other Hui to inbreeding and declared that, in his opinion, finding partners of another *minzu* would be "good for the children of the next generation."⁶⁸ The 52 year old receptionist explained why she did not follow her parents' example in forcing her daughter to seek a Hui husband:

The Hui social circle is too small. If you want to find someone you like, and fulfill these requirements, it's not easy. So, for the sake of my child's happiness, I broadened this category. If I absolutely wanted to require (my daughter) to find a Hui man, I maybe could find one, but I imagine

⁶⁶ Interview: JN34110415; in the original Chinese, "我爷爷奶奶，姥姥姥爷希望我找一个回族。虽然我们家已经有两个汉族了，但是他们还是，毕竟需要延续传统比较好。但是我爸妈的意思，我爸以前也是比较，说你一定要找一个回族，就是硬性规定给我了，说你必须要找一个回族。但是我妈妈后来跟我爸聊这东西说不定，说你最好找一个回族，但是找不到，只要尊重你，了解这个民族就可以了，就是能做到这个

⁶⁷ Interviews, JN27102015, JN28102215, JN32103115

⁶⁸ Interview: JN32103115

*this wouldn't be that great. I want her to find someone who's outstanding in all respects.*⁶⁹

One woman noted that living in Jinan allowed for more flexibility, especially when compared to rural Hui communities. Noting that in her rural hometown, marriage to a Han man might require him to become Muslim, she observed, “In order to marry a Han there would be some formalities to go through. Here, where were pretty far away outside of there, we wouldn't go through those formalities.”⁷⁰

In stark contrast to Jinan, Hui in Xining, where the Hui represent one of many different ethnic groups living in a truly multiethnic environment, largely remain firmly opposed to marriage between Han and Hui. Many respondents argued that Hui could marry Muslims of different minorities (e.g.; Salar, Baonan, Dongxiang, etc.) without any controversy.⁷¹ Most remarked, however, that the community did not view marriage with Han as suitable.⁷² One woman, an entrepreneur in her late thirties claimed that such marriages couldn't work because Han converts rarely took Islam seriously:

If Han and Hui get married, the Han person certainly has to convert. If not, it's impermissible. But we try as much as we can to not promote marrying Han, because converting to Islam for marriage isn't meaningful belief. Instead, it's because “I like this person, so I'll follow

⁶⁹ Interview: JN28102215; in the original Chinese, “因为回民圈子太小了，想找一个自己喜欢，就是各方面都满意的不是那么容易。所以为了孩子的幸福，就要把这一面扩大了。如果非要让她找回民可能会有，但是不是会想象的那么优秀。我想着他找一个各方面都优秀的人。”

⁷⁰ Interview: JN36111015; in the original Chinese, “我这边离得比较远的话，他们也就这样了。但是在我家里的话，这种情况下肯定有一些仪式，嫁汉族娶汉族是有仪式的，我们离得很远在外面就没有做这些。”

⁷¹ Interview: XN144052316; XN143052116; XN111041216

⁷² Interview: XN144052316; XN143052116; XN119041916; XN111041216

*them. At best, I won't eat pork." But it's not serious belief, so going about your life can be really troublesome.*⁷³

When asked if Han-Hui marriages ever occurred, one young man in his late twenties insisted, "That's something that happens more often in places back East."⁷⁴ One respondent observed that intermarriage "was more common in those situations where children strived their hardest," though she admitted that these were exceptional cases.⁷⁵

Preservation of Islamic customs motivated several respondents' opposition to marriage across ethnic lines. When explaining why she would not accept her son's marriage to Han, one woman explained that fear of cultural degradation motivated her stance:

*I'm afraid they'll become Hanified. Because I think a minzu can be maintained, passed down. I'm not saying this because of bloodlines, it's just minzu traditions. It's best if you can keep them completely intact, and to maintain them as much as you possibly can. If Hui, especially women, marry Han, then they'll lose a lot of our culture, and it's very sad. Of course, because I'm shaoshu minzu, I'm really concerned about this.*⁷⁶

⁷³ Interview: XN120042016, in the original Chinese "如果说汉族和回族结婚, 汉族肯定要进教, 如果不进教是不允许的, 但是尽量不提倡跟汉族通婚, 因为这进教不是真正意义的信仰, 而是因为我喜欢这个人我就跟着他, 我顶多不吃猪肉, 但是没有正儿八经的信仰, 所以过日子是挺麻烦的."

⁷⁴ Interview, XN128043016

⁷⁵ Interview: XN130050416; in the original Chinese, "就是小孩要尽力的事情多。"

⁷⁶ Interview: XN117041616; in the original Chinese, "我怕汉化了, 因为我觉得一个民族能保留下来, 延续下去的话, 不说是为了这个血脉吧, 只是这种民族的特征, 你最好能够完整的, 尽可能的保留下去, 如果回族, 尤其是女孩子外嫁给汉族的话, 本民族的东西丢失的会很多, 很可惜。本来就是少数民族的所以我还是很在意这个民族的东西。"

While residents in Xining placed emphasis on the importance of cultural preservation, many in Yinchuan—the capital of the Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region—often bemoaned the fact that these traditions had, in large part, already eroded. Over the course of the last 20 years, Yinchuan’s population swelled due to waves of internal migration from all parts of the city. The effects this migration exerted on the city, and its culture, led numerous respondents to remark that Yinchuan had become a “city of migrants” (*yimin chengshi*, 移民城市).⁷⁷ As wave after wave arrived, many locals complained about the disappearance of Yinchuan’s distinctive, Muslim culture. Many Yinchuan Hui griped that leniency and permissiveness in regard to Islamic orthodoxy contributed to a decline in the quality of the city’s religious atmosphere. Interethnic marriages, they responded, were partly to blame. One respondent in his early thirties from Yinchuan complained that standards in Yinchuan had grown too lax, and families weren’t serious enough about religious observance:

*There are some people who, because the religious atmosphere in this city is very lax, might have one eye open, and one eye closed. Of course, on the surface, they if course they won’t accept it. If a boy and girl have a good relationship, there’s nothing the family can do, and they’ll get married. The non-Muslim bride or groom will covert to Islam. But this conversion is only in appearance. You tell me, those converts, are they really Muslim? I don’t think so.*⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Interviews, YN68012016, YN69012116, YN73012316, YN75012616, YN76012616, YN900022116, YN107033016, YN108033016.

⁷⁸ Interview: YN95022916; in the original Chinese, “有一部分人由于城市里信仰氛围的淡化，他们可能睁一只眼，闭一只眼，虽然他们表面肯定会说是不同意，如果这个男孩和女孩的关系非常好，家里也没办法，结婚吧，非穆斯林的男方或者女方皈依伊斯兰教，这个皈依就是形式上的，你说他皈依了他就是穆斯林吗？不见得”

One man, a restaurant owner in the suburban community of Najiahu, echoed these sentiments, and longed for a return to the era where members of the community took a more active role in making sure their children married other Hui. He recounted that, in the past, people felt obligated to persuade other families not to allow their children to marry Han, lest they be complicit. “Now,” he lamented, “in this society, there’s nothing you can do about it. Everyone minds their own business. Just looking after your own children is enough.”⁷⁹ A woman in her early twenties who worked as a secretary in the offices of a neighborhood association, recalled parental disapproval led to a breakup with a former boyfriend, “I dated a Han guy before, but my family didn’t approve, and I think it was because we had different religious faiths.”⁸⁰

Despite these concerns, several respondents noted a change in the community. The Han woman preparing to marry a Hui man explained that her decision provoked strong reactions among her parents, who feared that her conversion would prohibit her from observing the practices of ancestor veneration, and wearing mourning clothes. She remarked that her husband’s family showed great tolerance in allowing her to observe such traditions, even after she became Muslim:

*This is where two families must be comparatively open-minded. My husband’s family is very open-minded, and they can accept Han-Hui intermarriage, and they must tolerate these traditions. For instance, with respect to the rules about dying, they surely approve of my doing these things.*⁸¹

⁷⁹ Interview, YN94022416; in the original Chinese, “但是现在社会没办法了，自己管自己，把自己的儿女管住就行了”

⁸⁰ Interview, YN80020416, in the original Chinese “我以前也有过一个汉族的男朋友，但是就是因为家里面不同意，觉得到最后宗教信仰不同。”

⁸¹ Interview: YN108033016; in the original Chinese, “这是两个家族比较开明的地方。我的老公家里老人他们也很开明，他们觉得既然能接受回汉的融合一定要包容这些习俗，比如说在生死方面需要的话一定同意我去做这些事情。”

Others mentioned that young couples were beginning to disregard such concerns altogether. One Han woman in her early thirties who worked as an elementary school teacher noted that attitudes about marriage had softened. She related the story of a Hui friend, remarking, “intermarriage between Han and Hui is becoming more common. My coworker’s new boyfriend is Han. Her parents weren’t very accepting but she told them she doesn’t want to marry a Hui man.”⁸²

Conclusions

The wide array of difference in attitudes found across these communities illustrates how and when marriage choices take on ethnic significance. Because the state set hard parameters on official ethnic registration, choosing to marry within or outside of the community varies with the importance attached to ethnic identity vis-à-vis other identities. The concentration or dispersion of population may heighten the degree to which ethnic identity takes precedence over others. When the concentration of the group is small, other identities may take precedence. Where multiple ethnic identities interact, the urge to prevent cultural degradation may compel ethnicity to take precedence where marriage is concerned.

In isolated communities, like Jinan, Hui are less likely to consider marriage strictly as an ethnonational choice, and less likely to consider ethnic intermarriage as a taboo. In these communities, where the Hui population is smaller, and the community is surrounded by Han, ethnic salience wanes when making marriage choices in favor of other considerations like class, level of education, or even romantic attraction between

⁸² Interview: YN106032616

partners. Respondents willingness to accept marriage between Han and Hui without requiring the Han partner's conversion to Islam provided the partner shows tolerance and respect for Hui culture and lifestyle illustrates the how Hui in these communities remain flexible and adaptable in the face of demographic isolation.

By contrast, in multi-ethnic communities, like Xining, where religious observance is more stringent, and linguistic divisions between ethnic groups may complicate relationships, marriage is framed as an explicitly ethnonational choice. The insistence on the part of many parents that their children marry other Hui for the sake of cultural preservation illustrates a fear for cultural survival in the face of increased interaction with other groups. That many Xining residents consider conversion of Han partners to Islam as a minimal requirement before allowing interethnic marriage clearly illustrates these urges. Thus residents may prioritize religious and ethnic choices over others, electing to return to enclave neighborhoods, and marry within the faith. In these cases, ethnicity gains increased salience over other forms of identity.

Yinchuan presents a unique set of conditions. As a titular autonomous community, Hui culture and identity takes an, admittedly superficial, place of prominence in the city. However, the recent influx of rural to urban migrants raises specific challenges. Often rural, more conservative rural migrants express different standards from those urbanites who view themselves as cosmopolitans. Likewise, children of rural parents who grow up in urban settings may form different attitudes than older generations. In this sense, in cities like Yinchuan, matters like the appropriate interethnic marriage may be subject to debate even within generations of the same family.

In a sense, Yinchuan, as a “city of migrants,” illustrates a broader trend. China’s push toward urbanization (*chengzhenhua*, 城镇化) moves Hui migrants from various locations into close proximity. In Yinchuan, the interactions of Han and Hui, and Hui from different parts of China reopen contestation over the appropriateness of interethnic marriage, and as a result renegotiates the ethnic significance attached to marriage choice. Such reopening of the process of defining the boundaries of Hui identity by debating whether or not non-Hui spouses should convert, or whether children of Han-Hui marriage should be claimed as Hui, may lead to drawing internal distinctions within the Hui community, itself, dividing along regional, sectarian, class, age, or gender lines. Thus, the importance attached to these choices about marriage, rather than perpetuating an alignment of social reality with the political goals of the *minzu* system in which fractional identities do not count, may instead expand notions and understandings of what it means to claim Hui identity. This contestation is not limited only to matters of marriage and self-identification. Rather, as following chapters suggest, this contestation pervades every facet of daily life, opening up matters of speech, dress, worship, and diet to the same negotiation, and allowing for the maintenance and adaptation of Hui identity in the face of continued urban change.

4. Talking: Arabic language, literacy, and Hui identity

“Our Qur’ans all have Chinese characters.”

As I strode in the center of the large courtyard in front of the mausoleum at Fenghuang Shan Gongbei¹ in Xining I greeted the complex’s caretaker, a short, middle aged man who wore a white knit skullcap, with a friendly wave. I walked up to the gray brick dividing wall filled with ornate stone carving that separated the larger, outer courtyard from the inner courtyard containing the tomb and shrine, and prepared to step through the rounded archway to stand in front of the tomb. As I began to move forward, a voice from behind startled me. “Hey!” it rang out. I turned around to see the caretaker waving his arms emphatically and signaling for me to stop. “You can’t go in there!” he told me, “you’re not Muslim!” Curious, I asked how he had made such a determination. “Because when you walked in, you didn’t say ‘*salamu*’ (萨拉姆, the Chinese transliteration of the Arabic *salaam*),” the man replied. “That’s how we Hui greet each other.”²

Over the course of conducting my field research, other respondents placed similar emphasis on the importance of language for signaling shared Hui identity. For instance, while conducting interviews in Yinchuan, a local Hui university professor encouraged me to offer the Islamic greeting of “*as-salaam-alaikum*” (“peace be upon you”) to my Hui interviewees before shaking their hands. Doing so, he insisted, was standard among Hui in Yinchuan.³ Elsewhere, in particular, in Xining, I was told by

¹ Author’s note: *gongbei* (拱北) are mausoleum complexes that house the tombs of Sufi Muslim masters who served as the heads of their orders, and their disciples.

² Field Observations, Xining, April 2016

³ Field Observations, Yinchuan, January 2016

many respondents that greeting friends and neighbors by saying “*salamu*” was an important expression of community, and an important ritual in the observation of the E’id al-fitr festivities that marked the end of Ramadan.⁴ Throughout the country, respondents frequently suggested that the used of Arabic language acted as a kind of shibboleth, or marker of belonging between Hui.

While language has long stood at the core of theories of identity formation, these theoretical frameworks emphasize how the institutionalization and standardization of language through official policy achieves the goal forging a unified group identity. Less scholarly attention focuses the way in which daily language choice impact the boundaries of ethnic identity. Following scholars like Fox and Miller-Idriss, who seek the ethnonational significance in quotidian actions by observing how the nation is invoked through everyday discourse and speech habits,⁵

The remainder of this chapter will explore this relationship between Arabic language and Hui identity. First it will briefly review the literature on the role played by language in the process of ethnic boundary formation and maintenance. While scholars have devoted much attention to the ways in which governments use language standardization policy as a means of centralization and national unification, less attention has been given to exploring the ways in which daily habits of speech instantiate ethnic boundary lines. Habits of speech like dialect choice, word choice, accent, or intonation often provide strong markers of identity. These markers may provide the basis for inclusion, exclusion, or stigmatization. They may also give way to

⁴ Interviews: XN115041516, XN134050716, XN135050916, XN143052116, XN146052816

⁵ Fox and Miller-Idriss, “Everyday Nationhood.”

concerns about language preservation and survival in the face of assimilation. Further, written language, like that used on road signs or official buildings may inspire and mobilize ethnonational sentiments.

After reviewing this scholarship on how everyday language habits maintain ethnic boundaries, the chapter will present an examination of the role played by Arabic language in ethnic Hui communities. Despite the status of the Hui as a Chinese-speaking minority, Arabic plays a pivotal role in the formation of Hui identity as a language of faith. Some Hui even attest to Arabic language contributing vocabulary to a particular “Hui dialect”, separate from normal Chinese dialects. Though the Chinese state officially promotes the use of Arabic language in public spaces in Hui communities, due to a curtailing of options to engage in minority language education many Hui living in these spaces are unable to read these signs and posters. This lack of resources presents Hui with a choice between studying the language of faith or pursuing economic interests. Thus, debates over the proper role of Arabic to Hui identity overlap with cross-cutting social and economic cleavages. These debates over language cause renewed contestation of identity between groups of Hui, and increase the salience of internal boundaries within the community.

Voice of the people: language and identity in nationalism scholarship

The connection between linguistic unification and standardization and the establishment of group boundaries, Billig remarks, is often regarded by scholars as natural. Common linguistic ties, he stresses, are often taken as “the central pillar of ethnic identity.” The establishment of a standard language revolves around processes of

contestation and struggles for hegemony between various related dialects.⁶ Studies that examine the emergence of ethnic and national identities describe the evolutionary processes of language standardization and the establishment of national identities. Historically focused scholars mark the development of vernacular languages from more universal languages of empire (e.g. church Latin), as pivotal moments in the development of a national consciousness, and thus important for the formation of the community of the nation. Further, the distribution of written text in vernacular language plays a pivotal role in creating the simultaneity of lived experience that extends the bonds of the imaginary community. Thus, language is frequently cited as one of the distinguishing markers that denote the boundaries of group identity.⁷ In particular, Anderson notes the importance of language, both spoken vernacular and printed word, in creating the feelings of simultaneous lived experience that extend the boundaries of the “imagined community” of the nation.⁸ Such works afford language a central role in forming and maintaining a common identity.

As such, states attempt to promote integration and unification of identity through promotion of a universal language. Such projects of linguistic standardization are often central to creating the core of a group identity. Weber’s study of the development of modern French identity examines how teaching standard French in schools provided

⁶ Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London ; Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage, 1995), 13–36.

⁷ Karl W. Deutsch, *Nationalism And Social Communication* (Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press, 1966); Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983); Anderson, *Imagined Communities*; Kanchan Chandra, “Making Causal Claims about the Effect of ‘Ethnicity,’” in *Comparative Politics: Rationality, Culture, and Structure*, ed. Mark Irving Lichbach and Alan S. Zuckerman, Second (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 376–412.

⁸ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.

one means of consolidating French national identity.⁹ Callahan notes that Myanmar attempted to stress the importance of Burmese language to the establishment of a Burmese national identity by casting minority languages as a backward, and uncivilized “other” by contrast with modern Burmese language.¹⁰ States may also attempt to broaden the scope of the group through recognizing multiple “official” languages. Adeney’s account of the drafting of the Afghan constitution illustrates how states may attempt to foster a supra-ethnic identity grounded in loyalty to the state. By institutionalizing multiple languages as officially recognized by the constitution, the framers attempted to create an Afghan identity that superseded ethnic and linguistic divisions.¹¹ The inability of the state to achieve standardization of language may contribute to the proliferation of persistent substate or subnational identities. Siobhan Harty underscores the role played by language in the incomplete assimilation of Catalonia into a Spain. The ability of Catalans to continue to use their local vernacular as a language of administration, business and law allowed for its preservation, and became a major force for the preservation of a distinctly Catalan national identity.¹²

Talking the talk: everyday language as a marker of ethnic identity

⁹ Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen*, 303–38.

¹⁰ Callahan, “Making Myanmar: Language, Territory, and Belonging in Post-Socialist Burma.”

¹¹ Katharine Adeney, “Constitutional Design and the Political Salience of ‘Community’ Identity in Afghanistan: Prospects for the Emergence of Ethnic Conflicts in the Post-Taliban Era,” *Asian Survey* 48, no. 4 (August 2008): 535–57, doi:10.1525/as.2008.48.4.535.

¹² Siobhan Harty, “The Institutional Foundations of Substate National Movements,” *Comparative Politics* 33, no. 2 (January 1, 2001): 199, 202–7, doi:10.2307/422378.

Despite this wide acknowledgement of the centrality of language to construction of identity, such a focus on historical development and official use of language neglects details about the importance of language and speech to maintaining a sense of identity in everyday interactions. The practical details about language functions as a boundary marker in interpersonal interactions tend to be lost in such large scale, historical accounts that treat language standardization as a slow-moving, structural process. Edensor notes, narratives that emphasize the development of national identities over the *longue durée* tend to be “overly historical” and often “cannot account for the extremely dynamic and ambiguous contemporary constructions of national identity.”¹³ Nor do discussions which focus on the formalization and institutionalization of language provide a complete understanding of the ways in which language distinguishes between self and other in daily, lived experiences. Billig similarly contends that understandings of the group identity as expressed via a single voice are mistaken, instead pointing to the necessity of observing the everyday discourse which establishes nations of group identity.¹⁴ Differences in talking and speech in daily interactions therefore constitute a vital body of observations for understanding how the construction of group boundaries unfolds.

Noting the centrality of language to sustaining a sense of identity, De Cillia et al., describe a multitude of ways in which discourse reifies the boundaries of ethnicity:

The idea of a specific national community becomes reality in the realm of convictions and beliefs through reifying, figurative discourses continually launched by politicians, intellectuals and media people and disseminated through the systems of education, schooling, mass

¹³ Tim Edensor, *National Identity, Popular Culture and Everyday Life* (Oxford ; New York: Berg, 2002), 9.

¹⁴ Billig, *Banal Nationalism*, 87.

*communication, militarization as well as through sports meetings.*¹⁵

While the substance of ethnic discourse may originate in elite and overtly political channels, De Cillia correctly emphasizes the pivotal role of informal channels like schools, popular culture, or sports to disseminate identity.

Everyday settings provide vital outlets for the reproduction of the boundaries of identity through habits of speech, placement of text, and use of dialect. Heller notes that both language choice—which language person chooses to use—and language use—the way in which language is used according to or in defiance of “culturally conventionalized ways of behaving”—may become strong emblems of ethnicity.¹⁶ These aspects of language—both spoken and written—provide strong markers of ethnic identity. Linguists note that word choice, accent, tone, and various other aspects of verbal communication frequently track with ethnic, gender and class associations.¹⁷ These traits may come attached to broad based stereotypes or caricatures about those who possess them. Speaking a particular dialect, with a particular accent, or using a particular set of vocabulary may stigmatize a speaker, or signal the speaker’s “otherness.” Koziura’s examination of language use in Western Ukraine notes that, in the community she studied, Ukrainian language was treated as unmarked, leaving

¹⁵ Rudolf De Cillia, Martin Reisigl, and Ruth Wodak, “The Discursive Construction of National Identities,” *Discourse & Society* 10, no. 2 (April 1, 1999): 153, doi:10.1177/0957926599010002002.

¹⁶ Monica Heller, “Language, Ethnicity and Politics in Quebec” (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1982), 12, <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/5zz7b8j6>.

¹⁷ Martha Laferriere, “Ethnicity in Phonological Variation and Change,” *Language* 55, no. 3 (1979): 603–17, doi:10.2307/413319.

speakers of other languages, like Russian or Romanian, to be seen as outsiders, or of lower status than the high-status Ukrainian speakers.¹⁸

Further, traits like accent or vocabulary may serve as grounds for exclusion, or characterization of the speaker as backward, or alien. Vigil and Bills note that, after generations of linguistic isolation, the Spanish language dialect New Mexico's *Mexicanos* came to be considered antiquated and backward by recent Mexican immigrants. As such it was indicative of "otherness" and difference within the Spanish speaking community.¹⁹ Bonner's study of Garifuna language usage in Garinagu communities in Belize found that Garifuna language was treated as inferior to Belizean English Creole. Garinagu youth increasingly chose to speak Creole rather than Garifuna in order to appear less suspect, avoid anti-Spanish prejudice, and to distinguish themselves from the increasing number of Spanish Creole speakers immigrating from El Salvador, and Honduras.²⁰

The language used on public signs may also provide a means of reproducing the boundaries of ethnic identity.²¹ Azaryahu and Kook maintain that street names offer

¹⁸ Karolina Koziura, "Everyday Ethnicity in Chernivtsi, Western Ukraine," *Anthropology of East Europe Review* 32, no. 1 (May 5, 2014): 1–21.

¹⁹ Neddy A. Vigil and Garland D. Bills, "Spanish Language Variation and Ethnic Identity in New Mexico," in *Language, Borders, and Identity*, ed. Dominic Watt and Carmen Llamas (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), 55–69.

²⁰ Donna M. Bonner, "Garifuna Children's Language Shame: Ethnic Stereotypes, National Affiliation, and Transnational Immigration as Factors in Language Choice in Southern Belize," *Language in Society* 30, no. 1 (2001): 81–96.

²¹ Rhys Jones and Peter Merriman, "Hot, Banal and Everyday Nationalism: Bilingual Road Signs in Wales," *Political Geography* 28, no. 3 (March 2009): 164–73, doi:10.1016/j.polgeo.2009.03.002; Daniel W. Gade, "Language, Identity, and the Scriptorial Landscape in Québec and Catalonia," *Geographical Review* 93, no. 4 (October 1, 2003): 429–48, doi:10.1111/j.1931-0846.2003.tb00041.x; Maoz Azaryahu and Rebecca Kook, "Mapping the Nation: Street Names and Arab-Palestinian Identity: Three Case Studies," *Nations and Nationalism* 8, no. 2 (April 1, 2002): 195–213,

more than mere indications of geographic location, but also serve as vehicles for the symbolic construction of identity through invocation of historic or cultural heritage. The note that “reading street names amounts to deciphering an officially constructed text of identity that reflects the interests and attitudes of local political elites.”²²

The manner in which these public signs are received by non-elite masses also provides a window into the process of identity contestation and boundary formation. Jones and Merriman note that, though the language of road signs may appear to be banal or mundane, the ability of language to convey representation makes road signs symbolically important, and occasionally a focus of hot, activated nationalist movements. The authors point to the campaigns for Welsh language signage and the vandalism of English language signs by Welsh activists in Wales as indications that matters of linguistic representation provoke impassioned responses.²³ Raento points to the importance of Basque-language graffiti covering over Spanish language road signs as an important tool for mobilization of Basque nationalist activists.²⁴

However, the language use on signs may also provide a reminder of the loss of salience of identity. Ben Hillman’s study of the Tibetan community of Shangri-La (formerly Gyalthang/Zhongdian) in southwestern China’s Yunnan province notes that, despite the mandate that street signs be written in Tibetan in accordance with the

doi:10.1111/1469-8219.00046; Paulina Raento, “Political Mobilisation and Place-specificity: Radical Nationalist Street Campaigning in the Spanish Basque Country,” *Space & Polity* 1: 2, 191–204, accessed March 12, 2017, https://www.academia.edu/29945985/Political_mobilisation_and_place_specificity_Radical_nationalist_street_campaigning_in_the_Spanish_Basque_country.

²² Azaryahu and Kook, “Mapping the Nation,” 210.

²³ Jones and Merriman, “Hot, Banal and Everyday Nationalism.”

²⁴ Raento, “Political Mobilisation and Place-specificity.”

community's designation as a Tibetan Autonomous County, few local Tibetan residents were literate enough to read them.²⁵

Multilingualism, everyday language use, and cultural survival

As Hillman's study indicates, language—both spoken and written—is often tied to concerns of cultural survival, especially among ethnic minority groups. Thus, linguistic and cultural survival are frequently linked. A decline in the use of a language may be associated with the assimilation of the group, or the loss of vitality of the community. Marquardt's study of language policy in the Chuvash Republic of Russia illustrates the connection between linguistic preservation efforts and survival of ethnic identity. In positioning itself as the lone protector of Chuvash identity, Marquardt observes, the Chuvash Republic's government employs Chuvash-language education programs, as well as television and radio broadcasting to promote Chuvash identity. Adopting such a role allows the government to position itself as an interlocutor for the people with the political center. The recent shift toward administrative bilingualism, a decrease of Chuvash language programming on TV and the radio, and the downplaying of Chuvash language education has increased tensions with Moscow related to the survival of Chuvash identity.²⁶ Concerns over linguistic survival often find expression

²⁵ Ben Hillman, "Paradise Under Construction: Minorities, Myths and Modernity in Northwest Yunnan," *Asian Ethnicity* 4, no. 2 (June 1, 2003): 175–88, doi:10.1080/14631360301654.

²⁶ Kyle L. Marquardt, "Stabilization and Symbolism: Language and Regional Politics in the Chuvash Republic," *Nationalities Papers* 40, no. 1 (January 1, 2012): 127–47, doi:10.1080/00905992.2011.633073.

beyond official spheres. Peltz's study of the decline of Yiddish speakers in South Philadelphia's Jewish neighborhoods concludes that, due to the rapid aging and decline in numbers of Yiddish speakers within the community, Jews in South Philadelphia, "must look inward to personal and family history for the ethnic foundations of their childhood, rather than to the street, synagogue, club, or Jewish Center."²⁷

While discussions of linguistic policy and cultural survival often focus on the tendency of language standardization to promote cultural homogenization or assimilation, Newman, et al. note that, where language policy allows for it, bilingualism may be the preferred choice of speakers of minority languages. Noting that bilingual asymmetry does not necessarily lead to cultural tensions, they argue:

*It is up to linguistic policy makers in such societies to extend competence in the minority language and its value as a means towards self-expression that does not necessarily lead to polarization between communities with different ethnolinguistic origins, but rather favors linguistic cosmopolitanism and, therefore, a diversity of identities coexisting in one single society.*²⁸

In this sense, embracing bilingualism may be a strategic choice. Far from leading to assimilation, bilingualism may lead to increased cosmopolitanism, and increased ethnolinguistic diversity. Newman, et al. argue that carefully thought-out policy which deliberately sponsors bilingualism may reduce tensions surrounding cultural and language erasure. They suggest that state carefully consider policies that

²⁷ Rakhmiel Peltz, "Who's Speaking Yiddish in South Philadelphia Today? Jewish Language in Urban America," *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 1987, no. 67 (September 1987): 145–66.

²⁸ Michael Newman, Mireia Trenchs-Parera, and Shukhan Ng, "Normalizing bilingualism: The Effects of the Catalan Linguistic Normalization Policy One Generation after," *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 12, no. 3 (June 2008): 330, doi:10.1111/j.1467-9841.2008.00369.x.

would foster and support bilingualism and foster greater linguistic diversity.

Forgetting the 'mother tongue'? Minority languages, ethnic identity, and the state in China

Linguistic rights form a crucial component of China's ethnic minority autonomy policy. Consistent with the Marxist-Leninist orthodoxy that the state must promote the values of socialism through minority autonomy, and using minority languages, the Chinese Communist Party enshrined linguistic rights for ethnic minorities in its founding creed.²⁹ However, despite these commitments to ethnic autonomy and linguistic preservation, the state's policies often facilitate the assimilation or Hanification of China's minority groups. Though the minority autonomy system officially intends to promote cultural preservation, in practice the policies it generates are often seen as eroding minority culture. Brady maintains that despite the promises of cultural preservation that have come with autonomy, "the effect of many of the government's ethnic policies has been increased integration and the steady loss of cultural diversity."³⁰ Thus, even those aspects of autonomy that are intended at promotion and preservation of minority culture may yield adverse consequences for members of the minority group.

One area in which these tensions between cultural preservation and integration arises is in minority language education. Postiglione remarks that China's public schools within ethnic minority regions are "charged with the responsibility to conserve ethnic cultures within a national context that places a premium on Han Chinese cultural

²⁹ Mullaney, "Critical Han Studies."

³⁰ Anne-Marie Brady, "Ethnicity and the State in Contemporary China," *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs* 4 (2012): 4.

capital.” Further, he remarks, language instruction in public schools exerts a powerful influence on the articulation of the content of ethnic identity. He argues, “the manner in which the state permits ethnic minority languages to be used in school is crucial for the form of ethnicity that schools reproduce.”³¹ Glasserman’s study of the curriculum of the state-affiliated Chinese Islamic Association (CIA) examines ethnic bias in the way the CIA instructs *jiejing* (exigesis or scriptural interpretation, 解经) that favors the Hui, and attempts to use language and textual interpretation to shape and control ethnic and religious expression.³²

Often, ethnic minorities must weigh matters of language preservation must be weighed against economic viability. As ethnic minorities from undeveloped regions of China move to urban centers to pursue their economic interests, incentives to learn and speak *putonghua* (standard Mandarin, 普通话) increase. One ethnic Salar interviewee in Xining explained, “I really worry that if a large number of kids live outside of their hometowns and study Chinese and slowly forget their mother tongue (*muyu*, 母语), how can we pass on our ethnic culture?”³³

Similarly, among China’s Mongol community, loss of ability to speak the

³¹ Gerard A. Postiglione, “Introduction: State Schooling and Ethnicity in China,” in *China’s National Minority Education: Culture, Schooling, and Development*, ed. Gerard A. Postiglione (New York, NY: Routledge, 1999), 4, 8–10.

³² Aaron Glasserman, “Making Muslims Hui: Ethnic Bias in the New Curriculum of the China Islamic Association,” in *Hui Muslims in China*, ed. Rong Gui, Hacer Zekiye Gönül, and Xiaoyan Zhang (Leuven, Belgium: Leuven University Press, 2016), 47–62.

³³ Interview: XN115041516, In the original Chinese, “我很担忧大批这样孩子在外地，学会汉语忘记母语，慢慢的这个民族文化怎么传承?”

Mongol language ranks as one of the primary concerns related to cultural survival.³⁴ However, having only Mongol language education puts Mongols at a distinct social and economic disadvantage. Borchigud argues that Mongol language education in autonomous areas reveal that these programs are perceived by minority citizens as harming their ability to gain high-wage jobs, or move up the social ladder since Mandarin Chinese is the language of business.³⁵ Bulag asserts that learning only Mongol makes Mongolians “economically, politically, and even socially incompetent citizens in a Chinese-dominated society that, from the 1980s onward, was increasingly market oriented.”³⁶ Due to the fact that functional mono-linguism has been functionally abolished in Inner Mongolia, and almost all Mongols speak at least some Mandarin Joakim Enwall argues if dramatic changes in language education and cultural preservation measures do not change soon, “it is difficult to see how the Mongols of Inner Mongolia can avoid being completely assimilated within a few generations.”³⁷

Uyghurs express similar resentments concerning language loss and economic

³⁴ Wurlig Borchigud, “The Impact of Urban Ethnic Education on Modern Mongolian Ethnicity, 1940-1966,” in *Cultural Encounters on China’s Ethnic Frontiers*, ed. Stevan Harrell (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1996), 278–300; Naran Bilik, “Language Education, Intellectuals and Symbolic Representation: Being an Urban Mongolian in a New Configuration of Social Evolution,” *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 4, no. 1–2 (March 1, 1998): 47–67, doi:10.1080/13537119808428528; Burgjin and Bilik, “Contemporary Mongolian Population Distribution, Migration, Cultural Change, and Identity”; Uradyn E. Bulag, “Mongolian Ethnicity and Linguistic Anxiety in China,” *American Anthropologist*, New Series, 105, no. 4 (December 1, 2003): 753–63; Wuyuncang Ojjied, “Language Competition in an Ethnic Autonomous Region: A Case of Ethnic Mongol Students in Inner Mongolia,” *Chinese Education & Society* 43, no. 1 (January 1, 2010): 58–69, doi:10.2753/CED1061-1932430105.

³⁵ Borchigud, “The Impact of Urban Ethnic Education on Modern Mongolian Ethnicity, 1940-1966.”

³⁶ Bulag, “Mongolian Ethnicity and Linguistic Anxiety in China,” 753–55.

³⁷ Joakim Enwall, “Inter-Ethnic Relations in Mongolia and Inner Mongolia,” *Asian Ethnicity* 11, no. 2 (June 1, 2010): 244, 254–56, doi:10.1080/14631361003779539.

viability. Many complain that the local schools do not teach courses in Uyghur beyond the elementary level, and that opportunities for economic advancement require them to gain fluency in spoken Mandarin Chinese.³⁸ Many of Kaltman's respondents remarked that Uyghur-language only education placed Uyghurs at a comparative disadvantage on the job market. Thus, Uyghurs are faced with a dilemma: preserving their native language in lower levels of education limits their abilities to gain access to the higher education needed for economic advancement. Those Uyghurs who elect to study Mandarin to better their economic chances face estrangement from their own community and alienation and loss of touch with their own culture and are pejoratively called "Chinese Uyghur." Some of Kaltman's respondents even claimed that language education was a means by which the government attempted to deliberately marginalize Uyghurs.³⁹

Reading the Qur'an in Chinese: mosque education and language instruction in Hui communities

As a *hanyu minzu*, (汉语民族, Chinese speaking nationality) language both tethers the Hui to traditional Chinese culture, and Han culture in particular. Although the Hui do not face a choice between learning their native tongue and the language of state, they do have to balance learning Chinese against the study of the language of faith, Arabic. Historical accounts differ about how the Hui have negotiated this issue. Raphael Israeli notes that early Chinese Muslim communities attempted to ground their

³⁸ Kaltman, *Under the Heel of the Dragon*, 3–4, 15–17, 20, 35, 39, 66, 78–79; Rosalyn Lim, "China's Ethnic Policies in the Xinjiang Region," *Washington Journal of Modern China* 10, no. 2 (2012): 64–89.

³⁹ Kaltman, *Under the Heel of the Dragon*, 17–29.

faith and their origins in a Chinese context, and rectify Islamic terms with Chinese context. Israeli argues that Chinese Muslims adopted Chinese names and spoke Chinese language in public spaces, but maintained Islamic names and spoke Arabic amongst themselves, resulting in a split between public and private identity.⁴⁰

Others, like Jonathan Lipman, offer an account of Hui identity that emphasizes fusion and innovation rather than bifurcation. As Muslims integrated into Chinese society, a number of linguistic innovations allow them to bridge the language gap between Chinese and Arabic or Persian language use. Lipman documents the use of mosque education (*jingtang jiaoyu*, 经堂教育) as early as the later stage of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) to provide instruction in Arabic for Chinese Muslim communities. In these mosque schools, imams developed systems by which Chinese students could learn to recite Qur'anic passages and Arabic or Persian religious treatises by using Chinese characters to approximate the sounds of the original language. Likewise, the creation of *xiaojing* (小经, also known as *xiao'erjing*, 小二经), an Arabic phonetic system (which Lipman refers to as an Arabic *pinyin*) allowed those Chinese Muslims who could speak but not read Chinese, to produce texts in Chinese language (See Figure 4.1, below).⁴¹ These innovations allowed the transmission of Islamic religious knowledge and Muslim identity in a context where Chinese, not Arabic stood as the dominant language. Ben-Dor Benite remarks that the product of this system was an identity among Hui literati that was, “at once fully ‘Muslim’ and fully ‘Chinese.’”⁴²

⁴⁰ Raphael Israeli, *Islam in China: Religion, Ethnicity, Culture, and Politics* (Lanham, Md: Lexington Books, 2002), 60–63, 113–18.

⁴¹ Lipman, *Familiar Strangers*, 49–51.

⁴² Ben-Dor Benite, *The Dao of Muhammad*, 13.

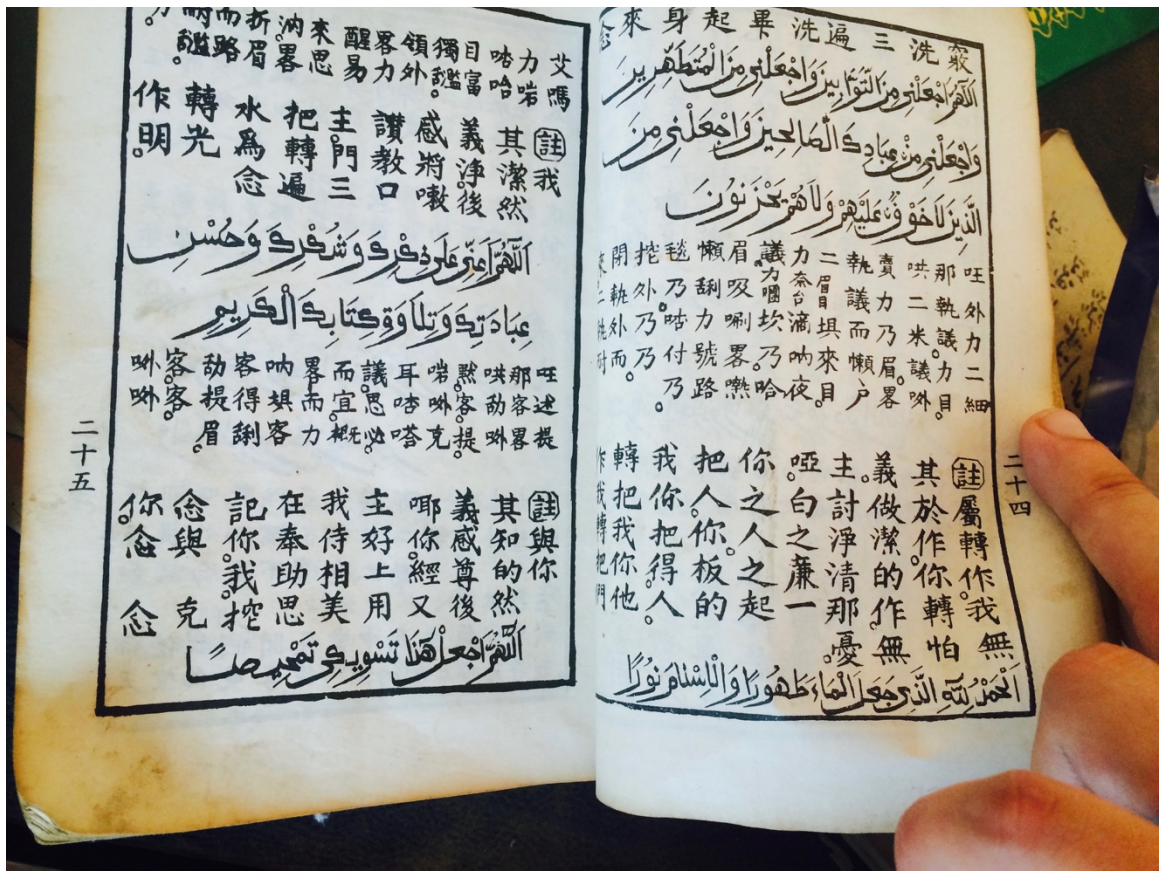


Figure 4.1: Qur'an with facing pages of Chinese and Arabic, Hualong Hui Autonomous County, Qinghai.

More recently, Lipman notes that a wide range of attitudes toward language education persists among Hui families, including those in especially rural areas who elect only to teach their children to read Persian and Arabic.⁴³ However, maintaining an Islamic identity in the face of modernization and standardization represents a major challenge facing Hui communities throughout China. As the state continues to promote policies of urbanization, matters of language and literacy form a vital part of the debate over Hui identity.

“We Hui don’t have our own language”: languages of faith and daily life in Hui communities

⁴³ Lipman, *Familiar Strangers*, 215.

Though the Hui are a linguistically diverse group whose members speak in a number of different languages, including variety of regional Chinese dialects, and in some cases dialects of Mongolian, Tibetan, or Chamic or Austronesian languages,⁴⁴ Arabic language doubtless exerts a heavy influence on Hui culture as a language of faith. For many Hui this connection to Arabic may seem no more than vestigial. Many respondents claimed that the extent of their ability to speak Arabic was to recite the *qingzhen yan* (清真言, *shahada*).⁴⁵ An engineer in his early fifties in Jinan remarked that the Hui had gone through a high degree of linguistic assimilation due to association with Han Chinese. “Of course the Hui aren’t a Chinese nationality,” he reasoned, “but they’ve been influence to a really large degree by the Han, and they speak *Hanyu* (Chinese language, 汉语). So currently, I certainly can’t speak Arabic.”⁴⁶ However, many respondents recognized the impact of Arabic and Persian language influences when describing distinctive patterns of speech present in conversations between Hui.⁴⁷

One interviewee, a 29 year old publisher in Beijing remarked:

It’s like this. We Hui don’t have our own language. What Hui use, what we speak in our daily lives, some words are from ancient Persian. Some words we use in our religion come from Arabic. So, in the midst of our lives, of course maybe we’re able to use some of these words, but the

⁴⁴ Hillman, “The Rise of the Community in Rural China”; Gladney, “Islam in China,” 91; Leonard Y. Andaya, *Leaves of the Same Tree: Trade and Ethnicity in the Straits of Melaka* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai’i Press, 2008), 45, 168; Chang, “Self-Identity versus State Identification of ‘Tibetan-Speaking Muslims’ in the Kaligang Area of Qinghai—An Ethnographic Analysis”; Marie-Paule Hille, Bianca Horlemann, and Paul K. Nietupski, eds., *Muslims in Amdo Tibetan Society: Multidisciplinary Approaches*, Studies in Modern Tibetan Literature (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2015).

⁴⁵ Interviews: BJ09091615, JN44112515, JN52120415, JN62122015, YN69012116, YN74012416, YN109033116, XN113041316, XN116041516

⁴⁶ Interview: JN32103115, in the original Chinese: “虽然回族不是中国的民族，但是受汉族影响太大了，说汉语，我现在不会说阿拉伯语，对吧”

⁴⁷ Interview: BJ02082915, BJ09091615, JN62122015, YN72012216, XN120042016,

*majority of them we're unable to use. The people who really grasp Arabic, they're all about 60 years old, and they all have ties to Qur'anic language.*⁴⁸

Some respondents went as far as to describe a “*Huihua*” (回话), as separate dialect. One respondent, the owner of a small electrical appliance store in Yinchuan explained how this “Hui dialect” incorporated expressions derived from Arabic words.⁴⁹ One Xining businesswoman in her late thirties explained “You can hear it. It’s all Qinghai dialect, but if a group of people from Qinghai are talking, you’ll know it just from talking. It’s all the same language, but there are a few pronunciations that will allow you hear, you’re a Hui, he’s a Han. It’s really pretty clear.”⁵⁰ Official government propaganda on minority identity also posits that the Hui use a specific set of vocabulary unique to Hui communities. While official descriptions fall short of labeling these linguistic differences as a “dialect,” they highlight the differences between word usage in Hui and Han communities. A government poster pasted to low wall outside an elementary school on the north end of Ledu Lu in Xining’s Hui Quarter, described how the Hui’s observance of Islamic customs led them to favor certain words, and avoid others, especially in regard to matters of eating and diet.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Interview: BJ08091215, In the original Chinese: “是这样的，我们回族没有自己的语言。回族用的是，生活当中用一些词来自于古波斯语，宗教里一些词来自于古阿拉伯语，所以我们生活当中，一些词肯定能够用到但是不会有大量使用机会，因为真正掌握阿拉伯语的，可能现在年龄在60岁上下了，而且都是跟经文有关的。”

⁴⁹ Interview: YN72012216

⁵⁰ Interview: XN120042016, In the original Chinese: “能听出来，都是青海话，但是如果一群青海人在一起聊天，一聊就知道，同样一样的语言，但是有一些语调语音能听出来你是回族，他是汉族，特别明显。”

⁵¹ Field Observations, Xining, April 2016. The relevant portion of the sign reads “在语言上，对食用的畜禽忌说‘肥’，而说‘壮’；忌说‘杀’而说‘宰’；忌说‘肉’而说‘菜’，如‘牛菜’‘羊菜’相互之间不用禁忌物来比喻。”

As changes in urban landscapes reconfigure Hui neighborhoods, and disperse concentrated Hui populations, concerns arise among Hui residents about the preservation of this uniquely Hui dialect. In some areas, like the MaDian neighborhood in north-central Beijing, the redevelopment of land, and the dispersal of the original residents precipitated a decline in usage of the local Hui patterns of speech. Once a strong pocket of Hui culture, the reconstruction of the MaDian neighborhood in the 1950s and again in the 1990s scattered the once concentrated Hui community. An imam at the mosque in the neighborhood lamented, “Here at MaDian, we had our own Hui dialect. It used Arabic words, and Chinese words. But now, there’s nobody who can speak *Huihua*. It’s already been lost.”⁵² Furthermore, the loss of local institutions dedicated to the promotion of Arabic language and Qur’anic study, like mosque schools devoted to *jingtang jiaoyu*, hindered the ability of residents to pass down the dialect. A shortage of officially sanctioned institutions for language promotion diminished the viability of *Huihua* among locals.

Though most official descriptions of Hui culture issued by government sources recognize Chinese as the native language of the Hui, government propaganda frequently employs Arabic—a language of faith—in prominent Hui neighborhoods. Various local and provincial government initiatives actively promote public displays of Arabic language on official signs in neighborhoods. In areas where the Hui are the titular autonomous minority, like Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region’s capital of Yinchuan, all street signs contain Arabic alongside Chinese characters and *pinyin* (see Figure 4.2

⁵² Interview: BJ02082915, In the original Chinese: “我们在马甸有了我们自己的回话，用阿拉伯词，中文词。现在没有人会说这个话，已经丢了。”

below). Proliferation of these bilingual signs is not limited to autonomous regions. On Niu Jie, site of Beijing's major Hui community, official buildings like the community post office also display both Arabic and Chinese fonts. Even in neighborhoods where the urban redevelopment relocated the historically concentrated Hui population, some official buildings still use Arabic script formally. The Community Residence Center Offices (*shequ fuqu zhan*, 社区服务站) on Douban Hutong in Beijing, a formerly vibrant Hui neighborhood with a famous mosque, displays its sign in both Arabic and Chinese (see Figure 4.2 below). Inside the office, however, none of the employees claimed to be Hui, and questions about why the sign contained Arabic script were met with puzzlement by those working at the desk.⁵³

These official displays of Arabic not only adorn street signs, but also grace propaganda posters, often heralding local neighborhood or municipal initiatives. Near the entrance to Jinan's Hui Quarter, on Gongqingtuan Lu, large wall sized posters placed by the Luo Yuan Jie Dao Neighborhood Communist Party Worker's Committee (泺原街道党工委) depict images of Jinan's glistening downtown. In bold red font, both Chinese characters and Arabic script proclaim slogans like "The City of Springs is My Home! Creating a Clean City Relies on Everyone!" and "A Clean Environment Starts With Me!" (see Figure 4.1 below). Despite the prominence of the signs, no local residents claimed to be able to read them.⁵⁴

Figure 4.2: Arabic on signs in Yinchuan (top), Beijing (middle), and Jinan (bottom).

⁵³ Field Observations, Beijing, September 2015

⁵⁴ Field Observations, Jinan, October 2015; in the original Chinese: "泉城是我家创卫靠大家" and "环境卫生从我做起"

Even though the local residents, who are the targets for the campaigns touted by the Arabic script on propaganda posters like the ones found in Jinan, may find the language inscrutable, the government still possesses incentives for displaying Arabic prominently in Hui neighborhoods. One respondent in Yinchuan who worked at the Ningxia Academy of Social Sciences explained that the promotion of Arabic language on signs in public places found throughout Ningxia was the result of a government initiative to showcase the province's ethnic nationality policy (*minzu zhengce*, 民族政策), and highlight the official status of minority languages in an autonomous region. However, he admitted, the project made little impact because, "most people have no connection to it" in their day to day lives.⁵⁵

"Muslims need to know Arabic to pray": (il)literacy and identity in Hui communities

The gap between the prominence of the Arabic in the official display, and the ability of residents to comprehend the meaning of the words on the sign illustrates an important dilemma: while Arabic language is important to the practice of Islam, and strongly associated with Hui identity, few Hui are able to speak or read it.

In part, many respondents cited the lack educational opportunities for learning Arabic made available in most Hui communities. In Yinchuan, the city's status as the capital of a Hui Autonomous Region opens avenues to formal study of Islamic language that may not be possible elsewhere. The Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region's *Jing Xueyuan* (Qur'anic Studies Institute, 经学院) affords college-aged students the

⁵⁵ Interview: YN92022216

opportunity to study a Qur'anic curriculum, and, by extension, Arabic language, in a formalized, degree-granting setting.⁵⁶

Even in Yinchuan, where the city's status as the capital city of a Hui Autonomous Region affords greater visibility to Arabic language on signs, and in public universities, the incentives for engaging in Arabic study have changed. A teacher at Yinchuan's *Jing Xueyuan* explained the “The purpose of the school is to train imams, but we also have students who become translators and do other jobs.” Due to a surplus of students trained as imams, the teacher remarked that it was unlikely that all students could find gainful employment as clergy. He explained:

*Only about 10-25% of students become imams. Why? Because Ningxia has 4,000 mosques and over 8,000 imams. So Imams are numerous but mosques are not. Many graduates wouldn't be able to find a job at a mosque. So yes, there are some students whose fathers were imams and so they feel like they also have to become imams. But most students will try to find work as translators or doing business because it's easier to find work.*⁵⁷

Thus, students undertaking formal study of Arabic increasingly do so for economic reasons. In this sense, for many Hui, Arabic has become a language of business rather than faith. As a result, Hui draw distinctions between contemporary Arabic (*alaboyu*, 阿拉伯语) and classical Qur'anic Arabic (*jingwen*, 经文). Many respondents note that even clergy may not fully understand *jingwen* even when they have learned to recite it.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Field Observations, Yinchuan, March 2016

⁵⁷ Interview: YN105032316

⁵⁸ Interviews: YN92022216, YN97031716, YN101032116, YN10532316, YN107033016 XN114041416

In part, these distinctions arise from lack of opportunity for formal study. Even with institutions like the *jing xueyuan*, residents of Yinchuan noted the paucity of options for language learning in public schools. An imam in Yinchuan remarked, “There aren't really many places to learn Arabic. Ningxia University has an Arabic department and there's the *jing xueyuan* but there aren't really that many options.”⁵⁹ Another Yinchuanese *ahong* in his forties at a prominent mosque in Yinchuan remarked that his experience with learning Arabic language was typical of many who became imams in rural communities. Rather than study Arabic formally in school, he explained, most of his education came through studying with imams in country mosques. Thus, he memorized the Arabic of the Qur'an and the hadith, but his understanding of the language was constrained by this context. The shopkeeper of an Islamic goods store in Yinchuan explained, the consequences of this informal, rural education. She remarked, “*Ahong* don't necessarily speak Arabic. They can recite from the Qur'an, but they can't use Arabic to communicate.”⁶⁰

In communities that lack minority autonomous status, gaining access to Arabic language requires pursuing alternative paths. A 56 year old professor of history in Yinchuan described some of the legal restrictions that made formal study of Arabic difficult for most Hui. He noted, “the government has rules and limitations. Mostly you're not allowed to attend mosque education until you're eighteen.”⁶¹ In some cases, private institutions provide education which skirts these obstacles. At the Islamic school

⁵⁹ Interview: YN101032116

⁶⁰ Interview: YN97031716, In the original Chinese, “阿訇不一定会阿文。他们会念经但是不会用阿文交流说话。”

⁶¹ Interview: YN104032216

for girls founded by a wealthy local woman in the town of Weizhou in Tongxin County outside of Yinchuan, students study the Qur'an and Arabic language alongside standard curriculum.⁶² Schools like these may provide the basis for learning Arabic, but suffer from lack of resources.

Xining provides a more successful picture of how these informal Arabic classes impact a community. One respondent remarked that, unlike other provinces, Qinghai did not place legal restrictions on Arabic language classes, and as a result these classes flourished in Xining.⁶³ The city's prominent Dongguan Grand Mosque offers daily classes in Arabic which draw large crowds, often filling classrooms and spilling out into the courtyard outside. The classes, which occur just prior to the start of midday *zuhr* prayer, consisted of the class of mostly retired men repeatedly imitating a single instructor as he pronounced the sounds of Arabic letters whose written form he continually pointed to on a chalkboard. On some days, when instructing upper level classes, the instructor taught larger passages of the Qur'an, intoning phrases like "*bismillāhi r-rahmāni r-rahīm*" ("In the name of God the most gracious, the most merciful") a line at a time in sing-songy Arabic, encouraging students to repeat after him.⁶⁴ One contact who attended these classes remarked that while the classes primarily catered to retirees, young people attended as well, and the classes generally served a wide range of the community.⁶⁵ As a tour guide at Dongguan Mosque explained, the

⁶² Field Observations, Weizhou, February 2016

⁶³ Interview, XN115041516

⁶⁴ Field Observations, Xining, April 2016

⁶⁵ Interview: XN135050916

classes were deemed necessary for the basic observance of faith. “We have this class because Muslims need to know Arabic to pray,” he reasoned.⁶⁶

Elsewhere options to study Arabic and Islamic practice are more scarce. In Jinan respondents noted that, though the a school in the Hui Quarter called itself the ‘Hui Elementary School’ (回民小学, *Huimin Xiaoxue*), the school offered no classes in Arabic language, or Qur’anic education.⁶⁷ A retired volunteer worker at the offices of the Jinan Islamic Association explained that the city had a small Qur’anic school attached to the Great Southern Mosque (*Nanda Qingzhen Si*, 南大清真寺) founded in 1984 to coincide with the reopening of the mosque after being shuttered for over a decade during the Cultural Revolution. However, he remarked, the school experienced sudden closure in recent years, and had not reopened since.⁶⁸ Without it, the neighborhood provided little means through which to study Arabic. While the mosques in the community provided a few informal weekly classes, one Imam in the neighborhood explained that, of late, young people showed disinterest in attending, causing the age of attendees to increase and the size of the classes to dwindle.⁶⁹

“There are a lot of people who think we shouldn't study Chinese”: language use and Hui identity contestation

The success of classes like those at the Dongguan Mosque, and the scarcity of Arabic-education resources in cities like Jinan, reinforce commonly expressed notions

⁶⁶ Interview: XN118041816

⁶⁷ Interviews: JN24101515, JN27102015, JN32103115, JN34110415, JN57121015

⁶⁸ Interview: JN31103015

⁶⁹ Interview: JN23101515

that Hui from the northwest, particularly those from rural villages, are more competent in reading the Qur'an in Arabic are thus more devoted to the faith. One 32 year old respondent in Beijing who had moved to the city from Harbin in the northeast noted the regional disparity in language difference between east and west, arguing, that, unlike northeastern Hui, like those in his hometown, “these Hui, which is to say those from places like *Xibei*, Yunnan, and Xinjiang, can read a little bit more. Also, they start to study at an earlier age than we do.”⁷⁰ In Jinan, an imam at one of the Hui Quarter's mosques echoed these sentiments, estimating that less than 5% of the people who attended his mosque had any competency in Arabic.⁷¹

When discussing Hui from the northwest, respondents painted a very different picture. Respondents commonly cited the availability of methods to learn Arabic outside of publicly provided classes, as one of the major differences between eastern and western Hui communities. Noting the differences in Arabic proficiency between cities and rural villages, the history professor in Yinchuan remarked, “In the countryside almost every mosque will have a class that teaches young students.” An imam in a mosque in the rural suburbs of Jinan contrasted the habits of young students in the northwest, “In *Xibei* (西北, colloquial term for China's northwest), they spend a lot more time studying Arabic. Over school vacations and holidays they'll go to the mosque like regular school.”⁷²

⁷⁰ Interview: BJ01082815, in the original Chinese, “...会念的更多一些, 就是说可能那种, 包括西北、云南、新疆这些地方.而且学的时间也比我们要早一些.”

⁷¹ Interview: JN2101215

⁷² Interview: JN33110115

Many respondents cited such discrepancies in terms of devotion to reading the Qur'an and praying in Arabic as a major markers of difference within the Hui community itself. Many Hui across all locations admitted that, though they could read Arabic letters, they could not understand the words they formed.⁷³ Divisions arose concerning the appropriateness of using Chinese characters to aid in pronunciation of Arabic texts. Those urbanite Hui, particularly those in east China claimed that they recited the Qur'an using Chinese characters to approximate the sounds of Arabic words.⁷⁴ One 18 year old college student from Shanxi province studying at a university in Jinan described this system, stating "Our Qur'ans all have Chinese characters, and Arabic, but I've forgotten all the Arabic I learned when I was young. When I memorized it I just memorized the Chinese characters."⁷⁵ Another respondent, a retiree from Tai'an near Jinan described how, in her youth, she learned how to recite Arabic phrases using Chinese to approximate the sounds. She explained, "I've forgotten how to say the *qingzhen yan*, but when I was young I could say recite it all. But, what I recited was the Chinese style, and the pronunciation was different."⁷⁶

While learning to recite the Qur'an through such a "different" means of pronunciation and study may ease the process of learning about faith for some Hui, others scorn and deride these means of Arabic recitation. Often, more orthodox Hui

⁷³ Interviews: BJ08091215, BJ11091715, JN24101515, JN37111115, YN74012416, YN94022416, XN112041316, XN113041316, XN117041616, XN120042016, XN121042116, XN123042316

⁷⁴ Interviews: JN33110115, JN47112615, JN621212015, YN90022116, XN112041316, XN113041316, XN128043016, XN130050416,

⁷⁵ Interview: JN47112615, "因为我们经书上都是汉字，有阿拉伯文，但是小时候学过现在就忘了。然后背的时候就背的是汉字"

⁷⁶ Interview: JN62122015; In the original Chinese, "(清真言)我都忘了，小时候都会念的是中国式的，发音很不一样。"

treated this use of Chinese characters as a language aid as a marker of assimilation, or insufficient commitment to Islamic heritage. For the more devout, often more rural Hui, such a use of Chinese language to read the Qur'an signaled secularization and Hanification (expressed as *danhua*, 淡化; or *Hanhua*, 汉化). One respondent in Xining, a 48 year old teacher who was born in the nearby town of Huangyuan to a Salar father and Hui mother, explained that many northwestern Hui "refuse to read the Chinese version of the Qur'an." When asked why, he argued, "There are a lot of people who think we shouldn't study Chinese; that it's just the rubbish language that's leftover from a heathen religion. So it's possible that this attitude can create some problems."⁷⁷ As these rural Hui migrate to cities seeking work, they express frustration with their urban co-ethnics' lack of Arabic proficiency. An 18 year old migrant from rural Qinghai, recently arrived in Jinan, cited this as one of many reasons Jinan's level of Islamic observance fell short of matching up with his hometown's.⁷⁸

While Hui who migrate to urban spaces look at their dedication to learning Arabic as a mark of superior devotion to faith, and evidence of a purer expression of Hui identity, urbanite Hui, particularly those in East China, view this commitment less favorably. In Jinan, many longtime residents of the Hui Quarter described recent migrants from Qinghai and Gansu as unwilling to allow their children to study Chinese. Pointing to a difference in attitude between local Hui and recently arrived Hui who came to Jinan to open noodle shops, one shop owner maintained, "Many of the people

⁷⁷ Interview: XN112041316; in the original Chinese "实际上很多穆斯林汉文的这个《古兰经》他们不愿意读" and "我们生活当中有一些人认为, 不要学汉语, 那些就是残渣着异教徒的语言, 这个可能就会产生这样一些问题" respectively.

⁷⁸ Interview: JN50120315

who sell *lamian* can speak Arabic. That's because of how things are different in the northwest. There they teach their kids how to read and speak Arabic from a very young age. They forbid them to read and write in Chinese characters because they only want them to use Arabic."⁷⁹ Another longtime Jinan resident, a 36 year old factory worker, echoed these observations. He remarked, "They (northwestern Hui) oppose everything to do with the Han, including using Chinese characters, and so they don't let their children study Chinese. There was a period of time, before Liberation (the end of the Chinese Civil War in 1949), when the attitude was to not allow for studying Chinese characters."⁸⁰

Increasingly, the prioritization of learning Islam over more standard education has come to be seen as a choice made by rural Hui who lack other educational opportunities. Children who struggle in with the public school system may be channeled into mosque education when other career options have failed. A retiree in his 60s Xining explained, "Some parents who have children don't do that well in school may send their kids to study the Qur'an. Mostly they go to Yinchuan or to Linxia to study where there are more formal schools. But if the kids do well in school, then parents encourage them to go to college to keep learning."⁸¹ As a result, urbanite Hui tended to look at those Hui educated in rural mosques who had Arabic literacy but less formal education in Chinese, as lacking the intellectual capability to succeed in other paths. Local, urbanite, Jinanese Hui looked down on recently arrived migrants, regarding their

⁷⁹ Interview: JN61121615

⁸⁰ Interview: JN52210415, In the original Chinese: "他反汉族一切，包括你的文字，所以不让孩子学习汉字。汉字都是不让学的，有一段时间，解放之前就是这样心态"

⁸¹ Interview: XN135050916

lower socioeconomic status, and levels of education as indicative of their status as either religious fundamentalists, or rural bumpkins.

Conclusions

These divisions over whether reading the Qur'an in Chinese is acceptable, or whether teaching children to be literate only in Arabic is backward are illustrative of the ways in which language draws internal distinctions between Hui. Despite the state's attempts to promote and standardize minority languages, thus integrating minorities into the Chinese state, disparities in the availability of Arabic language learning resources across China, and economic incentives to educate children in a standard curriculum rather than through *jingtang jiaoyu*, have resulted in renewed contestation over the boundaries and content of Hui identity.

In cities like Xining, where the Hui are one of many different Islamic minority groups alongside small communities of Salar, and Dongxiang, these questions may be bracketed into debates about Islamic orthodoxy, and sectarian difference. In cities like Jinan, however, these differences may be equally as salient as those between Hui and the majority Han. The questions about whether or not Hui should consider Arabic as a mother tongue, and whether Hui should prioritize learning spoken and written Qur'anic form important internal distinctions between Hui. As Hui migrate from the countryside to the city, interaction between Hui from different regions, and social environments increases the salience of these distinctions between different groups of Hui.

In drawing these internal boundary lines divisions over language activate a number of cross-cutting cleavages. Associating Arabic language competency with lower literacy in Chinese, and thus lower social status, activates economic divisions. Attributing proper Arabic pronunciation to the superiority of one Islamic school over another activates sectarian cleavages. In overlapping these notions about the necessity for Hui to speak Arabic, or the acceptability of speaking a Chinese-Arabic pidgin, with cross-cutting cleavages that precipitate judgments about level of education, social class, or religiosity, Hui increase the salience of internal boundaries rather than external ones.

Internal migration increases contact between these disparate groups of Hui, interaction between them brings these internal divisions concerning language into sharper relief. By highlighting differences in attitudes about the position of Arabic in Hui identity, the CCP's attempts to use language to promote integration and standardization achieve the opposite. While previous discussion of language and the politics of identity formation focus on the role played by official policy, and the institutionalization of standard language in achieving a universal identity, an examination of how these policies impact everyday language choices reveals the ways in which these policies increase contestation and division rather than create uniformity. As language preservation in the face of increasing modernization becomes a greater focus for scholars in the social sciences, a greater examination of the impact of these choices on daily language use should be considered.

5. Consuming: Islamic purity, dietary habits, and Hui identity.

“Real Qingzhen restaurants only use clean ingredients.”

Across the table at *Tongxin Chun*, the famous Islamic restaurant in Yinchuan, my interviewee, the 20-something son of the owner, took drags of his cigarette as he walked me through his understanding of the meaning of keeping a *qingzhen* (halal, 清真)¹ lifestyle. As the table’s automated lazy susan whirred around, laden down with numerous local delicacies made with mutton and beef, he remarked:

In a lot of Hui’s understanding, it’s just not eating pork that makes them Hui. In Yinchuan there are a lot of Hui like that. ‘I’m Hui, so I don’t eat pork.’ But if you ask them ‘What about God? What about speaking Arabic? What about praying?’ They won’t understand. What about fasting for Ramadan? They don’t understand. They only understand ‘I don’t eat pork, so therefore I’m Hui.’²

Throughout my fieldwork, many respondents echoed these sentiments explicitly linking Hui identity to the observation of *qingzhen* dietary codes. In the view of these respondents keeping a strict observance of *qingzhen* served as the primary connection to their ethnic identity. As one, a Hui professor in Jinan, remarked “What I

¹ Many scholars of Islam in China simply translate *qingzhen* as “halal.” Hereafter, I will use the term in this way. Popular understandings of the word’s meaning roughly validate this choice. However, some scholars, notably Dru C. Gladney emphasize the importance of a broader translation of *qingzhen* that reflects the centrality of the concept to Hui identity. For further discussion, see; Gladney, *Muslim Chinese*, 11–15; Yukari Sai and Johan Fischer, “Muslim Food Consumption in China: Between Qingzhen and Halal,” in *Halal Matters: Islam, Politics and Markets in Global Perspective*, ed. Florence Bergeaud-Blackler, Johan Fischer, and John Lever (New York, NY: Routledge, 2016), 162.

² Interview: YN83021216

understand about being Hui, in terms of Islam, is that the most important thing is not to eat pork. Besides that I really don't know much.”³

The strength of the Islamic taboo on pork and alcohol, and the visibility of *qingzhen* branding in Hui communities makes the observance of a proper, pure diet one of the most noticeable features of Hui identity. The practice of buying *qingzhen* foodstuffs, and eating at *qingzhen* restaurants, is not just an act religious observation, but a means of ethnic differentiation. The Hui prohibition on eating ritually unclean items stands in especially stark contrast to the majority Han, who observe few, if any, dietary restrictions.⁴ Accordingly, the Chinese state seeks to promote and control the *qingzhen* food industry in order to showcase ethnic diversity and celebrate displays of ethnic differentiation that are acceptable to its narrative of ethnic unity. Doing so allows the state to cast the development of the halal food industry as a yet another benchmark in the state's quest for inclusivity and progress. However, inattention to the actual substance of creating a standardized *qingzhen* food certification process undercuts the state's efforts to solidify and control the discourse over the form and expression of a *qingzhen* lifestyle. Instead, the lack of clear standards concerning *qingzhen* food open spaces for contestation of Hui identity, and drawing of interal boundary lines. Among Hui, the strictness and correctness of observance of these dietary codes serves as a measuring stick for the strength of one's identity, with more lenient observers frequently labeled as *danhua* (淡化), or diminished as Hui. Hui from different regions,

³ Interview: JN46112515

⁴ This is especially true regarding meat, as a famous Chinese aphorism observes, "Any animal whose back faces the sun can be eaten" (背脊朝天，人皆可食). Many Hui respondents mentioned this to me, when describing a Han diet.

social-economic statuses, and levels of religiosity contest the question of how to properly observe and maintain a *qingzhen* diet, and by extension, Hui identity itself.

The remainder of this paper will examine how, despite the state's showcasing of *qingzhen* food as an integral aspect of Hui culture, and attempts to promote *qingzhen* food as a force for inclusion and development, the lack of a clear set of standards for *qingzhen* certification allow for increased division and debate over the proper interpretation and observance of *qingzhen* dietary standards. Following a brief review of the literature on the impact of consumption habits, in particular regarding food and eating, and identity formation processes, I will explore the importance of consuming *qingzhen* food and the maintenance of Hui identity. First, I will establish the importance of adhering to a *qingzhen* diet to establishing markers that form the boundary of Hui identity. Next, I will provide an overview of the state's promotion of *qingzhen* products. Despite public promotion of *qingzhen* branding, the lack of a coherent policy on certification leaves regulation as a patchwork system vulnerable to exploitation by peddlers of fake *qingzhen* products. Traditionally, Hui communities form as enclaves surrounding mosque and markets to provide the means for the observance of Islamic lifestyle and dietary needs. As urban renewal alters these spaces, and their demographics, demand for *qingzhen* food rises. However, the lack of a comprehensive regulatory system for *qingzhen* goods allows for exploitation of these circumstances. Likewise, the lack of a national policy leaves an opening for renewed contestation over what should stand as the proper interpretation of *qingzhen*. Following these examinations, I will suggest that, absent national policy to resolve this contestation, market forces often influence definitions of *qingzhen* used by

entrepreneurs. In conclusion, I assess the ways in which this dialogue increases the salience of internal divisions within the Hui community, and presents opportunities to forge new consensus within the Hui community regarding the role of food and eating in marking the boundaries of Hui identity.

Ethnicity and Eating: Dietary Practices and Boundary Maintenance

Consumer goods carry powerful ethno-national connotations.⁵ Fox and Miller-Idriss identify habits of production and consumption as means of maintaining ethnic boundaries through “consuming the nation.”⁶ If, as they attest, nationalist or ethnic sentiments are “an act of production,”⁷ then ordinary consumer habits in effect engage with and reproduce important ethnonational tropes. Shoppers in search of any number of items, from groceries, and clothing, to automobiles, may intentionally or otherwise engage in acts of ethnic significance, based on their brand loyalties and consumer preferences.

Such ethnic associations connected to particular goods or brand names leave ample space for ethno-preneurs to profit from the sale of culture and identity. These merchants use the ethno-national associations of their products and service to build recognizably ethnic brands. Items marked with tags declaring “Made in the U.S.A.”

⁵ David McCrone, Angela Morris, and Richard Kiely, *Scotland the Brand: The Making of Scottish Heritage* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995); Melissa L. Caldwell, “Domesticating the French Fry: McDonald’s and Consumerism in Moscow,” *Journal of Consumer Culture* 4, no. 1 (March 1, 2004): 5–26, doi:10.1177/1469540504040902; Comaroff and Comaroff, *Ethnicity, Inc.*

⁶ Fox and Miller-Idriss, “Everyday Nationhood.”

⁷ *Ibid.*, 550.

appeal to a sense of American economic nationalism. Restaurants signal similar connotations to customers in touting food that is “real” in efforts make bold declarations about a product’s authenticity in connection to its ethnic origins, and associate this characteristic with superior quality. This kind of cultural exchange through commerce inverts structures of authority in determining the “authenticity” or genuineness of a product. By allowing a role for markets and consumer preference in shaping the sale and branding of cultural goods, the processes of contestation of the content of an ethnic identity become mass rather than elite driven. The infinite replicability of these brands through processes of marketing and “logoization”⁸ and the powerful associations that these brands share with ideas about the nation make them ideal vehicles for reproducing the boundaries of ethnic or national identity.⁹

In this sense, surveying the contents of a department store display case, or of the shopping carts of the customers entering and exiting the store, may reveal valuable insights about how individuals interact with their ethnic identities on a daily basis. Examining consumption habits not only allows scholars to identify the kinds of practices that mark the boundaries of ethnic identity, but also to examine and assess the role that these products play in the daily lives of those who buy them.

Some practices carry greater apparent ethnic or national significance than others.¹⁰ The act of purchasing a specific type of item may be more readily ethnicized

⁸ On logoization, and the reproduction of symbols connected to the nation, see; Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.

⁹ For further discussion on national branding projects, see; Melissa Aronczyk, “New and Improved Nations: Branding National Identity,” in *Practicing Culture*, ed. Craig Calhoun and Richard Sennett (New York, NY: Routledge, 2007), 105–29.

¹⁰ Gwendolyn Blue, “..If It Ain’t Alberta, It Ain’t Beef: Local Food, Regional Identity, (Inter)National Politics,” *Food, Culture and Society: An International Journal of*

than others. Fox and Miller-Idriss are quick to point out that while items like flags provide the most visible and obvious instances of consuming national products, the range of consumer goods and programming that carries nationalist or ethnic significance extends well beyond specifically branded patriotic items. Indeed, they assert that “it is not the intrinsic properties of these products but rather the shifting modalities through which meaning is attached to them that distinguishes national consumption from other forms of consumption.”¹¹

Food and habits of eating often serve as vehicles for transmission of ideology, and national self image.¹² A growing body of scholarship examines this relationship between food consumption and ethnic or national identity.¹³ Steffan Igor Ayora-Diaz’s

Multidisciplinary Research 11, no. 1 (March 1, 2008): 69–85, doi:10.2752/155280108X276168; M. DeSoucey, “Gastronationalism: Food Traditions and Authenticity Politics in the European Union,” *American Sociological Review* 75, no. 3 (June 1, 2010): 432–55, doi:10.1177/0003122410372226; Kolleen M. Guy, “Wine, Champagne and the Making of French Identity in the Belle Epoque,” in *Food, Drink and Identity: Cooking, Eating and Drinking in Europe Since the Middle Ages*, ed. Peter Scholliers (New York, NY: Berg, 2001), 163–78; Willy Jansen, “French Bread and Algerian Wine: Conflicting Identities in French Algeria,” in *Food, Drink and Identity: Cooking, Eating and Drinking in Europe Since the Middle Ages*, ed. Peter Scholliers (New York, NY: Berg, 2001), 195–218.

¹¹ Fox and Miller-Idriss, “Everyday Nationhood,” 552.

¹² Paolo Sorcinelli, “Identification Process at Work: Virtues of the Italian Working-Class Diet in the First Half of the Twentieth Century,” in *Food, Drink and Identity: Cooking, Eating and Drinking in Europe Since the Middle Ages*, ed. Peter Scholliers (New York, NY: Berg, 2001), 81–98; Inger Johanne Lyngø, “The National Nutrition Exhibition: A New Nutritional Narrative in Norway in the 1930s,” in *Food, Drink and Identity: Cooking, Eating and Drinking in Europe Since the Middle Ages*, ed. Peter Scholliers (New York, NY: Berg, 2001), 141–62.

¹³ Melissa L. Caldwell, “The Taste of Nationalism: Food Politics in Postsocialist Moscow,” *Ethnos* 67, no. 3 (January 1, 2002): 295–319, doi:10.1080/0014184022000031185; Gediminas Lankauskas, “On ‘Modern’ Christians, Consumption, and the Value of National Identity in Post-Soviet Lithuania,” *Ethnos* 67, no. 3 (January 1, 2002): 320–44, doi:10.1080/0014184022000031; James L. Watson and Melissa L. Caldwell, eds., *The Cultural Politics of Food and Eating: A Reader*, Blackwell Readers in Anthropology 8 (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub, 2005); Melissa L.

study of Yucatecan regional cuisine asserts that the development of a distinctive Yucatecan style of cooking serves as a means of preserving a distinctly Yucatecan identity against the hegemonizing and homogenizing power of the Mexican nation-state. The flavors and preparation methods of the region's foods, he argues, reflect the cultural values of the region, and in this way, cuisine becomes an important element of a Yucatecan regional identity that declares itself to be distinct from Mexico.¹⁴ First and Hermann's study of an Israeli company's branding of sugar packets with the images of patriotic, Zionist icons asserts that branding of foodstuffs can be used to reinforce and replicate elite nationalist claims on a mass level.¹⁵ Often food culture and dietary habits draw sharp lines between a group and another, and thus serve as powerful examples of ethnic differentiation.¹⁶ Caldwell's landmark study of food consumption in post-

Caldwell, Elizabeth C. Dunn, and Marion Nestle, eds., *Food & Everyday Life in the Postsocialist World* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009); Neringa Klumbyte, "The Geopolitics of Taste: The 'Euro' and 'Soviet' Sausage Industries in Lithuania," in *Food & Everyday Life in the Postsocialist World*, ed. Melissa L. Caldwell (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2009), 130–53; Takeda Hiroko, "Delicious Food in a Beautiful Country: Nationhood and Nationalism in Discourses on Food in Contemporary Japan," *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism* 8, no. 1 (April 1, 2008): 5–30, doi:10.1111/j.1754-9469.2008.00001.x; Anat First and Tamar Hermann, "Sweet Nationalism in Bitter Days: A Commercial Representation of Zionism," *Nations and Nationalism* 15, no. 3 (2009): 506–523; Steffan Igor Ayora Díaz, *Foodscapes, Foodfields, and Identities in Yucatán*, 1st. ed, Latin America Studies (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012).

¹⁴ Ayora Díaz, *Foodscapes, Foodfields, and Identities in Yucatán*.

¹⁵ First and Hermann, "Sweet Nationalism in Bitter Days."

¹⁶ Christy Shields-Argelès, "Imagining Self and the Other: Food and Identity in France and the United States," *Food, Culture and Society: An International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research* 7, no. 2 (September 1, 2004): 13–28, doi:10.2752/155280104786577905; David Bell and Gill Valentine, *Consuming Geographies: We Are Where We Eat* (London ; New York: Routledge, 1997), 18, 167–83; Warren James Belasco, "Food Matters: Perspectives on an Emerging Field," in *Food Nations: Selling Taste in Consumer Societies*, ed. Warren James Belasco and Philip Scranton (New York, NY: Routledge, 2002), 2–23.

Soviet Russia asserts that an increased availability of foreign foods led some Russians to seek out local food items, as an expression of their Russianness, and to draw clear us/them distinctions between Russians and others, both in cuisine and more broadly.¹⁷

The power of food consumption to create distinct boundaries between self and other are especially strong in situations where religious faith makes impositions on dietary routines. The Islamic faith's taboos on a number of ingredients, especially pork and alcohol, serve as bright and clear dividing lines between those who belong to the faith, and those who do not. Remzi Kuşçular notes that, in Islam, cleanliness provides a foundation for belief, and is regarded as "half of faith." Thus, Muslims regard maintaining a proper, pure diet as not only a practical matter, but also a means of ensuring a greater sense of spiritual purity.¹⁸ Keeping a halal diet becomes both a practice of consumption that requires the purchaser's attention to specific qualities of the food, but also an act of ritual and devotion to the faith. Employing separate means of preparing and consuming food so as to avoid contaminating or making other items ritually "unclean" causes strong notions of division between self and other to take root. Frederick M. Denny explains that the distinction between *haram* and *halal* "divides up the world for Muslims and relates to practically everything imaginable."¹⁹ Consuming *halal* food serves as a clear marker of Islamic identity. Though Wilson and Liu note that entrepreneurs often struggle to use *halal* instrumentally as a marketing device, in those Muslim communities surrounded by non-Muslims, consumers treat *halal* as a brand

¹⁷ Caldwell, "The Taste of Nationalism."

¹⁸ Remzi Kuşçular, *Cleanliness in Islam: A Comprehensive Guide to Tahara*, 1st English ed (Somerset, N.J: The Light, Inc, 2007), 3–23, 65–73.

¹⁹ Frederick Mathewson Denny, *An Introduction to Islam*, 3rd ed (Upper Saddle River, N.J: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2006), 278.

which vouches for the quality, safety and appropriateness of a product.²⁰

Eating “pure” and “true”: Hui identity and the centrality of ‘qingzhen’ food

China’s Hui community’s adherence to a *halal* dietary code provides a clear illustration of the ways in which habits of consumption form boundary lines. In much of China, difference in diet and consumption of food are often the most apparent and visible differences between the identities of the Muslim Hui and the non-Muslim Han majority. In recent years, Hui entrepreneurs created a cottage industry surrounding the purveyance of halal food. Signs for restaurants selling *halal* food are frequently green and white or yellow (colors associated with Islam), and contain symbols related to Islam: stars and crescent moons, the silhouettes of Arabesque domes, minarets, etc. These signs are nearly always emblazoned with word “halal” written in Arabic script, accompanied by the translation in Chinese: *qingzhen* (see Figure 5.1, below).²¹

²⁰ Jonathan A.J. Wilson and Jonathan Liu, “Shaping the Halal into a Brand?,” *Journal of Islamic Marketing* 1, no. 2 (June 25, 2010): 107–23, doi:10.1108/17590831011055851.

²¹ Dillon, *China’s Muslim Hui Community*.



Figure 5.1: Halal branding on signs, Beijing

Popular understandings of the concept of *qingzhen*, reflect the triumphs of ethnic branding campaigns. *Qingzhen* (which literally translates to “pure and true”) has become a byword in connection with quality and cleanliness. In recent years, scandals concerning consumption of tainted milk, food cooked in previously-used dirty cooking oil (known colloquially as “gutter oil,” *digou you* 地沟油), and cheap or unpalatable cuts of meat altered by chemicals and sold as premium cuts of prime meat, created increased attention throughout China to food safety and cleanliness.²² Several

²² For further discussion of food safety in China see; Michael Moss and Neil Gough, “Food Safety in China Still Faces Big Hurdles,” *The New York Times*, July 23, 2014:

respondents claimed that among the many advantages of eating a *qingzhen* diet was a high degree of certainty in the safety and cleanliness of the product.²³ One respondent in Jinan simply explained, “I think *qingzhen* food just is clean, and pure.”²⁴

Such conceptions even exist among non-Muslim Han Chinese. A middle-aged Han couple from Beijing interviewed near the NiuJie Mosque explained the relationship between halal beef and cleanliness. Niu Jie’s reputation for butcher shops selling superior beef and lamb brought the couple to the street from their northern suburb of Beijing, almost an hour and a half away. When asked what would justify such a long commute for grocery shopping, the man answered, “The people who live here on NiuJie are all Muslim. They eat a lot of beef and mutton. So the beef and mutton here is very tasty (*haochi*, 好吃) and safe to eat (*baozheng*, 保证).”²⁵ The willingness of even Han to travel far for an ordinary and prevalent meat item, indicates the pervasiveness of the association between quality and safety in the case of halal food.

The association of *qingzhen* and purity is strong enough for some Hui respondents that they expressed sensations of physical discomfort when in the presence of non-*qingzhen* food. While walking through the Tongxin Lu meat and produce market in Yinchuan, a Hui professor remarked that the odor and sight of pork made him feel physically ill. “I know that this is all psychological, that it's all in my head, and that it's

http://www.nytimes.com/2014/07/24/business/international/food-safety-in-china-still-faces-big-hurdles.html?_r=0 (accessed November 29, 2016)

²³ Interview: BJ29102315, XN117041616

²⁴ Interview: JN46112515

²⁵ Field Observations, Beijing, August 2015

all through conditioning," he told me, "but all the same I can't help it. When I'm around pork, I get the feeling that I might throw up."²⁶

Given that dietary restrictions play such a central role in the daily lives of Hui communities, the relationship between mosque and marketplace is usually a close one. In China's largest cities, small businesses and restaurants catering to Hui clientele frequently adjoin or surround community mosques, and provide local Muslims with everything needed to maintain a strictly halal community.²⁷ In Xining's ChengDong District (城东区), behind the famous Dongguan Grand Mosque in a narrow alleyway, market vendors sell fresh produce, halal meat, fried street snacks and other Islamic sundries out of small tented stalls, or from flatbed carts attached to the back of pedal bikes.²⁸ Removed from these mosque and market centered communities, Hui identity wanes. Many urban Hui living outside of concentrated Hui neighborhoods complained about the arduousness of maintaining a *qingzhen* diet while living in predominantly Han neighborhoods. One longtime resident of Beijing's Dongcheng District (东城区) in his seventies lamented that being distant from a predominantly Hui community made even simple acts like buying groceries difficult. "On Niu Jie (the major Hui community in Beijing) it's easy to eat *qingzhen*," he opined. "You can close your eyes and eat anything and not worry. It's all clean and healthy. In this neighborhood it's difficult. There aren't places to buy beef or mutton; there aren't *qingzhen* restaurants."²⁹

²⁶ Field Observations, Yinchuan, January 2016

²⁷ Gladney, *Muslim Chinese*, 175, 189.

²⁸ Author's Observation, Xining, April 2016

²⁹ Interview BJ30102415

International expos and imposter qingzhen: state policy and ambiguity in halal certification

The linkage between *qingzhen* food and Hui culture forms one of the most visible aspects of the governments' attempts to present an official version of Hui identity. As such, many official displays of Hui culture showcase *qingzhen* food as crucial element of the Hui community, and celebrate the Hui's vibrant culinary traditions. Especially in west China, where Hui and other Muslim minorities are more numerous, local governments actively promote *qingzhen* food culture as an aspect of local culture. In Xining, the Qinghai provincial government went to great lengths to promote halal foodstuff and other goods during the annual Qinghai International Halal Food and Ethnic Products Fair (青海国际清真食品及民族用品展览会). The carefully staged event broadcast an image of global inner-connectedness, thriving commerce, and cutting-edge, innovative development. Signs posted outside the hall boldly displayed the motto for the event: "Innovation, Coordination, Greenness, Opening Up, Sharing" (创新, 协调, 绿色, 开放, 共享). The expo's main attraction, held in a large, airplane hangar sized hall, brought together vendors from 11 provinces throughout China, as well as from 13 foreign countries like Pakistan, Turkmenistan, Malaysia, and Iran, selling everything from halal instant noodles, to yak butter, to hand-woven rugs and intricate metal worked tea sets and statuettes. Elsewhere, individual counties of Qinghai province erected booths and displayed their visions for future development efforts, including scale models of new convention centers, slick videos advertising new roads and highways, and other expressions of prosperity.³⁰

³⁰ Field observations, Xining, May 2016

In imbuing the *qingzhen* food industry with the sheen of prosperity and innovation, and providing it a showcase, the provincial government paints a picture of inclusion of minority culture and minority entrepreneurship as central to the province's development strategy. However, outside of these showy display of support for *qingzhen* foods, local government's commitment to developing standards and promoting the quality of *qingzhen* foodstuffs and eateries remains superficial. No national standards exist for certification of *qingzhen* foods. The responsibility for policing and overseeing these industries fall to individual provinces, many of which implement their own certification processes. The lack of a national oversight process results in uneven standards for halal food. Matthew Erie notes that though Islamic autonomous units Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region possess some means of enacting law in accordance with Islamic law, even these areas face limitations. Laws governing halal food and restaurant certification have been amongst the most prominent and successful examples of Muslim autonomous communities implementing Islamic law. Erie notes that *qingzhen* certification laws were the only law enacted by the government of Linxia Hui Autonomous County that find roots in the Qur'an.³¹ While Sai notes provinces often develop *qingzhen* certification standards through some form of collaboration with local Islamic Associations, the bulk of the certification processes were developed by bureaucrats in the state-run industries.³² As such, standards vary in their stringency of observation of Qur'anic standards.

³¹ Matthew S. Erie, "Muslim Mandarins in Chinese Courts: Dispute Resolution, Islamic Law, and the Secular State in Northwest China," *Law & Social Inquiry* 40, no. 4 (September 1, 2015): 1006–7, doi:10.1111/lsi.12137.

³² Yukari Sai, "Policy, Practice and Perceptions of Qingzhen (Halal) in China," *Online Journal of Research in Islamic Studies* 1, no. 2 (2014): 4–6.

In Yinchuan, capital of a Hui autonomous region, *qingzhen* restaurants are policed through a fairly standard system of certification, and inspection. In order to display a *qingzhen* sign, restaurants must ensure that all food served in the restaurant has been purchased from *qingzhen* vendors, all kitchen staff preparing food are Hui, and a majority of the wait staff serving diners are Hui.³³ Vendors of *qingzhen* meats must display certificates attesting to the authenticity of the products for sale. These certificates list the name of the imam responsible for overseeing the slaughter of the animal, and in some instances, contain QR codes which patrons may scan with their phones in order to receive the imam's contact information (See; Figure 5.2, Below).³⁴

³³ Interviews: YN78012916, YN79012916, YN87021816, YN88022016, YN89022016, YN91022216, YN99031816

³⁴ Field Observations, Yinchuan, January 2016



Figure 5.2: Qingzhen food Certification featuring a QR code which can be scanned for verification, Tongxin Lu Market, Yinchuan

However, elsewhere, this lack of enforcement causes problems with authenticity. A rash of fake *qingzhen* products, and poseur *qingzhen* restaurants plagues Hui communities and causes many Hui to be skeptical about the provenance of the food served there. These concerns are heightened as businesses relocate in the midst of urban renewal. As the physical spaces that define Hui neighborhoods change, so, too, must consumer habits of residents living in these spaces. On Dikou Lu in Jinan, the renovation of the neighborhood's Hui community centralized a number of *qingzhen* butcher shops and restaurants. Whereas many of the vendors had been previously dispersed, the new market allowed for them to be concentrated in a single space. While

this change made shopping more easy for residents, it also brought in new vendors from outside the community.³⁵ Several interviewees explained that the influx of new restaurants, and the opening of new market spaces like these came with a proliferation of impostor halal restaurants. A growing market for *qingzhen* goods, they explained, created opportunities for Han entrepreneurs to capitalize on the demand from the Muslim population.

A Hui grocer in her mid 50s in Jinan's Hui Quarter explained that many of the restaurants proclaiming to be *qingzhen* in the neighborhood were actually run by Han. The problem, she noted, began with landlords seeking to help their tenants increase their profits. "A lot of landlords don't pay attention to who they rent to," she explained, "They rent to a lot of Han. Their methods for preparing food are definitely not '*qingzhen*' but these shops still put up signs that say '*qingzhen*.' The landlords give them these signs." When asked if the tenants would go as far as to put pork or other taboo items in their food, she remarked, "They wouldn't dare do that. But they don't pay attention to whether or not their meat is properly *qingzhen*. And they also go home and eat pork and handle pork. This is unavoidable. But they come back to the restaurant and it's not properly *qingzhen*."³⁶ Even in Yinchuan, a respondent informed me, Han entrepreneurs may use forged documents, or borrow a Hui friend's documentation to cheat the system and gain a *qingzhen* certification.³⁷

Similarly, impostor restaurants may take advantage of the universality of *qingzhen* branding symbols to present products that appear to be *qingzhen* certified. At

³⁵ Interview: JN26101915

³⁶ Interview: JN61121615

³⁷ Interview: YN79012916

the new food court on Xining's LiMeng Pedestrian shopping street, *qingzhen* and non-*qingzhen* vendors occupy different floors, and follow a similar color coding scheme: green signs for *qingzhen*, red signs for non-*qingzhen*. As a result restaurants follow a color-coded dietary logic where green signs signal halal food, and red signs signal food that uses pork or other taboo ingredients.³⁸ This kind of color-coded significance recurs throughout China, and usually allows patrons to easily identify *qingzhen* establishments. However, in some instances, wily entrepreneurs seek to take advantage of such strong color associations with food, and use green for the signs on their own restaurants in hopes of luring diners who fail to notice the lack of a *qingzhen* certification. In Yinchuan, a 40 year old Hui professor pointed to one such restaurant sign, green with red characters, advertising Hangzhou-style meat buns (*baozi*, 包子). "The people who run that restaurant are Han, but if you're not looking closely, it looks like a *qingzhen* restaurant," he observed.³⁹ Similarly, in Xining, a Han butcher on the bustling Mojia Jie market street branded his store as vending *lüse rou pin* (绿色肉品), or "green meat products," a common label on halal butcher shop. The shop, however, lacked a *qingzhen* label. When asked if the meat he sold was *qingzhen* he reasoned that, because his meat was slaughtered by local Hui, it was fundamentally the same as branded *qingzhen* meat. The butcher explained that he could not label his store as *qingzhen*, because, "If we Han put out a sign that says *qingzhen* there would be Hui who would oppose it."⁴⁰

³⁸ Field Observations, Xining, April 2016

³⁹ Field Observations, Yinchuan, February 2016

⁴⁰ Interview: XN136051216

The prominence of these impostor halal restaurants leads many more devout Hui express skepticism about the cleanliness of even supposedly *qingzhen* establishments. In Yinchuan, a 21-year-old Hui butcher originally from the nearby town of Wuzhong (吴忠) working at the open air market on Yuhuangge Bei Lu explained that many Hui avoid even those restaurants with halal signs. “There are a lot of *qingzhen* restaurants that we don't dare eat at,” he explained. You go there and it's dark and the restaurants aren't necessarily that clean. Who'd dare to eat there?” When asked what made these ostensibly *qingzhen* eateries unfit for eating, he elaborated:

You know Hui have strict dietary restrictions. You can't necessarily trust that the people working there are Muslims. Maybe the food isn't qingzhen. A lot of Han open up qingzhen restaurants even though you're supposed to be Hui. A lot of Hui won't even go out to eat. Like my grandfather, who's 80. He doesn't trust restaurants. He won't even agree to eat la mian. He doesn't eat outside of the house. A lot of Hui, when we travel, we carry out own pots and cooking gear.

Asked to describe an acceptably clean and safe restaurant, the butcher described the family-run restaurant connected to his butcher shop. “You can go to our restaurant and see the difference,” he insisted, adding “Our restaurant is bright and clean, and everyone wears *baimaozi*, (white prayer hats, 白帽子) or *shajin* (hijab, 纱巾). You can be sure it's *qingzhen*.”⁴¹

This lack of oversight by some provincial governments, and the high propensity for fraudulent *qingzhen* products compels some Hui ethnopreneurs into action, driving them to press for more thorough, more universal standards for certification of *qingzhen* products. In Xining, the Qinghai Qingzhen Food Production Association (青海清真食

⁴¹ Interview: YN91022216

品行业协会) seeks to resolve these ambiguities through creation of an institutionalized standard for certification of foodstuffs. A representative from the Institute, a visiting consultant from Malaysia, explained, “We want to create a standard that other places can follow. We want it to be a kind of brand that stands for halal.” The consultant added, “People will see our certificate as a sign of quality and the places that don't have them will fade away.” Ultimately, the consultant remarked, the Association’s goal is to have the process become so widely accepted that the Association can petition to have it become absorbed into national law, thus resolving any disputes about what is and is not certifiably *qingzhen*.⁴²

The boundaries of barbecue: market forces and contestation of qingzhen standards

Currently, however, the absence of such a universal standard leaves allows the definition of what is “necessary” or “proper” for the observance of a *qingzhen* diet to become the subject of internal contestation. Despite the centrality of *qingzhen* dining to the daily operating rhythms of Hui life, within the Hui community, itself, different levels of religious observance, and different notions about the very meaning of *qingzhen* spur internal debate.⁴³ Nowhere is this dilemma more pronounced than during debates about the sale of alcohol in halal establishments. While the Qur’an prohibits the consumption of alcohol by observant Muslims, provincial-level authorities in many

⁴² Interview: XN138051316

⁴³ Maris Boyd Gillette, “Children’s Food and Islamic Dietary Restrictions in Xi’an,” in *The Cultural Politics of Food and Eating: A Reader*, ed. James L. Watson and Melissa L. Caldwell (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005), 106–21.

problems do not deem a prohibition on alcohol sales as necessary for receiving *qingzhen* certification. As a result, the disjuncture between the state policy and scriptural law causes renewed space for contestation regarding the necessity of observing an alcohol taboo to the centrality of Hui identity. In the absence of a definitive policy market incentives may tilt the scales towards prohibition or sale of alcohol by Hui merchants.

Many conservative Hui view the sale of beer and liquor as a violation of the halal dietary code. Strictly observant Hui treat this as disqualifying; if a restaurant elects to serve beer, they explain, it cannot truly be considered halal because it is in violation of the laws of God. As a 26 year old receptionist at an Islamic hotel in Xining explained, “The only real *qingzhen* restaurants are the ones that forbid the sale of alcohol. Real *qingzhen* restaurants only use clean ingredients.”⁴⁴ A 47 year old imam of a relatively large mosque in Yinchuan remarked that restaurants that sold liquor and claimed to be *qingzhen*, “weren’t truly halal restaurants (不是真真的清真餐馆).” He further explains that these types of restaurants, “don’t pay attention to religious doctrine (他们没有注意教法).”⁴⁵ In rural, Hui-majority communities, social opposition to the sale of alcohol leads merchants to realize that selling alcohol will lose customers and money. In Weizhou, a small Hui majority town in Tongxin County in rural Ningxia, a 20 year old student remarked that previous merchants who attempted to open a liquor store found themselves quickly out of business, due to lack of sales. Pious Weizhou citizens could not tolerate having such a presence in the community.⁴⁶ A university

⁴⁴ Interview: XN144052316

⁴⁵ Field Observations, Yinchuan, January 2016

⁴⁶ Field Observations, Weizhou, February 2016

administrator in Xining echoed these sentiments in explaining why most *qingzhen* restaurants in the city refrained from selling alcohol. He argued, “If you serve alcohol in a *qingzhen* restaurant it would be closed the next day because nobody would agree to come ever again.”⁴⁷

In response to these demands for an alcohol-free dining experience in line with strict Qur’anic interpretations of *halal*, some entrepreneurs elect to embrace the Islamic prohibition on alcohol as a means of distinguishing their restaurants from the scores of competitors whose standards of dietary cleanliness do not hold up as strongly. In so doing, these ethnpreneurs establish the strict adherence to the guidelines as a brand associated with Hui identity. Restaurants like the famous *Tongxin Chun* (同心春) restaurant in Yinchuan, or the self-serve hotpot buffet on the top floor of Ningxia’s Muslim Hotel, choose to cater to other Hui seeking a *qingzhen* meal without having to encounter alcohol, tapping into a niche market of devoutly religious Hui.⁴⁸

However, market demands may also encourage entrepreneurs to sell liquor. In Yinchuan and Jinan, most restaurants selling barbecued lamb kebabs (羊肉串儿 *yangrou chuan'r*) also sell beer and *baijiu* (白酒, a Chinese liquor distilled from sorghum). For most Jinan cab drivers, and indeed many Jinanese residents in general, the Hui Quarter is synonymous with barbecue and drinking draft beer out of plastic kegs (known as *zhapi*, 扎啤).⁴⁹ Choosing not to serve alcohol may put owners at a position of relative disadvantage competitively. A 35 year old Yinchuan restaurateur who

⁴⁷ Interview: XN129050116

⁴⁸ Field Observations, Yinchuan, January 2016

⁴⁹ Field Observations, Jinan, October 2015

originally came from the predominantly Hui community of Wuzhong complains that he felt he has no choice but to serve alcohol in his restaurant. The space, which is connected to a large, business hotel, serves both Hui and Han patrons alike. The owner laments that despite running a halal restaurant serving homestyle dishes from Wuzhong, he must serve beer and *baijiu* in order to please Han guests, even though his own personal reservations about the sale of alcohol make him hesitant to widely advertise this fact.⁵⁰ Another Hui restaurant owner who ran a traditional Hui restaurant adjacent the Hui Culture Park in the Yinchuan suburb of Najiajhu notes that in the winter most of his clientele come from Yinchuan or nearby Yongning County to hold business lunches. These men, primarily Han, usually prefer to conduct lunch business over beer or *baijiu*. While he refuses to sell alcohol to any of his diners, he remains unable to stop guests from bringing their own bottles.⁵¹

Similarly, in Jinan, demographic changes in the city's Hui Quarter affect shifts in the market for *qingzhen* food as well. Many longtime Jinan residents remark that in the aftermath of the first wave of *chai qian* in the early 1990s, the make-up of the neighborhood changed. Longtime local residents dispersed to live outside the quarter. In their place, newly arrived Hui from the northwest began to fill apartments in the neighborhood, opening up new restaurants and stores.⁵² In particular, the arrival of restaurants and stall selling *yangrou chuan'r* (羊肉串, lamb kebabs) appealed to a less niche customer base. One Jinanese Han respondent explained that for both the city's

⁵⁰ Field Observations, Yinchuan, January 2016

⁵¹ Field Observations, Najiahu, February 2016

⁵² Interviews: JN42112215, JN43112415, JN54120715, JN61121615

Hui and Han, eating *chuan'r* was quickly adopted as a summer pastime, and paired with another longstanding Shandong summer tradition of drinking local keg beer.⁵³

Market preferences in Jinan, therefore, pushed this *qingzhen* staple food into a different niche than in the northwest. While Hui entrepreneurs in cities like Xining have succeeded in creating a *qingzhen* brand that emphasizes strict adherence to Islamic guidelines, the market in Jinan dictates that choosing to prohibit alcohol sales cuts against the economic interests of restaurateurs. Absent national standards that clarify matters such as the sale and consumption of alcohol, the standards for *qingzhen* develop heterogeneously, and often in response to market demand. The tendency of some Hui to decry restaurants that serve alcohol as being inauthentically *qingzhen*, or as evidence that a community is *Hanhua* (Hanified, 汉化), illustrates the degree to which matters like degree of religious observance, region, or social class create internal boundaries within Hui communities. Despite the government's celebration of *qingzhen* food, and its attempt to make it a unifying symbol of Hui culture, the lack of any clear standard for *qingzhen* food certification leaves matters of diet up for contestation, and highlights the heterogeneity of Hui communities throughout China.

Conclusions: re-contesting qingzhen one bowl at a time

Food undoubtedly plays a pivotal role in marking the boundaries of Hui identity. Symbolically *qingzhen* carries unmistakable connotations not just about the sanitary and culinary quality of the food it describes, but also the lifestyle of those who consume it.

⁵³ Interview: JN49120115

The symbolic power of *qingzhen*, and the ease of its replicability as a brand provide ethnopreneurs with potentially lucrative opportunities to attach their business to the booming *qingzhen* food industry. Yet, as the remarks of many interviewees attest, the opportunities created by the prominence of *qingzhen* also present opportunities for counterfeited or knock-off halal food items.

The efforts of groups like the Qinghai Halal Food Production Association to standardize or create uniformity in *qingzhen* food certification point to an interesting dilemma arising from an era of mass market branding and global consumption. Without a nationwide standard for *qingzhen* certification, consumers lack certainty with regard to the provenance of the goods they consume. However, as illustrated above, the differences in the degree of dietary rigor and devotion to the faith across Hui communities throughout China make establishing a single, standard system for *qingzhen* certification difficult. Currently, the patchwork system of halal certification leaves much of the matter to the individual consumer. As the *qingzhen* brand continues to spread across the country, even to communities that historically lack a sizeable Islamic population, the dialogue between different groups of Hui concerning the precise meaning and standards connected with *qingzhen* food consumption will inevitably continue.

However, by putting a nationwide standard into place necessarily involves yet another, different authority: the state. While establishing a set of standard practices for the certification of halal food may settle legal questions on the matter, it does not guarantee popular acceptance. In fact, placing the external constraints of state institutionalization around the processes of contestation of such crucial elements of Hui

identity may in fact deepen the concerns of some Hui about the disjuncture between the official state guidelines, and those derived from the Qur'an.

Thus, even something so foundational to Hui identity as maintaining halal dietary codes becomes the subjects of significant in group variation. As China's urbanization continues to draw rural Hui to urban centers, spreading *qingzhen* food to previously unreached markets, and bringing Hui from different regions into constant contact, contestation about the precise meaning and regulations surrounding *qingzhen* will continue. Differences in the level and manner of the observance of *qingzhen* now also mark important distinctions *between* Hui, potentially creating internal boundaries and sparking debate about which is the most valid or correct way of to maintain a proper diet. Though changes in China's urban landscape may bring the disparate part of the Hui community closer together than ever before, the gulf between the ways in which these Hui from different backgrounds experience and understand the daily practices of production and consumption of goods associated with living a Hui lifestyle—to say nothing of the interpretations of the Islamic principles underlying them— remains as wide apart as ever.

6. Performing: Islamic faith, daily rituals and the everyday performance of Hui identity

“Without Islam, We’re not Hui”

As the sun set on a June evening at the Yangjiazhuang Mosque (杨家庄清真寺) in the heart of Xining’s Chengdong District, members of the mosque community began to gather in the courtyard. On this night, like every other during the month of Ramadan, the congregation waited patiently as daylight waned to break the day’s fast. As children played in the twilight, darting back and forth across the courtyard, their parents busily handed out light snacks to mark the end of fasting. One elderly man, seated on a stone bench near the edge of the courtyard pressed a date into my hands, explaining that Muslims, following the prophet Mohammed’s own example, always broke their fast by eating dates. Elsewhere, others ate slices of melon, or pieces of flatbread. After a few moments, the *adhan* sounded, calling the congregation to the first of this evening’s many prayer services. Once these prayers ended, the community would join together to eat a communal *iftar* meal, prepared by the women of the mosque. After the joyous feasting concluded, the adults would reconvene in the large prayer hall to perform the evening’s *dhikr*, where several elderly men of the community led the congregation, reciting from the Qur’an in sing-songy Arabic. As we waited for the evening’s celebration to begin, several congregants proudly remarked that Yangjiazhuang was the only community that ate the *iftar* together. In other mosque communities, they explained, families gather to eat in their homes, but at Yangjiazhuang the *iftar* was a community affair for a larger family in faith.¹

¹ Field observations, Xining, June 2016

Ritual performances like the breaking of Ramadan fasting at the *iftar* meal at Yangjiazhuang provide powerful opportunities to build the bonds of community. These celebratory moments of “collective effervescence” bring members of the community together to engage in the shared performance of identity.² As such, events like these are pivotal for building and maintaining a sense of groupness.

This chapter assess the ways in which ritual and performance like those at Yangjiazhuang, define the boundaries of Hui Muslim identity, and how these practices evolve in the face of urbanization. China’s government attempts to standardize expression of ethnic identity through ethnic census, and a classification system that attempts to harden the boundaries of ethnic identity around static content. However, as these forces of urban change bring together Hui from different regions of China through a process of internal migration, interactions between them sparks renewed contestation of the content of Hui identity. As a result, the boundaries of Hui identity evolve and change.

In order to describe these changes, I begin by briefly reviewing the established body of scholarship on performance and identity. While official performances may broadcast a message aimed at creating moments of “collective effervescence” that intend to solidify the bonds of community, recent scholarship argues that audiences may attach their own understandings to performances, or may simply choose not to pay attention at all. Further, research on everyday ritual emphasizes that the daily performances which are vitally important to boundary maintenance may be taken-for-

² Émile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life, a Study in Religious Sociology*. (London, 1915), <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc2.ark:/13960/t7qn68r64>.

granted by those performing them. Thus, while performance provide opportunity for unification, it may lay the ground for fragmentation and contestation as well.

Following this overview, I will conduct an examination of daily ritual in urban Hui communities. I assess three areas of performance of Hui identity. In each area renewed contestation regarding the how to properly practice Islamic faith and observe Hui culture, results from interactions between different groups of Hui as a result of urbanization. In examining practices associated with daily prayer, wearing Islamic clothing, and celebrating Islamic holidays, I will illustrates the ways in which this contestation undercuts CCP's efforts to control performance of ethnic identity to ensure that Hui culture exhibits "permissible difference,"³ Finally, I conclude by examining how this renewed contestation over Hui identity ultimately helps to revive interest in Hui identity within these urban communities.

Performance, ethnicity, and state control in urban settings

Exercising control over the manner in which ethnic identity may be performed forms a part of large-scale programs of modernization and development. The authoritarian state frequently uses urban planning and development as tools to increase the legibility of the citizenry, and curtail potential challenges. In an attempt to prevent forms of association that might subvert its own ruling authority, the authoritarian state organizes public space in configurations that limit independent or unapproved

³ Schein, *Minority Rules*.

association outside the state.⁴ These efforts at controlling the development of urban communities may also include attempts to limit and control movement of population. Particularly when dealing with pockets of ethnic minority populations, authoritarian states may use migration as a means of facilitating integration or assimilation in service of maintaining order and building a unified state.⁵ States possess incentives to directly control or supervise public performances which invest symbolic meaning in ethnic identity. By controlling the public performance of ethnicity, the state may limit the forms ethnic identity may take.

The power of performance and ritual to inculcate feelings of belonging is a well-worn subject. Much of the established body of scholarship on ritual performance emphasizes the power of ritual to strengthen the bonds of community through collective participation. Ritual, Durkheim maintains, are collective experiences that articulate the values and beliefs held by all members of the group, and as such, rituals “belong to the group and unify it.”⁶ By contrast with the mundane activities of individual daily life, which he regarded as “profane” and unlikely to stir feelings of passion, Durkheim argues that collective rituals were moments of “collective effervescence” where coming together allowed the group to experience the “sacred.”⁷ As they are collective, shared, beliefs, rituals make the interpretation of symbols and the social world possible, and render interactions legible and intelligible. Similarly, Alexander argues that in “complex societies” performance aims to recapture the feelings of collective belonging and bridge

⁴ Scott, *Seeing like a State*.

⁵ Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*; McGarry, “Demographic Engineering.”

⁶ Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life, a Study in Religious Sociology.*, 41.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 206–18.

the divisions that might otherwise cause separation or fragmentation. In successful performances, performers embody the symbols they display, and disparate elements of the performance become indivisible, and feel authentic.⁸

Many examinations of ritual follow Durkheim in explaining how large scale performance can serve as a means for creating a larger national consciousness. Official, state sanctioned performances, invoke images and tropes intended to symbolically extend the boundaries of the imagined community, or, in the case of authoritarian states, legitimate the ruling regime's control.⁹ Such large scale displays of national spectacle, Edensor remarks, bestow "an affective yet disciplined sense of belonging," that builds up the community of the nation.¹⁰ Explaining that the nation is a product of "wild longings and weird fantasies," Kevin Carrico observes how adherents of the Han Clothing Movement use elaborate costumes and solemn rituals to fulfill their desires to belong to an idealized Han national community and escape the mundane realities and disappointments of daily life.¹¹

Performance and ritual provide a powerful tool for mobilization by issuing a call to arms, or rallying disparate factions together in common cause. In analyzing the

⁸ Jeffrey C. Alexander, "Cultural Pragmatics: Social Performance Between Ritual and Strategy," *Sociological Theory* 22, no. 4 (December 1, 2004): 547–50, doi:10.1111/j.0735-2751.2004.00233.x.

⁹ Hwang and Schneider, "Performance, Meaning, and Ideology in the Making of Legitimacy"; Lyn Spillman, *Nation and Commemoration: Creating National Identities in the United States and Australia* (Cambridge England ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Lisa Wedeen, *Ambiguities of Domination: Politics, Rhetoric, and Symbols in Contemporary Syria* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).

¹⁰ Edensor, *National Identity, Popular Culture and Everyday Life*, 2002, 74.

¹¹ Kevin Carrico, "The Imaginary Institution of China: Dialectics of Fantasy and Failure in Nationalist Identification, as Seen through China's Han Clothing Movement" (Dissertation, Cornell University, 2013).

Syrian resistance in 2011, Ismail observes that by using performance in protests, like songs that named specific locations or sectarian groups, activists reinterpreted attempted to bridge sectarian divides and provide an alternative to the Assad regime's vision of the nation.¹² Wyrzten's historical account of Moroccan resistance to French colonial rule examines the role played by *latif* prayers, usually practiced in times of great calamity to ask for God's deliverance, to bridge the divide between Arabs and Berbers and mobilize the mass public around an overarching Moroccan identity.¹³

Rituals may also allow for new contestation of meaning rather than cementing established narratives. Participants may become fatigued by the barrage of symbolism conveyed in the performance, or attached their own understandings to the event.¹⁴ Wedeen's study of public ceremonies in Hafez al Assad's Syria suggests that such public ritual may be received sardonically, thus becoming an object of mockery or feigned enthusiasm.¹⁵ The public may reject the official message, or manipulate it to their own purposes, or simply ignore it altogether.¹⁶ Citing the ability of ritual to cause discord as well as unity, Lukes pushes back against Durkheim and his followers, noting that while ritual "helps to define as authoritative certain ways of seeing society," it also

¹² Salwa Ismail, "The Syrian Uprising: Imagining and Performing the Nation," *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism* 11, no. 3 (December 1, 2011): 538–49, doi:10.1111/j.1754-9469.2011.01136.x.

¹³ Jonathan Wyrzten, "Performing the Nation in Anti-Colonial Protest in Interwar Morocco," *Nations and Nationalism* 19, no. 4 (October 1, 2013): 615–34, doi:10.1111/nana.12037.

¹⁴ Spillman, *Nation and Commemoration: Creating National Identities in the United States and Australia*, 17–56.

¹⁵ Wedeen, *Ambiguities of Domination*.

¹⁶ Jon E. Fox, "National Holiday Commemorations: The View from Below," in *The Cultural Politics of Nationalism and Nation-Building: Ritual and Performance in the Forging of Nations*, ed. Rachel Tsang and Eric Taylor Woods (New York, NY: Routledge, 2013), 42–48.

deflects attention away from other representations.¹⁷ Especially during “unsettled” periods, ritual may play an important role in fostering new cultural practices, and forming “unfamiliar habits” rather than sustaining established patterns of social life. Thus ritual has the power to “reorganize taken-for-granted habits and modes of experience.”¹⁸

To account for such diversity in the way ritual is received, Fox suggests turning away from analysis which focuses solely on elite intentions, or assumes an attentive audience. On the contrary, Fox contends that scholars should not presume that these events inherently form connections between people, but must account for inattention and non-attendance as well.¹⁹ Eriksen, in his study of national display in Trinidad, and Mauritius, makes a distinction between formal nationalism which is located in and perpetuated by the state, and informal nationalism which is located in and perpetuated by civil society. Formal nationalism may be integrative and universalizing and transmitted through state media to large audiences, Eriksen notes, but informal nationalism usually involves processes which invoke kinship through face to face interaction.²⁰

Outside of studies of official performances of ethnic identity, studies of commercialize, theatrical, or festival-related performances draw major scholarly

¹⁷ Steven Lukes, “Political Ritual and Social Integration,” *Sociology* 9, no. 2 (May 1, 1975): 289–308, doi:10.1177/003803857500900205.

¹⁸ Ann Swidler, “Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies,” *American Sociological Review* 51, no. 2 (1986): 277–79, doi:10.2307/2095521.

¹⁹ Fox, “National Holiday Commemorations: The View from Below,” 41–43.

²⁰ Thomas Hylland Eriksen, “Formal and Informal Nationalism,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 16, no. 1 (January 1993): 1–25, doi:10.1080/01419870.1993.9993770.

attention. Many of these studies observe the ways tourist sites represent and perform identity in their programming, and assess how tourism spurs evolutions in traditional cultural practices. Debates about the “authenticity” of tourist performances receive the preponderance of scholarly attention in this field, though increasingly scholars concede that even commoditized tourist displays may spur contestation of ethnic content without degrading ethnic identity itself.²¹ Comaroff and Comaroff explain that the commercialization of cultural identity “does *not* necessarily cheapen it or reduce it to a brute commodity,” but can be a source of empowerment and cultural revival for the community.²² Marjorie Esman argues that tourism can become “an arena for the expression of ethnic differences that might otherwise disappear due to acculturation.”²³ In his studies of the Bamboo Beating dance of Hainan’s Li minority Xie noted that commoditization of the dance enabled new forms of cultural expression without degrading its vitality.²⁴ Similarly, Hillman describes how the search for profits from tourism led the Hui community of Balong to rediscover their Islamic faith, reopen their mosque and resume religious observance and education.²⁵

²¹ Margaret Byrne Swain, “Commoditizing Ethnicity in Southwest China,” *Cultural Survival Quarterly* 14, no. 1 (1990): 26–30; Oakes, *Tourism and Modernity in China*; Philip Feifan Xie, “The Bamboo-Beating Dance in Hainan, China: Authenticity and Commodification,” *The Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 11, no. 1 (2003): 5–17; Hillman, “The Rise of the Community in Rural China”; K. F. Gotham, “Tourism Gentrification: The Case of New Orleans’ Vieux Carre (French Quarter),” *Urban Studies* 42, no. 7 (June 2005): 1099–1121; Erik de Maaker, “Performing the Garo Nation? Garo Wangala Dancing between Faith and Folklore,” *Asian Ethnology* 72, no. 2 (2013): 221–39.

²² Comaroff and Comaroff, *Ethnicity, Inc.*, 7–9.

²³ Esman, “Tourism as Ethnic Preservation: The Cajuns of Louisiana.”

²⁴ Xie, “The Bamboo-Beating Dance in Hainan, China: Authenticity and Commodification.”

²⁵ Hillman, “The Rise of the Community in Rural China.”

Similarly, rituals related to festival celebrations provide opportunities for scholars to assess and observe how performers invoke and portray symbolic repertoires that define the boundaries of ethnic identity. Khusen examines how performing the *slametan* ritual meal and accompanying prayers allows Sufi Surinamese Javanese living in Rotterdam to maintain a sense of connection to the heritage and traditions in Java.²⁶ The examinations of Orsi and Sciorra of street festival processions for Our Lady of Mt. Carmel in New York's Italian American communities argue that parades not only project Italian culture and map the boundaries of the community onto physical space, but also distinguish Italian-Americans from their fellow Catholic Puerto Rican neighbors.²⁷ These street celebrations not only provide visible expressions of community identity, they may also allow members of the community to map the boundaries of identity onto physical space.²⁸ Similarly, making pilgrimage to sites of cultural significance, like shrines or tombs, allows members to extend the boundaries of the group, and create mental maps of belonging and difference.²⁹ Fox and Miller-Idriss

²⁶ Moh Khusen, "Contending Identity in the Islamic Ritual: The Slametan among Surinamese Javanese Muslims in the Netherlands," *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 43, no. 2 (2005): 283–308.

²⁷ Robert Orsi, "The Religious Boundaries of an Inbetween People: Street Feste and the Problem of the Dark-Skinned Other in Italian Harlem, 1920-1990," *American Quarterly* 44, no. 3 (September 1, 1992): 313–47, doi:10.2307/2712980; Joseph Sciorra, "'We Go Where the Italians Live': Religious Processions as Ethnic and Territorial Markers in a Multi-Ethnic Brooklyn Neighborhood," in *Gods of the City: Religion and the American Urban Landscape*, ed. Robert A. Orsi (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1999), 310–41.

²⁸ David R. Stroup, "Boundaries of Belief: Religious Practices and the Construction of Ethnic Identity in Hui Muslim Communities," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 40, no. 6 (May 3, 2017): 988–1006, doi:10.1080/01419870.2016.1193211.

²⁹ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*; Dru C. Gladney, "Muslim Tombs and Ethnic Folklore: Charters for Hui Identity," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 46, no. 3 (1987): 495–532, doi:10.2307/2056897; Liyakat Takim, "Charismatic Appeal or Communitas? Visitation to the Shrines of the Imams," in *Contesting Rituals: Islam and Practices of*

note that even occasions meant to foster the kind of “collective effervescence” Durkheim described, are most powerfully experienced outside the confines of official ceremony. They note that public holidays often serve as excuses for family gatherings, neighborhood parties, or other informal observations.³⁰ Edensor remarks that expatriate communities in new or culturally alien surroundings use ritual performance to “recreate familiar stages which reinstate a sense of belonging, both participating in spectacular communal events and performing everyday routines to tether national identity in unfamiliar surroundings.”³¹

While observations of vibrant, colorful events like festivals or parades capture the kind of collective effervescence that build a sense of community, the more mundane daily habits that sustain a sense of ethnic identity garner less scholarly attention. Indeed, Tsang and Woods observe that these daily rituals and everyday performances presents scholars of nationalism and ethnicity with a largely unexplored theoretical terrain.³² Unlike tourist displays, or galas, or parades in which participants knowingly engage in performance, small acts of ritual may pass without fanfare or audience, or may unfold in private spaces. In these moments performers may take the significance of their actions for granted, or perhaps even lack awareness they are performing at all. Performing daily habits with the knowledge that throughout the community of the nation others

Identity-Making, ed. Pamela J. Stewart and Andrew Strathern (Durham, N.C.: Carolina Academic Press, 2005), 181–204; Rory Dickson, “The Tablighi Jama‘at in Southwestern Ontario: Making Muslim Identities and Networks in Canadian Urban Spaces,” *Contemporary Islam* 3, no. 2 (July 1, 2009): 99–112, doi:10.1007/s11562-008-0072-9.

³⁰ Fox and Miller-Idriss, “Everyday Nationhood,” 547.

³¹ Edensor, *National Identity, Popular Culture and Everyday Life*, 2002, 100.

³² Rachel Tsang and Eric Taylor Woods, *The Cultural Politics of Nationalism and Nation-Building: Ritual and Performance in the Forging of Nations* (Routledge, 2013).

simultaneously engage in the same process allows for a the construction of shared identity, even absent direct contact with other members of the community.³³ Fox and Miller-Idriss explain that these dispassionate and banal performances do not inspire vibrant and colorful expression of community and belonging, but instead stand as a form of “national genuflection.” The effervescence of such moments, they argue “is not measured in moments, but in lifetimes.”³⁴ Edensor argues that “embodied habits” of daily life such as ways of walking, sitting, dressing, or conversing invoke shared meaning and constitute a shared identity among members. Such actions convey messages about norms of appropriateness, or reflect deeply held cultural values that foster a sense of shared belonging among participants. Daily, synchronized enactments of ritual give structure to “time-geographies” of the regular interactions between people, and create a sense of “cultural rhythm or social pulse” that members of a community partake in.³⁵ Karner argues that these everyday habits reproduce structures that create predictability and reduce anxieties associated with unfamiliarity.³⁶ For example, Mazumdar and Mazumdar explain how for Muslim immigrants to the United States, establishing daily ritual surrounding prayer and Islamic observation in the home helps to ease the challenges of adapting to living in a non-Muslim country.³⁷

³³ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.

³⁴ Fox and Miller-Idriss, “Everyday Nationhood,” 549.

³⁵ Edensor, *National Identity, Popular Culture and Everyday Life*, 2002, 95–98.

³⁶ Christian Karner, *Ethnicity and Everyday Life*, *The New Sociology* (London ; New York: Routledge, 2007), 27–29.

³⁷ Shampa Mazumdar and Sanjoy Mazumdar, “The Articulation of Religion in Domestic Space: Rituals in the Immigrant Muslim Home,” in *Contesting Rituals: Islam and Practice of Identity-Making*, ed. Pamela J. Stewart and Andrew Strathern (Durham, N.C.: Carolina Academic Press, 2005), 125–46.

Habits related to dress and clothing, despite being inherently functional, provide the most visible examples of the kind of day to day ritual that sustain identity.³⁸ Clothing may provide a powerful means of differentiation, both between and within identities.³⁹ Harrell's commentary on clothing in ethnic minority communities in southwest China observes that many subdivisions of groups like the Red Yi and White Miao take their naming conventions from the colors of clothing they wear.⁴⁰ Likewise, the Han Clothing Movement participants that Carrico studies, push back against being depicted as "unmarked" and "modern" by donning a style of clothing they see evocative of a distinctively Han identity.⁴¹ However, clothing may also denote intra-group divisions. Describing the clothing in Sami communities in northern Scandinavia, Svensson remarks that Sami wear traditional clothing in two contexts: 1) in intragroup official political and ceremonial gatherings, or 2) in intergroup interactions, like demonstrations, in which Sami seek to accentuate their identity.⁴² Quizon notes a similar dynamic in the Bagobo of Mindanao's distinction between referring to traditional clothing as *ompak* (dress) among other Bagobo, and as *kostyum* (costume)

³⁸ Tom G. Svensson, "Clothing in the Arctic: A Means of Protection, a Statement of Identity," *Arctic* 45, no. 1 (1992): 62–73; Cherubim A. Quizon, "Costume, Kóstyom, and Dress: Formulations of Bagóbo Ethnic Identity in Southern Mindanao," *Ethnology* 46, no. 4 (2007): 271–88, doi:10.2307/20456632; Stevan Harrell, "Reading Threads: Clothing, Ethnicity, and Place in Southwest China.," in *Writing With Thread: Traditional Textiles of Southwest Chinese Minorities*, ed. Tom Klobe (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Art Gallery, 2009), 99–112; Shauna Wilton, "Bound from Head to Toe: The Sari as an Expression of Gendered National Identity," *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism* 12, no. 1 (April 1, 2012): 190–205, doi:10.1111/j.1754-9469.2012.01153.x.

³⁹ Svensson, "Clothing in the Arctic," 72.

⁴⁰ Harrell, "Reading Threads: Clothing, Ethnicity, and Place in Southwest China."

⁴¹ Carrico, "The Imaginary Institution of China: Dialectics of Fantasy and Failure in Nationalist Identification, as Seen through China's Han Clothing Movement."

⁴² Svensson, "Clothing in the Arctic."

with outsiders. While *kotsyum* mixes and matches various aspects of Bagobo identity and becomes a bricolage of ethnic culture, *ompak* is tied to “moral and aesthetic concepts,” and reserved for specific uses tied to their meaning.⁴³

Permissible difference and cultural contestation: a case study of performing identity in Hui communities

Schein remarks that China’s ethnic policies seek to allow a degree of “permissible difference.”⁴⁴ The ruling Chinese Communist Party (CCP) regime seeks to create official and acceptable forms of expression of ethnic identity that the regime may supervise and control. The party’s attempts to harden the boundaries of ethnicity through a Stalinist classification system seeks to empower the CCP to set cultural standards for minority groups in ways that promote patriotism and loyalty to the state. Allowing such permitted expressions of ethnic minority culture and difference from the majority Han, allows the state to present a picture of interethnic tolerance and family style cooperation among the various minority ethnic groups.⁴⁵ Gladney notes that, in order to perpetuate this image, the state promotes minority festivals, religious worship, ethnic costume, and other performances.⁴⁶ Frequently, these expression of minority culture take place in the form of highly choreographed song and dance routines at a televised, annual Chinese New Year Gala or other nationwide event.⁴⁷

⁴³ Quizon, “Costume, Kóstyom, and Dress.”

⁴⁴ Schein, *Minority Rules*, 6–7.

⁴⁵ Brady, “‘We Are All Part of the Same Family.’”

⁴⁶ Gladney, *Dislocating China*, 23.

⁴⁷ Gladney, “Representing Nationality in China.”

However, attempts like these on the part of the state fail in attempts to create unified, standardized expression of identity. Examining three kinds of performance of Hui ethnicity—performance of prayer, wearing Islamic garments, and observations of Islamic holidays—will illustrate how, despite the efforts of the state to use performance to harden and standardize ethnic boundaries, ritual instead serves as a grounds for further, renewed contestation and fragmentation of in-group consensus about concerning the appropriate level of piety and observance, and the proper content of Hui religious devotion.

Performance of prayer and perpetuation of Hui culture

Performance of weekly prayers provides the state with an opportunity to open a channel for expressing permissible displays of ethnic difference. Friday prayers at the Dongguan Mosque of Xining illustrate the state's willingness to cooperate with Hui communities to permit a sanctioned practice of religion. The city mandates that—among Xining's dominant Yihewani sect—only the Dongguan may hold *Jumu'ah* (referred to as *zhuma*, 主麻, in Chinese) prayers. Consequently, the prayers attract enormous crowds. A mosque employee, who served as a tour guide for visitors, estimated that on Fridays as many as 60,000 routinely attended.⁴⁸ Crowds fill the mosque's internal courtyard, and spill out into the streets, filling the sidewalk and the eastbound two lanes of traffic for the length of two city blocks on the wide boulevard in front of the mosque. The local government even goes as far as to help the mosque deal

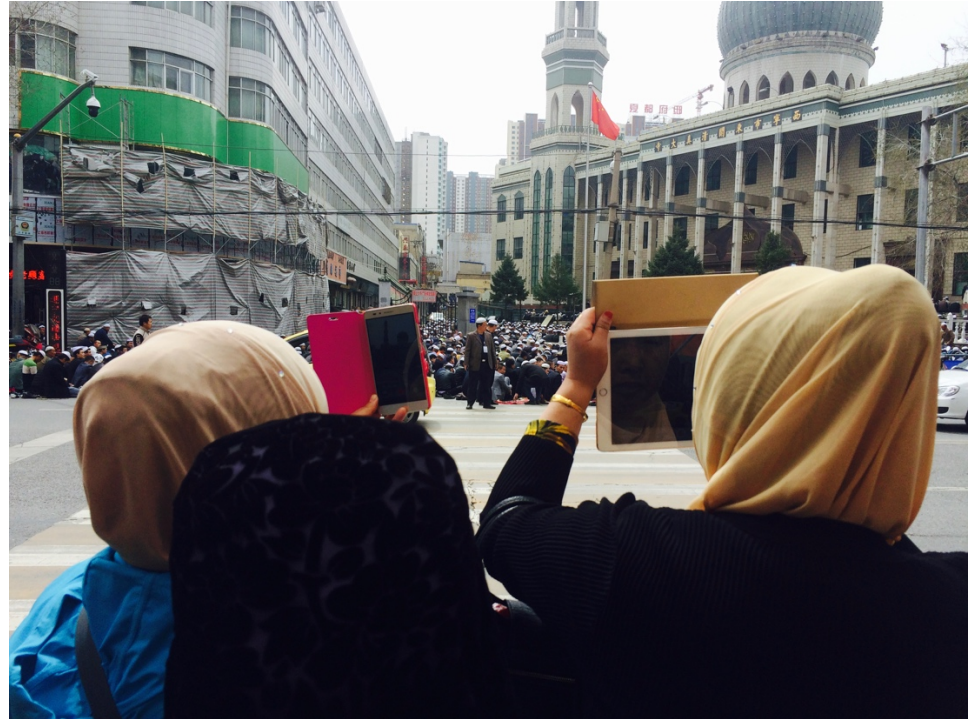
⁴⁸ Interview, XN118041816

with logistics and facilitate worship. To ensure safety and avoid roadblocks, the city deploys police to stand in the street near the mosque, and direct traffic.

Unsurprisingly, *zhuma* prayer services at the Dongguan mosque attract international attention, and serve as a showcase of ethnoreligious cooperation touted by both the local government and the local Hui community. Prayer services represent the most visible collective expression of Hui culture in Xining, and also serve as a tourist attraction. Every Friday, onlookers, including foreign and Han tourists, and Hui women from the community who do not attend prayer at the mosque, gather on the opposite side of the street, holding cameras up to capture images of the crowd (see Figure 6.1 below).⁴⁹ By using the city's resources to provide one, single location for holding prayer, and promoting the ceremony as a large-scale, community building experience of “collective effervescence”, the state sets parameters on religious and cultural expression and articulates a sanctioned, monitored version of Hui culture.

Figure 6.1: Two observances of prayers at the Dongguan Mosque of Xining: Han tourists watch afternoon prayers during Ramadan (above), and Hui onlookers take in weekly ZhuMa (主麻) prayers on Friday afternoon (below).

⁴⁹ Field observations, Xining, April-June 2016



The state's surface-level commitments to promoting religion do not always translate into policies that promote accommodation for practice of religion. On the contrary, residents of Hui enclave communities in cities, like Jinan, where Han form the

preponderant majority of the population, frequently cite practical limitations for their sporadic prayer attendance. They allege that, unlike in rural communities, where employers tolerate breaks to accommodate prayer, employers in cities where the Hui are relatively isolated are not so accommodating. Many respondents argued that these pressures meant making a choice between work and faith, and expressed complaints about sacrificing the practice of daily prayer in order to save their jobs.⁵⁰ The owner of a small tea shop in Jinan cited the difficulty of dutifully upholding the requirement of praying five times a day while facing the demands imposed by employers. He reasoned, “We're supposed to pray every day but if you don't work near a mosque that's not easy to do. On Fridays if you leave work to pray, your *danwei* (单位, work unit) might fire you. You have to provide for yourself. God isn't too serious about these things.”⁵¹ A baker in his forties, also a lifelong Jinan resident also contrasted the faithfulness of local Hui to recently arrived migrants, claiming, “The Hui from the northwest go to pray more often than a lot of locals. For them, Islam is absolutely a part of their daily lives. But, we local Hui are very business-minded (*shangye hua*, 商业化). We're really concerned about work, and don't have a lot of time to go pray.”⁵² One respondent, a 32 year old magazine editor in Beijing, remarked that because he worked on Fridays he rarely found time to leave the office to attend weekly prayers at 2pm. Instead, as compensation, he remarked that he often resorted by going to the mosque alone to pray after his work let out.⁵³

⁵⁰ Interviews JN28102215, JN32103115, JN36111015, XN115041516

⁵¹ Interview, JN43112415

⁵² Interview, JN51120315

⁵³ Interview, BJ01082815

Obstacles like these that hinder the ability to observe daily prayer services present migrant rural Hui with substantial challenges when trying to adjust to their new urban surroundings. Rural migrant Hui often disparage their urban counterparts' lack of devotion to daily prayer. A recently arrived front-desk worker from nearby Minghe who worked at the "Muslim Hotel" in Xining's Chengdong quarter explained that, in her eyes to be "qualified" (*hege*, 合格) as Hui, it was necessary to pray five times a day.⁵⁴ In Jinan, a 19 year old chef in a noodle shop, recently arrived from rural Qinghai lamented that Jinanese Hui, "just know 'I'm a Hui,' but they don't know about anything else." Unlike the Hui in his hometown, he griped, Hui in Jinan rarely attended daily prayers.⁵⁵ Another respondent in Jinan labeled these infrequent mosque attendees as '*nian Hui*' (年回, literally 'yearly Hui'), explaining, "There are Hui that pray regularly, and there are a group called '*nian HuiHui*' which is because they only pray once a year on *Kaizhai jie*."⁵⁶

Contestation also occurs over not just the frequency of prayers, but the content as well. In particular, the practice of commemoration of deceased saints and relatives (*jinian wangren*, 纪念亡人) where, families invite an imam to visit their homes, lead prayers, and recite the Qur'an on the anniversary of a relative's death (see photo in Figure 6.2, below). Many respondents, particularly those followers of Sufi orders⁵⁷,

⁵⁴ Interview, XN144052316

⁵⁵ Interview, JN50120315, in the original Chinese, "就知道 '我是回族', 其他的他们都不知道"

⁵⁶ Interview, JN52120415, in the original Chinese, "有真正礼拜的回回, 还有一种叫年回回, 就是一年礼拜一次, 开斋节礼拜一次."

⁵⁷ For a complete discussion of the various Sufi orders prominent in China, particularly in Qinghai, Gansu and Ningxia, see; Dillon, *China's Muslim Hui Community*.

named the practice as one of the major practices of faith that ordinary members of the community frequently engaged in, and identified it as an important part of holiday ceremonies.⁵⁸ Adherents cited these practices unique to Chinese Islam, and as linking Islam to traditional Chinese cultural practices. As one imam in Beijing insisted, that such blending of Islamic and Chinese tradition was not only inevitable, remarking, “Confucius taught that people all ought to act benevolently. We Muslims say that God is the most benevolent.”⁵⁹ In Xining, one imam expressed the view that, as a product of cultural fusion, Hui culture necessarily incorporated elements of traditional Chinese ritual. Hui, he reasoned, needed to observe both their Chinese and Islamic root:

The reason that the Hui are a nationality is because of our religion. Without Islam, we're not Hui. But Hui culture is like the child of two major cultures: Chinese Culture and Islamic Culture. Chinese culture is our mother culture, and Islamic culture is like our father culture. Even if we are currently closer to mother culture, the father culture is most important. We can't forget this father culture⁶⁰.

These discussions of the Hui as holding equally Chinese and Islamic heritage align with the state’s call for the Hui to value patriotism on an equal footing with religious devotion, often expressed through the maxim, “Love your country, Love your faith” (*ai guo, ai jiao*, 爱国爱教).

Figure 6.2: Pilgrims offer incense at the Da Gongbei (大拱北), tomb of Sufi Master Qi Jingyi (祁静一) in Linxia

⁵⁸ Interviews YN69012116, YN74012416, XN112041316, XN113041316, XN115041516, XN128043016, XN147052916

⁵⁹ Interview, BJ14092415, in the original Chinese “孔子教过人都应该有仁慈. 对我们穆斯林来说真主是最有仁慈的.”

⁶⁰ Interview, XN150061516



While such commemorations play a critical part in maintaining a sense of Hui identity for those adherents who practice them, others in the Hui community—particularly those non-Sufi members of the non-Sufi, reformist Ikhwan (known in Chinese as *Yihewani*, 伊赫瓦尼) school of Sunni Islam—regard them as syncretic, and ultimately in contravention of proper Islamic practice. Two respondents from Lanzhou remarked that these readings of the Qur’an for one’s dead relatives was influenced by the Confucian practice of ancestor worship, and was essentially blasphemous.⁶¹ In Xining, such the growth of adherents to orthodox, Salafist Islam provokes further challenges over whether or not Hui should adhere to indigenous Islamist practices, or look to emulate the Middle East. Many in the community express annoyance at the

⁶¹ Field observations, Lanzhou, July 2014

Salafists' haughty lectures about the syncretic nature of local traditions.⁶² As the influx of rural Hui into urban communities continues in line with the Chinese state's push for urbanization, contestation over how often and in what manner Hui ought to pray continues.

Islamic garments and wearing Hui culture

Measuring faithfulness and devotion often entails other practices besides merely going to the mosque to pray. Wearing official ethnic costume, and traditional Islamic garments, like headscarves and *bai maozi*, also provides an outward performance of ethnoreligious identity. The state frequently uses images of minorities in ethnic costume to suggest the strength of China's diversity. Official Museum displays, like the Museum of Ethnic Culture (*Minzu Bowuguan*, 民族博物馆) at Minzu University in Beijing (see photo in Figure 6.3, below), depict the Hui wearing Islamic clothing. Indeed, the vibrant minority costumes on display are upheld as pieces that carry "rich cultural connotations which convey deep meanings," and are thus vital purveyors of culture.⁶³

Figure 6.3: Hui costume as depicted in an ethnic minority costume exhibit in a museum on the campus of Minzu University (left) and in propaganda on Niu Jie in Beijing (right)

⁶² Interview, XN141051616

⁶³ Field Observations, Beijing, September 2015, in the original Chinese "隐藏着极其丰富多彩的文化内涵."



However, despite these showcase displays of ethnic clothing, and proclamations of its deep cultural significance, many urban Hui respondents remarked that official limitations placed on them in the workplace prevented them from routinely wearing hijabs or *bai maozi*. As a rule, they explained, *danwei* tended to prohibit their employees from wearing religious garments.⁶⁴ One woman, the owner of an Islamic goods store in Jinan, cited these workplace limitations as a major reason why most local Hui chose not to wear hijabs, even if they felt religiously obligated to do so. In her

⁶⁴ Interviews JN37111115, JN57121015, YN108033016, YN80020416, YN84021316, XN117041616, XN121042116,

remarks, she expressed frustration with those recently arrived migrants who acted dismissively towards those who did not cover their heads:

*A lot of people who have moved into this neighborhood might be Muslims, but they don't really behave like Muslims should. Maybe they don't think I dress properly. They'll ask 'Why don't you wear a hijab? How can you really be a Muslim if you don't wear a hijab?' And I say 'I know I should wear one, but I don't.' But here we just don't wear them except to go pray. In fact, a lot of danwei will forbid you from wearing a hijab, so people don't wear them.*⁶⁵

One 24 year old public school teacher from Xining explained the choice to wear a hijab as a choice between two lifestyle paths. Those who wore them, she explained, limited their prospects for attaining higher education, or engaging in professional employment. Instead, she argued, these women tended to marry young and work low wage jobs.⁶⁶ Framed in these terms, many respondents portrayed the choice to wear a hijab or *bai maozi* as a choice to limit economic opportunity. As a response to such economic realities, a 37 year old restaurant owner from Yinchuan reasoned, wearing a prayer hat or a hijab had become reserved for formal occasions only. He stated, “I feel that wearing a hijab is becoming more formalized. Many people who work in cities, like entrepreneurs and other jobs like this, they seldom wear them. In Yinchuan there are few people who wear hijabs or prayer hats.”⁶⁷ As a result, urban residents working in professional jobs rarely wore traditional religious dress. One interviewee, a woman in her early twenties who grew up in Jinan, noted that migrant Hui from the northwest

⁶⁵ Interview, JN61121615

⁶⁶ interview, XN121042116

⁶⁷ Interview, YN84021316, in the original Chinese, “我觉得戴头巾现在都变成一种形式化了, 好多在城市上班的, 比如说出来创业, 比如像这种的他们都很少, 银川市内的都很少戴头巾, 帽子的”

were far more likely than locals to regularly wear prayer hats or hijabs. “Nobody in my family wears (a hijab),” she claimed.⁶⁸

Many respondents used wearing hijabs or prayer hats as an outwardly visible measure of devotion. Respondents associated one’s manner of dress with one’s level of faithfulness, and associated wearing Islamic clothing with being more authentically Hui. Dressing in Islamic fashion, one respondent assured me, was a minimum qualification for being Hui.⁶⁹ One man, who sold yak butter products in the Hui Quarter in Xining explained how wearing a hat served as a means of broadcasting ethnic identity. “If you wear a *bai maozi* it just shows that you’re a Hui,” he argued. Citing the fact that I had initially inquired whether or not his product was sanctioned by Islamic dietary law, he remarked, “Just now, when you came in, you didn’t know that I was Hui and so you asked about whether or not this was *qingzhen*. But, if I was wearing a *bai maozi* you’d certainly know that I was Hui.”⁷⁰

Other interviewees expressed a similar sense of religious obligation to wear a hijab, or dress in a more conservative fashion.⁷¹ During one interview, a 29 year old woman in Xining argued, “The Qur’an explains how people are supposed to dress. They’re not supposed to wear tight clothes or show hair, or show the skin on their shoulders.”⁷² Unsurprisingly, these respondents pointed to those Hui who routinely donned hijabs and prayer hats as exemplifying the proper manner of dress and behavior for the Hui. Especially when speaking to migrants from rural Hui communities,

⁶⁸ Interview: JN34110415

⁶⁹ Interview, XN144052316,

⁷⁰ Interview, XN145052516

⁷¹ Interview, XN120042016, XN134050716

⁷² Interview, XN134050716

invocations of the fact that greater numbers of Hui wore white hats and headscarves in the village served as proof of superior faith. Many of these respondents look with disapproval on the comparative lack of Hui wearing white hats in urban communities. One respondent, a middle-aged entrepreneur from Yinchuan, asserted the superior devotion of Ningxia Hui on the basis that they wore Islamic dress with greater frequency than Hui from elsewhere.⁷³

Islamic holidays and the performance of Hui ethnicity

Islamic holidays like Eid al-Fitr (in Chinese, *kaizhai jie*, 开斋节)⁷⁴ and Eid al-Adha (in Chinese, *Gu'erbang jie*, 古尔邦节) offer the state a similar opportunity to promote an official, sanctioned version of Hui culture. For many Hui, *kaizhai jie* marks the only occasion in a calendar year which obligates mosque attendance. These celebrations bring members of the community together to engage in simultaneous practice of faith, and extend the bonds of the Hui community. In large, cosmopolitan communities, like Beijing's Niu Jie (牛街), *kaizhaijie* prayer ceremonies attracted Hui from every region of China, and every sect and school of thought. Similar celebrations take place throughout the country. Many respondents in Xining remarked that attendance at the Dongguan Mosque grew exponentially for morning prayer services to observe holidays. Several respondents estimated that the number of worshippers on

⁷³ Interview, YN72012216

⁷⁴ Author's note: for the remainder of this chapter, I will follow the conventions used by my interviewees and use the Chinese language terms for these celebrations.

these occasions surpassed 200,000.⁷⁵ Even in relatively isolated communities like Jinan's Hui Quarter, *kaizhai jie* draws large crowds. A 22 year old woman from Jinan described a similar scene at *kaizhai jie* observances at the city's Great Southern Mosque. "Last year for *kaizhai jie*, I went (to the mosque) and there were so many people. Not just local Muslims from Jinan, but people from all over the country all attended."⁷⁶ As such, these celebrations also provide the state with a vital opportunity to endorse and control expression of Hui culture and Islamic faith.

Accordingly, the state accommodates official observance of the holiday in many ways. In Yinchuan, the government of the Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region declares Islamic holidays public holidays, and give civil servants three days vacation time. Elsewhere, local governments play a role in staging large scale holiday observances. On the morning of *kaizhai jie* on Niu Jie in Beijing, traffic police erected barriers in the middle of the street, turning the avenue into a pedestrian thoroughfare. The Beijing Cuisine Association (*Beijing Pengren Xiehui*, 北京烹饪协会) hosted the "9th Beijing Halal Food Culture Festival" (*Beijing Qingzhen Meishi Wenhua Jie*, 北京清真美食文化节), for which it erected a row of white pop-up tents that lined the avenue opposite the mosque, housing vendors selling snack foods. The morning's festival atmosphere allowed the city government a channel for broadcasting its own message. Over the avenue, a bright red banner, hung especially for the occasion, read "Raise high the great banner of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics! Build a prosperous, civilized,

⁷⁵ Interviews, XN118041816,

⁷⁶ Interview, JN34110415, in the original Chinese, "去年开斋节我去了人特别多, 不只是济南的这些信伊斯兰教, 全国各地人都去了."

harmonious, and livable new Xi Cheng District!” Signs for the food festival likewise declared, “Spread nationality policy and promote interethnic cooperation.”⁷⁷ Likewise, the holiday provides an important opportunity for the state to join with and promote mosques’ efforts to build and strengthen the community. As one imam in Jinan explained, on *kaizhai jie* the local mosque committee engaged in acts of charitable donations, and distribution of goods like cooking oil, and *you xiang* (油香, fried oil cakes) to the neighborhood’s poor.⁷⁸ In facilitating and overseeing the celebration of the holiday, and providing logistical support for the prayer services, the state gains the ability to oversee the content and tone of the celebrations, and may transform the celebration into a platform for its own agenda.

Even with such support for official observance of the holiday, the most important observations of the holiday occur outside of the purview of the state. Numerous respondents Outside the pomp and circumstance surrounding official holiday celebrations, however, many Hui remark that the most important aspects of *kaizhai jie* involved informal gatherings with family to eat a large family meal, and to express holiday greetings. Multiple respondents, when asked to identify holiday activities immediately mentioned gathering with family to fry *youxiang* (油香, oil cakes) and make large family meals.⁷⁹ On Niu Jie, after the morning prayers ended, attendees spilled out onto the streets, filling the neighborhood’s many halal restaurants, to

⁷⁷ Field observations, Beijing, July 2016; In the original Chinese, “高举中国特色社会主义伟大旗帜，建设繁荣文明和谐宜居的新西城” and “宣传民族政策，促进民族团结，” respectively.

⁷⁸ Interview, JN23101515

⁷⁹ Interviews: BJ01082815, BJ08091215, JN22101315, JN32103115, JN34110415, JN47112615, JN48112615, JN62122015, YN76012616, YN83021216, XN117041616, XN120042016, XN128043016, XN130050416

celebrate with family and friends.⁸⁰ Even for those relatively secularized Hui who skip prayers at the mosque on *kaizhai jie*, the act of celebrating the day by eating *youxiang* provides a connection with a sense of Hui identity, and a feeling of belonging in the Hui community. For many, these informal, family-oriented observances of holiday traditions represent a more relevant expression of Hui culture, and indeed matter more than the official, carefully messaged, state-sanctioned events.

Recent arrivals in the countryside also complained that traditional holiday celebrations in urban communities lacked the vivacity of the countryside. One Imam in Yinchuan remarked that *Kaizhai Jie* celebrations in the city weren't as "festive" (*nuanhe*, 暖呵) as those in his rural hometown of Pingluo because in the countryside entire villages came out to celebrate together. By contrast, in Yinchuan, celebrations were small and private.⁸¹ A professor at Yinchuan's *Jingxue Yuan* shared these sentiments. In the countryside, he explained, celebrations of *Gu'erbang Jie* took place in single story courtyard houses where the community could gather together to slaughter sheep and cattle, and roast whole goats to share with neighbors in keeping with Islamic tradition. In the city, where everyone lived in cramped apartment quarters, no communal space existed for gathering to celebrate the holiday together.⁸² One woman, a 52 year old Hui front desk worker at a weekend English prep school in Jinan, explained that local holiday celebrations lacked vibrancy because, outside of local residents received no time off from work to celebrate. "Right now the government doesn't give a

⁸⁰ Field observations, Beijing, July 2016

⁸¹ Interview, YN77012816

⁸² Interview, YN105032316

holiday,” she observed. “It’s not like in the Northwest, like in Xi’an or Shaanxi, or Gansu where everyone can take a vacation. We here in Jinan don’t get a vacation.”⁸³

Conclusions

Despite the state’s attempts to use these displays to routinize, and standardize Hui culture, the interactions between Hui from different regions that stem from mass movement and migration subverts the state’s attempt to harden or control the contestation of ethnicity. In fact it often achieves the opposite effect by turning performance into a site of contestation. Public celebrations, like the prayer services to celebrate *kaizhai jie*, fill city streets and provide visible expressions of Hui culture.

However, these performances allow for internal boundary setting and fragmentation of as much as they do for unity and integration. Limitations on the ability to wear head scarves at work, or take time off of work for weekly prayers forces some Hui to weigh religious observance against economic self-preservation. Migration highlights the way in which Hui from different age, class, regional, and professional backgrounds weigh these choices differently. Many Hui working as part of urban *danwei* feel unable to sacrifice their employment in order to observe religious norms, while other more pious Hui view this choice as evidence of secularization and lack of seriousness about being Hui.

⁸³ Interview, JN28102215, in the original Chinese “因为现在国家也不给假期了，不像西北方，比如说西安，陕西那边都会放假的，甘肃那边都会放假，咱们济南这边没有假期。”

Differences of opinion over the significance of wearing a hijab or prayer hat, or how often Hui should observe prayer, illustrate the assertions of Fox, Spillman, and others that rituals do not impart universally accepted meanings, but instead may be a cause for contestation and debate. Previous studies of religiosity among the Hui observe that these discrepancies in mosque attendance and regularity of prayer often overlap with divisions between rural and urban Hui. In these configurations, rural Hui are often held up as more pious, and urban Hui as more secular.⁸⁴ However, as migration brings Hui from different geographic regions and social environments into contact, other cleavages like social class, level of education, and age also become salient as urban environments foster the kind of interaction that renews contestation of Hui identity.

Internal migration only increases the prominence of, and amplifies this contestation. By bringing Hui from different regions and different social environments together, the mass migration that occurs as a result of urbanization sparks new discussions about the proper ways to be Hui. Debates over how to properly practice and observe Islamic ritual are essential to defining the boundaries of Hui identity. Though this renewed contestation activates cross cutting identity cleavages. Even though the common ethnic identity of Hui may provide common ground for these disparate groups, other identities may supersede it. The process of contestation draws intragroup boundaries and call attention to the differences that exist within the Hui community.

Migration also serves to revive interest in Hui identity. As more devout Hui come into contact with more secularized Hui, renewed interest in Islamic practice

⁸⁴ Lesley Turnbull, "In Pursuit of Islamic" Authenticity": Localizing Muslim Identity on China's Peripheries," *Cross-Currents: East Asian History and Culture Review* 3, no. 2 (2015): 482–517.

blossoms. The arrival of migrants from the northwest impacts the daily habits of residents of Jinan's Hui Quarter, and in many cases galvanizes local Hui to rediscover their religious and cultural roots. Many residents observe that increased contact between Hui from the northwest and local Hui revitalizes mosque communities and renews interest in Islamic heritage. These migrants model proper Islamic behavior, and adhere more strictly to religious orthodoxy. Locals assert that northwestern migrants more regularly attend prayer, and often make up the majority of the attendees at daily prayers.⁸⁵ One interviewee noted that the arrival of migrants in the community, led to increased visibility as the number of Hui wearing white prayer hats increased:

*There are still some men who wear bai maozi, but over the past few years, I feel like the number of Hui wearing bai maozi around here has increased. There are also more who wear hijabs. When I was young, you never saw anyone else wearing a hijab. But these last few years there are quite a few.*⁸⁶

Likewise, moving to urban communities affects migrant Hui in their daily habits. Many respondents in Yinchuan noted that, as a city comprised primarily of recently arrived migrants, Yinchuan's Hui community was defined by blending of traditions and fusion.⁸⁷ One interviewee in Yinchuan remarked that as more Hui moved into the city from elsewhere, more people within the Hui community began to celebrate the Chinese New Year.⁸⁸ The Islamic goods store owner in Jinan observed a loosening in the strictness with which recently arrived Hui observed dress codes:

⁸⁵ Interviews JN23101515, JN51120315, JN52120415

⁸⁶ Interview, JN46112515; In the original Chinese, “男的戴白帽子的还是有的，但是我觉得近几年才发现身边回族戴白帽子的多起来。然后还有围头巾的多起来，我小时候从来没有见过别人，就是回族围头巾，这几年才有的。”

⁸⁷ Interviews YN92022216, YN104032216, YN105032316,

⁸⁸ Interview, YN152011816

I think these Muslims from the northwest also have become a bit more relaxed. In the northwest they cover their entire heads and don't allow any hair to show. But here you see women who still wear the hijab but have a little hair showing through because they think it's prettier to look this way. So they also have relaxed a little.⁸⁹

Ultimately, ritual performance provides a vehicle for the creation of new understandings of the boundaries of Hui identity. These interpretations of Hui identity may draw on sources of authority other than those sanctioned by the state, and may not conform to the template of Hui identity held up by the CCP.

As the contact between Hui groups triggers Islamic revival among some secular Hui and increased cosmopolitanism among some orthodox Hui, new understandings about the essential nature of Hui culture emerge. This process of contestation and renegotiation happens outside of the control of the state through informal processes. Though the policies of state seek to channel ethno-religious expression into a state-sanctioned channel, daily interactions in the context of urbanization and migration achieve the opposite effect. Rather than consolidation of Hui identity around the narrative of the state, debates over performance of Hui identity reveal the heterogeneity within the Hui community, and illustrate the limitations of the state's ability to control how ethnic boundaries are set and maintained.

⁸⁹ Interview, JN61121615

7. Conclusion: Drawing Lines Between Devotion and *Danhua*: Contesting Hui ethnic identity in the midst of China's rural-to-urban migration

On a blindingly sunny day in late March, I sat on a low stool on the side of the road surrounded fields of *goji* (枸杞) plants, the snowcapped peaks of the Helan Shan range looming in the distance. Beside me several residents of Nanliang, a small farming town about 15 miles to the north of Yinchuan, sat stripping the thorns and briars of the dead branches of *goji* bushes. The young man seated next to me, a twenty-something who wore a *baimaozi*, told me about his arrival in this suburb of Yinchuan from his hometown in Ningxia's mountainous southern region (Specifically the areas around Guyuan Prefecture and Haiyuan County, known locally as *Nanbushanqu*, 南部山区) at the age of ten. His family moved to this suburban outpost within the administration of Yinchuan as a part of a massive government sponsored relocation of people from the rural south begun in the early 2000s. The entire village, which specialized in producing Ningxia's signature crop of *goji* berries, arrived from the same mountain village. He spoke softly, continuing to snap away with the clippers as he talked. "My hometown was very poor," he recalled. "The soil there is rocky, and it's not good for growing crops. Most people there herd sheep." When asked how his adopted community differed from his childhood home, with a wave his hand out toward the fields of bushes left bare-branched after the winter, he remarked, "Here, there are more opportunities. We grow *goji* and corn."¹

¹ Field observations: Yinchuan, March 2016

The young man's story is but one among thousands just like it. Since 1980, China's urban population has grown by some 500 million people. By the year 2030, projections estimate that the urban population will swell to just over a billion. In part, economic incentive drives this mass movement of people from the underdeveloped countryside to more prosperous cities. However, government policies to encourage relocation to cities also increases the rate at which migration occurs.² Often the two forces work in tandem, as they do in the case of Hui migrants from rural communities in western China. As a 24 year old Hui woman in Xining explained:

Lots of people from Hualong County (化隆回族自治县) migrate to open restaurants. Right now the government, the Qinghai government, really supports this kind of action. They give these young entrepreneurs a bit of money. They take this money to go and open restaurants, and really this spurs all of Qinghai's development. I'll give you an example. If you have a little money, but not enough to open a lamian restaurant, if I'm the government and I give you a little money, the money you have plus the money I give you together is enough for you to go open the restaurant. On the one hand, you spread publicity about Qinghai, and on the other hand you're driving your development. If you're from a small farm village, everyone, almost half the people, will go to open a restaurant, and come back after they've saved up some money.³

Migration on this scale undoubtedly impacts social and economic life in both the rural communities from which migrants originate and the urban communities to which they relocate. Among the many consequences that this mass movement of people generates are consequences for how the boundaries of Hui ethnic identity are formed and maintained. As migration draws Hui from different regions, class backgrounds, and degrees of education and religious piety together, they contest notions about how to define, and set parameters around the content of the ethnic Hui identity. Though the

² Miller, *China's Urban Billion*.

³ Interview: XN121042116

state's policies on ethnic minorities attempt to standardize Hui identity through identifying a number of cultural traits and ethnic practices the state deems acceptable, the interactions between members of various Hui communities that occurs as a result of migration belie the notion of a tidy, standardized version of Hui identity. Rather, as the previous chapters of this dissertation have shown, Hui from different communities express thoroughly different understandings of how Hui identity ought to be chosen, talked about, performed, and consumed. The responses given during my interviews, and elaborated upon in preceding chapters, illustrate that, more than increasingly the salience of boundaries between Hui and others, urbanization, in particular the rural-to-urban and west-to-east migration that occurs as a result, heightens the salience of internal boundaries by highlighting cross-cutting cleavages.

This final chapter argues that urbanization and migration draw internal boundary lines by highlighting internal differences within the Hui community, and also allow for contestation that allows the boundaries Hui identity to be redefined and renegotiated. It begins by examining how daily interactions in the context of urbanization and migration raise the salience of non-ethnic categories of identity, like class or religious sectarianism. Highlighting the differences between groups of Hui reopens the contestation of the boundaries of Hui identity.

Next, I offer an assessment of the consequences of this renewed debate around boundary markers. Because such contestation concerns matters of daily habit and routine like diet, dress, and religious observance, it occurs in informal contexts, and outside of the purview of the state. Thus, I argue, that despite the state's attempts to use ethnic policy and classification systems to harden the boundaries of Hui identity around

a state-approved frame, the urbanization policies pursued by the state facilitate greater expression of intra-Hui diversity.

Despite the fact that this contestation happens outside the purview of the state, it may nonetheless work allow the state to exercise control in managing ethnic relations. To close, I discuss how a focus on internal boundaries strengthens state control. Though the state may fail to limit or control expression of Hui identity, the resulting intra-Hui debates about the proper way to embody Huiness prevents mobilization in resistance to the state. The intragroup contestation of Hui identity focuses attention on internal boundaries. Inward contestation effectively prevents organization against the state, as contentious politics are directed inward. This inward focus also draws attention away from drawing distinctions between the Hui and the majority Han, and highlights the differences within the Hui community itself. The continuous contestation within the group, in effect, defuses potential conflict with the state. These findings point to both a strength and a weakness of authoritarian states. Though the contestation within the Hui community may limit the ability of Hui to promote organized resistance to the state, the state's grasp on control remains tenuous. Attempts by the state to crack down on expressions of ethnic identity it deems undesirable may serve to increase the salience of ethnic identity.

Understanding ethnicity by exploring cross-cutting cleavages

In her contribution to a 2001 symposium retrospectively assessing the ground broken by constructivist scholars, Kanchan Chandra asserts that, despite making

valuable insights about the multiplicity and fluidity of social identities, many empirical studies conducted by constructivists fell back on old habits, treating identity as fixed and stable. Such studies, she remarks, did not follow constructivist logic to its conclusions, namely: 1) constructivist theories posit that individuals possess multiple identities; and 2) these identities vary in their salience depending on interactions with other independent variables. Often, Chandra insists, such research exhibits a failure to account for shifting identifications, or changes in the salience of categories, or renegotiation of identity boundaries.⁴

A frequently invoked maxim in the study of ethnicity and ethnic politics is that those who go looking for ethnicity will surely find it. Fox and Jones observe that a tendency to prioritize ethnicity above other identities, plagues migration studies. Further, they argue, scholarship examining the effects of migration on ethnicity tend to treat ethnicity as static, or fixed. The assumed degree of the fixity of ethnicity evident in much of the field's scholarship, they conclude, "is at odds with its contingent and socially constructed nature." As a consequence, they conclude, scholars fall back on essentialist understandings of ethnicity. Adopting such an outlook, the authors caution, "risks reification of social difference, it also usurps agency from the everyday essentialisers by side-lining or simply disregarding alternative non-ethnic modes of identification."⁵ Glick Schiller et al., similarly charge that methodological nationalism, and the assumed framework of the nation-state privileges ethnicity in migration scholarship, "obscuring the diversity of migrants' relationships to their place of

⁴ Chandra, "Symposium: Cumulative Findings in the Study of Ethnic Politics."

⁵ Jon E Fox and Demelza Jones, "Migration, Everyday Life and the Ethnicity Bias," *Ethnicities* 13, no. 4 (August 1, 2013): 387, doi:10.1177/1468796813483727.

settlement and other localities around the world.” By imputing that ethnicity structures the social realities of migrants these accounts discount or ignore “non-ethnic ‘pathways of incorporation’” like class, age, gender, religion, region, etc.⁶ These critiques mirror Chandra’s observations that much of the initial wave of constructivist scholarship overlooked the foundational tenets of constructivism in treating ethnicity as fixed, and failing to fully incorporate insights about the fluidity of identity into analysis.⁷ By trying to explain all findings in terms of ethnicity, we may blind ourselves to other forces at play, and perhaps even to the most important impacts on ethnicity itself.

As a potential solution to the the problem of over-prioritizing essentialism or not fully accounting for multiplicity and variance in salience of identities, a focus on cross-cutting cleavages offers a more nuanced picture of how, when, and why ethnicity becomes salient. Chandra remarks that examining cross-cutting cleavages, “allows for the possibility of choice between group memberships on more than one dimension of identity.”⁸ Fox and Jones’ conclude by observing that “Ethnicity, then, along with gender, class, religion, community and so forth are neither essential traits nor inevitable conditions: rather, they are the variable and contingent outcome of assorted practices that make them meaningful in some contexts but render them invisible and irrelevant in others.” They further express their convictions that scholars “should be specifying the contexts and practices through which ethnicity, alongside other modalities of experience, is invoked and evoked in everyday life” makes a similar argument for

⁶ Nina Glick Schiller, Ayşe Çağlar, and Thaddeus C. Guldbrandsen, “Beyond the Ethnic-Lens: Locality, Globality, and Born Again Incorporation,” *American Ethnologist* 33, no. 4 (2006): 612–33.

⁷ Chandra, “Symposium: Cumulative Findings in the Study of Ethnic Politics.”

⁸ Chandra, “Ethnic Parties and Democratic Stability,” 241.

exploring how ethnicity rises and falls in salience as it interacts with other identities.⁹

Examinations of the impacts of cross-cutting cleavages on social behavior have heretofore largely focused on formally institutionalized cleavages, and processes like elections, party membership, census, and ethnic violence.¹⁰ However, evidence gathered here illustrates that such cross-cutting cleavages exert influence even in everyday settings. Heterogeneity defines urban Hui communities throughout China. Recent urban-to-rural and east-to-west migration highlights these differences by bringing Hui from different locations, classes and social settings together in the context of an urban environment. Interactions between these Hui from different backgrounds sparks contestation over what markers constitute the defining features of Hui identity, and makes such debates public.

Cross-cutting cleavages, migration, and contesting the boundaries of Hui identity

The distinctions made to distinguish between different groups within the Hui community illustrate a perhaps unintended consequence of urbanization: the activation of cross-cutting cleavages that results in drawing internal boundary lines. Despite all sharing the same official designation of *Huizu* according to China's *minzu* system, differences of opinion about matters of marriage, speech, prayer, dress, and diet

⁹ Fox and Jones, "Migration, Everyday Life and the Ethnicity Bias," 391.

¹⁰ Daniel N. Posner, "The Political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas Are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi," *The American Political Science Review* 98, no. 4 (2004): 529–45; Chandra, "Ethnic Parties and Democratic Stability"; Dunning and Harrison, "Cross-Cutting Cleavages and Ethnic Voting"; Lieberman and Singh, "The Institutional Origins of Ethnic Violence."

underscore the internal cleavages that divide Hui communities.

In Jinan, where the Hui quarter stands as a concentrated island of Hui surrounded by a sea of ethnic majority Han, class, education, and regional cleavages distinguish locals from migrants. Longtime Hui residents of Jinan mark the increase in migrants to the city from Gansu, Qinghai and elsewhere in *Xibei* as one of the most drastic changes of the last 20 years. However, not all residents welcome the arrival of these Hui. Rather, local Jinanese Hui highlight class and education differences when drawing distinctions between themselves and migrants. One man, the owner of a small tea shop in his fifties, remarked of migrants to the community, “they come from a place like Gansu where there are also other Muslims like Salar and Dongxiang. And of course these areas are a little less educated and a little poorer.”¹¹ Others were less kind in their attitudes towards migrants, some even holding prejudices against migrants themselves. Many viewed migrants’ relative lack of formal education and lower social status negatively. A 52-year-old Hui engineer who grew up in the Jinan Hui Quarter but has since moved away states, “I really don’t like going to the Hui Quarter. It’s not like it used to be. A lot of new people have come into the neighborhood. Probably less than half of the residents there are locals now. It just seems like the people that live there aren’t very well-educated or well-mannered.”¹² For the engineer, and many like him, such a lack of sophistication defines Jinan’s Hui Quarter, and leads to less desire to be associated with the residents. Rather than models of Islamic piety, people like the

¹¹ Interview: JN43112415

¹² Interview: JN32103115

engineer look upon migrants as country rubes or religious fanatics. As such, they express no desire to be grouped along with migrant Hui.

That many Jinan Hui remained content in being culturally, if not religiously Hui became a major source of tension with northwestern migrants. Locals prioritized abstention from pork, and self-identification as Hui on citizenship forms as the primary markers of Hui identity. Adopting practices such as frequently attending *zhuma* prayers, wearing religious attire, or sending their children to study the Qur'an during school vacations were often brushed aside in favor of economic self-advancement. Taking off work to pray, or wearing a headscarf were cited as obstacles to advancing in the workforce. Studying Arabic came at the cost of classes needed to ensure college admission. Devotion to these aspects of faith was often posed as choosing cultural and economic backwardness.

Migrants from more pious western communities expressed feelings of alienation from local Hui, and displeasure at their perceived secularization and laxity. A man in his late thirties had recently arrived in Jinan from Qinghai to open a restaurant remarked that "My hometown is very small and maybe we're not as educated as Jinan." In contrast, however, he proclaimed "In Qinghai there are a lot of Hui, so Jinan's Hui culture isn't nearly as strong as ours." Similarly, an 18 year old who had recently arrived in Jinan from Qinghai to work at a *lamian* restaurant glumly gave his impressions of Jinan, lamenting, "People here just aren't as faithful."¹³ These migrants expressed dismay at the disconnect from their religious roots expressed by their local Hui counterparts. For these migrants, local Hui appeared lax in their upholding the basic

¹³ Interview: JN50120315

tenets of Islamic faith. An *ahong* at one of Jinan's mosques summarized these complaints concisely, claiming "Well, the Islamic tradition in the west is stronger. They start going to the mosque, studying Arabic at an early age. Some of them, in places like Ningxia, when they're young can speak and read Arabic but can't even write their own names in Chinese."¹⁴

Local Jinanese echoed these sentiments regarding the superiority of migrants' faithfulness. One man, a factory worker in his mid-thirties testified, "people from *Xibei*, they teach their children at home. I've seen a lot of owners of *lamian* shops practicing the *qingzhenyan* (*shahada*, 清真言) with 10 year old kids, teaching their 7 or 8 year olds how to pray."¹⁵ Another respondent remarked that the majority of people who showed up to prayer on Fridays were migrants from Qinghai. She argued, "I think they're a big influence on the neighborhood. They go to pray every Friday. Local Muslims aren't this observant. We're a little bit *danhua*. But they regularly attend."¹⁶ However, this devotion to the faith caused further friction in the minds of some locals. A number professed that their northwestern migrant neighbors prioritized Islamic over secular education, and hinted that the children of these migrants lacked functional literacy in Chinese characters, but could read the Qur'an. Viewed in this light, the piety of the northwestern Hui becomes stigmatized as a marker of backwardness and lack of sophistication. The tea shop owner frowned on such piousness, and felt unfairly judged. "This is just my opinion, but I don't really think we should divide or separate into groups and say what we believe is right and what you believe is wrong," he declared,

¹⁴ Interview: JN26101915

¹⁵ Interview: JN52120415

¹⁶ Interview: JN61121615

adding “I think if you eat a *qingzhen* diet, don't eat pork, and believe in God, you're doing OK.”¹⁷

While the arrival of migrants increases the salience of class and educational cleavages in cities like Jinan, in Xining, the religious and sectarian lines take on increased meaning. Several respondents boasted of the superior Islamic environment in the city. One, taxi driver, scoffed at what he perceived as the comparative ignorance of eastern Chinese Hui regarding Islam. He emphatically declared, “Qinghai Muslims are more devout. Muslims from the east like in Shandong don't know anything about Islam. They smoke, and drink and everything. Some of them even eat pork!”¹⁸ Another Xining respondent, a teacher who grew up in Huangyuan, just outside the city, contrasted the religious atmosphere in Xining with other locations China. Assessing the religious climate in Yinchuan, he remarked that he found the level of Islamic culture there wanting:

*Especially in Yinchuan, people are very danhua. I say that because I went to Yinchuan and after I arrived, I could just feel it. The differences were enormous. The religious outlook there, as far as we here are concerned, was maybe more danhua. If we're using contemporary terms here, maybe they're more modernized. But as far as we here are concerned, we're more conservative, because in addition to developing the economy, these circumstances are still good. I have money, I have standards. These standards are more numerous in regard to religious life.*¹⁹

Locals cited those Hui who had come west to Xining as a part of China's “Great Western Development” (*Xibu dakaiifa*, 西部大开发) as having to adapt to the higher religious standards of Xining. Xining locals disparaged many these Hui as clinging to

¹⁷ Interview: JN43112415

¹⁸ Interview: XN141051616

¹⁹ Interview: XN112041316

Han traditions from back east, and pointed to this as evidence of their Hanification. As one interviewee remarked:

*There are some people who are still a little rough from a religious point of view. For instance, those Hui whose hometowns are in Hebei and Shandong, who followed their parents to Qinghai as children. Their parents' religious faith was a pretty lapsed, and so the children are also very lapsed. They all think they have to rush out and buy new clothes and set of fireworks at Spring Festival, and things like that.*²⁰

These respondents held up Xining as a standard bearer for Islamic devotion. Further, Xining Hui beamed with pride at the influence that Hui from Qinghai exerted when they moved in to eastern communities. Citing the prominence of migrants from Qinghai to eastern Hui communities, one respondent remarked, “The people who live in *Neidi*, they're very *danhua*, but when people from Qinghai go to the cities to *dagong*, they start to pray more often, and believe more deeply.”²¹ Another respondent, himself an *ahong*, noted that Muslim migrants planted the seeds of faith in long dormant eastern Hui communities through by their exemplary devotion. He explained, “(Migrants’) influence is really large. Maybe in those cities, before they arrive nobody goes to pray at the mosques, and after they arrive more people attend prayers. Or in some places there are communities where there is no mosque, and then after Qinghai Muslims arrive, the community builds a mosque.”²²

The pride and emphasis on Islamic observance proclaimed by Xining’s Hui illustrate the ways in which religion and religious observance provides a salient cross-

²⁰ Interview: XN120042016

²¹ Interview: XN148053016

²² Interview: XN150061516

cutting cleavage in Hui communities. Even though their eastern counterparts shared an ethnic identity as Hui, their insufficient devotion to Islamic practice, lax dietary standards, and insistence on observing custom regarded as “Han” distinguished them from locals. One interviewee, a visiting halal food industry consultant from Malaysia summarized this pride in religious faith concisely in his observance that Xining was, in his estimation, “the de-facto Islamic capital of China.”²³

Yinchuan provides an interesting counterpart to Xining’s cultural capital as a Hui stronghold. As the capital of Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, the city spearheads much of China’s cultural outreach to the Islamic world, and is home to many official sites of Islamic culture. However, unlike Xining, a city that carries a strong Islamic flavor, Yinchuan’s recent development leaves it, in many ways, in search of an identity. The Great Western Development Campaign, and the influx of migrants arriving in the city as a result of it, caused Yinchuan’s population to balloon in recent years. As one respondent, an restaurant owner in his late thirties, explained, “We have people here from all over the country, and they’re all in contact.”²⁴ Another interviewee, a Han woman preparing to marry into a Hui family who worked in a creative design firm, recalled her experience of moving to Yinchuan. “It’s a very distinct experience,” she began, “I’m also a migrant here. My grandparents moved here because my grandfather was a soldier. My grandfather was from Shanxi, and my grandmother was from Anhui. My mother was from Hunan. Even my friends who live nearby aren’t purely from Ningxia. Most of them came from somewhere else.”²⁵

²³ Interview: XN138051316

²⁴ Interview: YN76012616

²⁵ Interview: YN108033016

In a space where people from so many different backgrounds interact, regional identities gain increased salience. In particular, as migrants from impoverished regions of rural Ningxia move into the city, the urban-rural cleavage within the Hui community impacts notions of what it means to properly claim Hui identity. One woman, a Han convert to Islam working in an Islamic prayer goods store described the impetus for rural Hui to leave their hometowns in Guyuan, or Haiyuan to relocate more prosperous areas around the city:

Migrants come in, they're mostly from remote and mountainous areas, and their lives are very difficult. One year's salary for a whole family is only about 5,000 kuai, and this 5,000 kuai has to provide for the family's parent, their children, and the couple themselves. So, because it's very difficult, the government hands down a few policies that allow them to choose a place nearby in Ningxia that's a bit better, and gives them a house that's built a bit better to provide relief. They have a big shed for growing produce, and they move from places that are hard to survive in to here, where they can survive.²⁶

These migrants make an immediate impact on the city. As whole villages relocate from the *Nanbushanqu*, they change the cultural and demographic makeup of neighborhoods. One man, a professor noted the effects of migration on neighborhoods typically regarded as Hui enclaves, remarking, “migrants have come in and changed how people live in neighborhoods. For instance near the Nanguan Mosque. As Yinchuan has gone through *chengshihua* those neighborhoods have changed.”²⁷

Once arrived in Yinchuan, these Hui migrants from rural Ningxia express a sense of distance from their urbanite counterparts. One man noted that faster pace of life

²⁶ Interview: YN73012316

²⁷ Interview: YN103032216

in the city made it difficult for rural Hui to adjust. In contrast with his home of Wuzhong, he noted “people are more concerned with work. It's not like in Wuzhong where people drink tea and chat. It's more relaxed.”²⁸ In part, respondents identified the isolating nature of city life as contributing to their feeling of alienation when arriving in the city. An instructor at the local Qur’anic Studies Academy (*Ningxia Jingxueyuan*, 宁夏经学院) who had moved to Yinchuan from Guyuan, described how such isolation made life difficult for recently arrived Hui from the countryside. “Here Hui are isolated from one another, and there isn't much opportunity for communication,” he declared, adding, “maybe in an apartment tower there might only be one or two Hui families. So, people don't communicate as much.”²⁹

Along with the loss of community, many recently arrived rural Hui in Yinchuan professed that the seemingly secularized habits of their urban counterparts left them feeling out of place. Some complained that, unlike their hometowns, where almost everyone observed Islamic tradition, Yinchuan was marked by a more casual attitude about mosque attendance. The instructor at the Qur’anic Studies Institute contrasted prayer attendance in Yinchuan with his hometown. “In Guyuan religious belief is a little stronger” he claimed. As testament to this fact, he pointed out that, “on Fridays, it doesn't matter whether you work in business, or you're a teacher, or whatever job; everyone goes to the mosque to pray. Maybe 90% of the town will attend. But in Yinchuan maybe only 40% attend.”³⁰ Another respondent noted that in rural areas, like nearby Tongxin County, standards of dress coincided more closely with Islamic

²⁸ Interview: YN87021816

²⁹ Interview: YN105032316

³⁰ Interview: YN105032316

standards for piety. She contrasted the habits of Yinchuan residents with those of Tongxin:

*Yinchuan is a provincial capital, and it's also an important city for migration. Yinchuan's local traditions have also been influenced by customs from those who've migrated here from other parts of China. The changes have been significant. From our point of view, Tongxin is a pretty concentrated Hui area; it's almost a purely Hui county. So, the religious atmosphere really stands out. Especially in regard to the way people dress, it's a really different from Yinchuan.*³¹

These differences in dress, and diet, and degree of religious observance, and the lack of community lead migrants to conclude urban Yinchuan Hui lack devotion to faith. “A lot of *yimin* Muslims who come here and find Yinchuan to be very *danhua*,” remarked, one man, an academic in the local academy of social sciences in his late fifties.³²

Furthermore, rural migrants comment that close contact with Han results in compromising the basic and foundational aspects of Hui culture. A restaurant owner, originally from Haiyuan, discussed the ways in which local Hui felt the need to bend or be flexible in their beliefs in order to adapt. Citing the fact that many Yinchuan Hui found themselves surrounded by Han, he described the social pressure that many faced:

For instance, if there are three of us that are friends, and you drink, and the other two of us don't drink, aren't we still friends? You understand. If we two aren't really persistent, then if five or six friends come, and they're all non-Muslims, they might say 'today we're all getting along so well, let's hang out. But if you don't drink it'll be awkward.' If you don't

³¹ Interview: YN69012116, in the original Chinese, “银川的是一个大的都市，也是一个主要的移民城市，银川我们的本地的习俗也受到了外省的移民过来的中国人习俗的影响，变化很大。作为我们同兴是一个回族比较集中的地方，几乎是纯回族的一个县市，所以宗教的氛围习俗方面尤为突出。尤其在服饰方面和银川的差别很大。”

³² Interview: YN92022216

*want to join in and go drink with them, then you have be really persistent and uncompromising. I'm determined not to drink.*³³

Unlike their rural hometowns, which were overwhelmingly Hui, the urban environs of Yinchuan presented challenges associated with secularization. The Hui professor explained how the existence of cultural institutions located outside of the Islamic community might lead to an erosion of the salience of Hui identity among Yinchuan residents. He explained, “In the city people are more open minded. For instance, the things people can do for amusements are more numerous; like KTV, or going to parties. So people may not identify as Hui quite as strongly. As for me, my identity as a scholar and an intellectual is more important. My identity as Hui is perhaps less important.”³⁴

The differences between urban and rural identity cross-cut ethnic identity cleavages in Yinchuan’s Hui community. However, as rural migrants continue to move to the city, they increasingly exert influence on the formation of a local culture. Just as migrants feel the city’s environment influences their participation in Hui dietary, religious, and cultural practices, so, too, do migrants influence change in the city. As the scholar from the Ningxia Academy of Social Sciences remarked, “It works both ways; they adapt to Yinchuan but they also spur locals to think about being more active.”³⁵

³³ Interview: YN74012416; in the original Chinese, “比如我们三个是朋友，你喝酒了，我们俩不喝酒，难道我们不是朋友吗？明白吧。如果我们两个不是坚持特别硬的话，来了五六个好朋友，都是非穆斯林，今天我跟（木撒）关系很好，咱们一起玩，但是你不喝酒很尴尬，融不进来，中间他们喝酒了，就是坚持的很不彻底的人，我坚决不喝酒。”

³⁴ Interview: YN104032216

³⁵ Interview: YN92022216

In each of these communities—Jinan, Xining, and Yinchuan—migration activates cross-cutting cleavages as Hui from different class, educational, regional, and religious backgrounds interact. The salience of these cross-cutting cleavages frequently overrides the encompassing ethnic identity of Hui. The salience of these divisions draws internal boundaries within the Hui community, making distinctions like *bendi* (local, 本地) and *waidi* (outsider, 外地), *xibei* and *dongbu* (eastern Chinese, 东部), or *qiancheng* (pious, 虔诚) and *danhua* subcategories into which Hui group themselves. In many cases respondents more frequently and more readily cited the markers that distinguish these internal categories than those that drew distinctions between Hui and Han. These internal boundaries illustrate the ongoing contestation over Hui identity heightened by the increased contact brought about by migration. Examining internal divisions like these also illustrate various social challenges that arise in the context of migration.

Eating bitterness: Migration, ethnicity, and social challenges in Hui communities

I sat at the table in the hotpot restaurant on the eighth floor of the Yinchuan's Muslim Hotel (*Ningxia Musilin Fandian*, 宁夏穆斯林饭店), wisps of steam rising up from the ceramic pot filled with bubbling chili-oil laced broth in front me, listening to my respondent, a middle aged former imam currently working as the operator of small electronics shop, extol what he cited as the virtues of the Hui. "We Hui aren't very lazy," he began. "It's not like those Kazakhs and Uyghurs from Xinjiang who're are so lazy. Hui are really able to *chiku* (to undergo hardship, literally translated as "eat

bitterness,” 吃苦).”³⁶ He continued to attribute this superior fortitude to the cleverness and ingenuity of Hui people. His confident boasts resembled many remarks I heard throughout my time in the field: Hui succeeded wherever they went, thanks to their adaptability. His belief in the ability of his fellow Hui to overcome struggles belied the real and substantial obstacles that Hui migrants face.

The aforementioned cross-cutting socioeconomic cleavages that draw internal boundaries within Hui communities contribute to a number social and cultural challenges that migrants face when moving into urban spaces. While many respondents in Xining affirmed that leaving rural Qinghai provided migrants with better work opportunities and the ability to improve their quality of living³⁷ many remarked that cultural chasms between urban and rural life made it difficult for migrants to adjust to life in cities. One merchant selling yak butter in Xining described the cultural barriers that migrants confronted in eastern cities:

*(Migrants) make a lot more money. Most people who make lamian come from Hualong county or Xunhua county. Most of them are farmers, but they go open lamian restaurants in the east and they can earn a lot. When they come back they can afford a nice house in Xining, or a new car. It's made their lives a lot more comfortable. But they're still not very refined (meiyou suzhi, 没有素质).*³⁸

Even after improving their economic circumstances, migrants face challenges fitting in. These educational, and lifestyle obstacles make integration into urban environments difficult. A respondent in Yinchuan remarked of migrants from rural parts

³⁶ Interview: YN72012216, in the original Chinese “回族不是很懒。不是跟新疆的哈咋克族，维族那么懒。回族人是很会吃苦的。”

³⁷ Interviews, XN121042116 , XN128043016, XN134050716, XN144052316, XN145052516,

³⁸ Interview: XN145052516

of Ningxia, “they're still integrating. They still face some discrimination. They are not as educated or economically well off.”³⁹

These difficulties most profoundly affect the children of migrants who grow up trapped between cultural spheres. Many respondents noted that the children of migrants spend the formative parts of their youth living in large urban centers where they are stigmatized as different from local children. However, upon returning to their parent’s hometowns, they experience similar feelings of distance. The school teacher from Xining explained the difficulties that children who leave *Xibei* face upon their return:

*The kids have some problems fitting in, because they've lived in Beijing or Shanghai for such a long time. The kids live there from when they're born until maybe they're seven or eight years old, maybe even into their teens. They go to school there. These kids return to Xining, and after they stay for month or so, they just don't fit in. They want to go back, and they'll say 'I don't want to live here, let's go back home.' This is a big influence on the next generation.*⁴⁰

Another respondent, a professor at a Xining university, connected the experiences of these children who grow up in eastern cities to a decline in religious observance. He explained, “One professor at a local university explained how “(The children) grow up in cities and they don't want to be farmers. They want to come back and live in the city. This has some influence on faith. Their family has faith, but they grow up in areas that don't have strong faith. So it's more difficult to maintain.”⁴¹

Upon their arrival in larger cities like Jinan or Yinchuan, rural northwestern migrants struggle to adjust to social environments with different cultural practices, and different standards for religiosity and piety than the hometowns they leave behind.

³⁹ Interview: YN103032216

⁴⁰ Interview: XN112041316

⁴¹ Interview: XN143052116

Habits that might be ordinary in the context of their hometowns may breach norms of appropriateness in the cities in which they arrive. For instance, in November 2015, Jinan Capital City Television's (济南都市电视台) leading nightly news and entertainment program, *Dushi Xinnubao* (都市新女报) aired a story which report that the public butchering of sheep on a street corner in a manner consistent with *halal* standards (wherein the animal is slaughtered by slitting its throat and draining all of the blood out of the meat) caused a stir because it frightened kindergarteners at a nearby school. The report, which did not specify the ethnicity of the vendors, but heavily implied they were Hui, raised questions about the sanitary quality of the meat, as well as the emotional damage such events may have caused children.⁴² While this process of slaughtering animals in a manner consistent with the dictates of Islamic law might be in keeping with normal practice in predominantly Islamic communities, in the overwhelmingly Han environment of Jinan, such practice might garner negative attention.

Differences in cultural practices not only pervade interactions between locals and migrants, but also color the interactions of migrants with social and administrative institutions. Such difficulties are particularly evident in cities like Jinan, where local social and administrative institutions differ significantly from those in the communities that migrants leave behind. One imam in Jinan remarked that northwestern Hui often have trouble adjusting to the cultural habits of the city. These migrants, he explains, depend upon the mosque to help them learn how to fit in to the city. Among other difficulties, he notes, migrants from the northwest are unfamiliar with local

⁴² Field observations, Jinan, November 2015

governance and administrative systems and therefore look to the mosque rather than the state to settle social and business disputes.⁴³ The factory worker in Jinan explained the cultural differences that necessitated such intervention:

It's called the Gansu Muslim Society for Connecting Migrant Muslims (甘肃穆斯林外来穆斯林联络联谊会), and they are responsible for being a liaison for migrants. For instance, with the local government, if they're operating a business; or if they have a conflict with other locals that needs to be settled. They go to the mosque, but in fact, if it were us locals in this situation, we wouldn't go to the mosque. In locals' opinion, the mosque is an ahong's workplace, and it doesn't have anything to do with me. It's all completely separate. Only when my parents pass away, I'll go to find the ahong, or when it comes time to commemorate my parents, I'll go find the ahong. This is because of a secularized (shisuhua, 世俗化) way of thinking. But, people from Xibei aren't like that. For People from Xibei, religion is the center of their whole life. Not only that, they frequently ask the ahong to be a mediator for their life's conflicts. They're convince that the ahong has brought this way of thinking to the east, and they still think the ahong has a really strong and authoritative position here, so when conflicts arise in their lives, when they need an intermediary between people, they go find the ahong. But as far as local Hui are concerned, this is impossible. We go through the formal legal channels if we have a problem: offices, agencies, the police. Their first thought is the mosque. This is a difference in method.⁴⁴

Difficulties in adjusting to the societal conventions, and differing means of overcoming obstacles and resolving problems, like those described by Jinan residents

⁴³ Interview: JN23101515

⁴⁴ Interview: JN52120415, in the original Chinese, “他们是负责跟他们联系的。比如说他们在经营当中与当地的政府，或者当地其他人发生了矛盾，你需要解决了。找北大寺，其实假如说这个问题，换作我们当地的回族人他不可能找北寺了。他的观念当中清真寺就是阿訇的工作地点和我没有任何关系，完全是有距离的。只有我的老人去世了我去找阿訇，我到纪念老人的日子找阿訇，这是一个世俗化的想法。但是西北人不是这样的，西北人一切生活以宗教生活为中心，而且他们往往是请求阿訇作为他们的生活矛盾的调节人。他们相信阿訇，把这种思维模式带到东部，还以为阿訇在这里具有很强的权威性，所以说他们在生活当中产生了矛盾，需要民间的调节时候，他们就去找阿訇。但是作本地回族人来讲是不可能的，我们通过法律渠道，如果有问题，工商局，办事处，警察。他们第一想到的是清真寺，这是模式上的不同。”

illustrate how differences in profession, region, and religious and class background nonetheless divide Hui who claim a common ethnic identity. As migration draws disparate groups of Hui together in close contact in urban spaces cross cutting cleavages grow in significance and make such divisions more readily apparent. As a result, urban spaces become the sites of renewed contestation of the boundaries of Hui identity.

“Becoming part of a New Yinchuan”: contestation and remaking the boundaries of a Hui identity

While migration may promote contact between different groups of Hui, and highlight internal differences within the Hui community, the processes of identity contestation that such contact produces may also result in a reimagining of the boundaries of Hui identity. As one retiree in Xining explained, “The faith is basically the same. All Muslims recite the *shahada*—‘There is no God but Allah and Mohammed is his prophet’—we all believe this. But everywhere there are Hui we have adapted some to the local culture.”⁴⁵ Many respondents observed the act of migrating away from ancestral hometowns exerted a transformative effect on the lives of migrants.⁴⁶

Respondents attest that living in urban spaces allows migrants to become more open-minded. A university administrator in Xining explained, “the biggest change (for migrants) is freeing their minds, and expanding their horizons, seeing more people. When they get to big cities, there’s a huge change in their way of thinking.”⁴⁷ A twenty-four year old woman in Xining, herself the daughter of migrants who had moved east to

⁴⁵ Interview, XN135050916

⁴⁶ Interviews: XN112041316, XN115041516, XN121042116, XN129050116, XN143052116, XN145052516

⁴⁷ Interview: XN115041516

Zhejiang province in her early childhood, echoed these sentiments, and explained how a broader worldview could also impact change in migrants' home communities upon their return. She reasoned, "In fact, in another sense, because (migrants) go out to work, they also widen their horizons, open up their worldview, meet different people. This will also make changes. Some learn new things, and transform their hometowns."⁴⁸ The university administrator noted that these changes were especially profound in regard to migrants' conceptions of household roles and responsibilities—particularly for women. He remarked, "It makes people a bit more *kaifang* (open-minded, 开放). Especially for women. They come back and they want to go out and work. Traditionally women stay at home. But after working in the east lots of women want to work."⁴⁹ The Xining school teacher observed that changes in attitudes also frequently resulted in changes in daily habits and lifestyle choices, as well. Citing changes that migrants frequently made to their attire upon returning from coastal cities, he explained:

They might retain a few of their own traits from the city. For instance, habits about wearing a baimaozi, or women wearing shajin. Maybe normally go out to to get together and they won't wear a baimaozi and instead wear western style clothes. Clothing and stuff like this is a pretty big change.⁵⁰

The exposure to different lifestyles and ways of thinking most profoundly influences the children of migrants. Many respondents noted that the children of migrants who spend much of their youth in urban environments adopt habits from their urban counterparts. "Yes, there are very clearly differences. For instance, the way

⁴⁸ Interview: XN121042116

⁴⁹ Interview: XN129050116

⁵⁰ Interview: XN112041316

young people dress. Muslims aren't supposed to wear short sleeves and women aren't supposed to show their hair. But you see lots of people these days that wear short sleeves and low-cut shirts and show their hair.”⁵¹ Among the most prominent of these traits is language. Rather than speaking the local dialects of their parents’ villages, these children often grow up in environments where *putonghua* (standard Mandarin, 普通话) is the most frequently spoken language. Respondents noted that without the immersion in the context of their parents’ hometowns, where everyone speaks a local dialect, these children lose many of the expressions and speech patterns of the village. In the case of Hui communities, children may no longer use the Islamic terms derived from Persian or Arabic that punctuate their parents’ speech. As a 53 year old professor who originally grew up in Xunhua exclaimed, “(Migrants’) children also see so much more of the world. At the very least, their *putonghua* is standard.”⁵² Living in urban environments also offers the children of migrants opportunities that they might not otherwise gain in the countryside. In particular, children’s chances to receive quality education greatly increases. A woman in Xining who worked as a professor at a local university observed, “naturally, (migrants) greatly impact their own families. I think the things they bring back is their influence on changes in their children’s education.”⁵³

One respondent, the son of a local restaurateur who managed his father’s restaurants remarked that the children of migrant families were forging a new set of local traditions. To him, the interactions between these new generations of Yinchuan residents was responsible for forging a “New Yinchuan.” He opined:

⁵¹ Interview: XN114041416

⁵² Interview: XN115041516

⁵³ Interview: XN117041616

There isn't really an inherent influence of migrants. Maybe these people's children, the next generation, they can become residents of a New Yinchuan (xin de Yinchuan ren, 新的银川人). This includes residents of Old Yinchuan's children's children also becoming a part of New Yinchuan. Maybe it could be like that.⁵⁴

As migration draws Hui from different regional, religious, and socioeconomic backgrounds together, their interactions renegotiate the boundaries of Hui identity. The children of migrants who grow up in these environments forge new boundary markers of Hui identity, and form new understandings about the essential core of Hui identity.

Conclusions: contesting Hui identity under authoritarianism.

The contestation brought about by migration occurs outside of the purview of the state. Daily habits and repetition of ordinary practice become the subjects of debate about what should be considered essential markers of Hui identity. These processes of contestation may identify internal divisions that form internal boundaries within Hui identity. Equally, they may promote the formation of new boundary lines as Hui from different walks of life engage in cultural exchange. Cross-cutting class, educational, or regional cleavages may lead Hui from different backgrounds to differ about matters like forming a proper definition of *qingzhen*, determining whether or not Hui must wear religious head coverings, or choosing whether or not their children should learn Arabic. Migration may forge new understandings of the content of Hui identity, as families and traditions blend.

⁵⁴ Interview: YN83021216

This contestation occurs outside the purview of the state. Despite the *minzu* system's attempts to harden ethnic boundaries, and achieve the formalization of ethnic expression in accordance with the contours of a state sanctioned form, the renegotiation of Hui identity occurs through daily, informal interactions. Further, Hui residents often seek arbitration on these matters from figures outside of the state apparatus. Rather than forging a single Hui identity to allow "permissible displays of difference," migration opens the door to a multiplicity of understandings about the content of Hui identity, ranging from secularized to fundamentalist, and from assimilationist to segregationist. Further, migration is generative of new conceptions of Hui identity, brought about through the interaction of Hui from varying walks of life in varying social settings. These new definitions may not square with the formalized, state-sanctioned conceptions of Hui identity (see; Figure 1 below).



Figure 7.1: Propaganda describing official, essential characteristics of the Hui nationality, Ledu Lu, Chengdong District, Xining

However, this proliferation of conceptions of Hui identity does not necessarily weaken the state's ability to exert control over ethnic politics. In fact, by turning debate inward, such renewed contestation may take political pressure off of the state. Wimmer explains, "social and symbolic boundaries emerge when actors distinguish between different ethnic categories and when they treat members of such categories differently."⁵⁵ Usually this implies that difference between in and out group overrides other markers. Barth argues that this sense of difference may compel a marginalized minority group choosing to emphasize such differences, so as to stand apart from an other. After all, as Migdal remarks, "boundaries signify the point at which something

⁵⁵ Andreas Wimmer, *Ethnic Boundary Making : Institutions, Power, Networks* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 3.

becomes something else.”⁵⁶ However, the increase in salience of internal boundaries within the Hui community alters these dynamics. In this, the “something becoming something else” occurs as disparate groups of Hui draw contrasts between one another. Contentiousness over these boundary markers, or emphasis of ethnic difference is not directed at the state, or at the ethnic majority Han, but rather between members of the same group. Rather than promoting organized resistance in opposition to the state, different groups of Hui emphasize their distinctness from other Hui of different regional, religious or socioeconomic backgrounds. The state thus successfully exerts control.

Such control, however, is not absolute. Rather, the control exhibited by the state is precarious. If the state persists in using heavy handed tactics to suppress unauthorized or unwanted expressions of ethnic culture, it risks returning the focus to the external boundaries between Hui and non-Hui. If the state attempts to quash any unwelcome displays of ethnic identity it risks raising the salience of the common bonds of Hui identity, and provoking a backlash. Recent demonstrations of force by the state in exerting control over ethnic identification illustrate the precariousness of such a position. The “strike hard” (*yanda*, 严打) campaigns conducted in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region over the last decade, intensified since the March 2014 train station attack by Uyghurs in Kunming, demonstrate the state’s willingness to brutally suppress ethnic and religious expression that challenge the party’s carefully constructed official

⁵⁶ Joel S Migdal, “Mental Maps and Virtual Checkpoints: Struggles to Construct and Maintain State and Social Boundaries,” in *Boundaries and Belonging: States and Societies in the Struggle to Shape Identities and Local Practices*, ed. Joel S Migdal (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 5.

frame. By prohibiting religious expression by banning activities like growing beards, wearing Islamic head coverings, restricting the use of written Arabic in public spaces, limiting options for *qingzhen* diet in public institutions, and declaring certain rhetoric or kinds of religious observances illegal, the CCP risk arousing the enmity of Hui community. Campaigns like these also illustrate the failures of the CCP to deliver on the guarantees of ethnic unity, and shared stake in the state that form the core of its ethnic minority policies.⁵⁷ Such discord challenges the CCP's promises of stability, and the party's good stewardship of ethnic relations under the banner of *minzu tuanjie*. A deterioration of the regime's credibility in making such claims also erodes vital pillars of the regime's legitimating narrative.

Thus far, no Hui separatist movements of any size exist, nor do relations between Hui communities and the state evidence the same level of tensions as their Uyghur counterparts. For the time being, the internal contestation occurring within the Hui community allows the regime to successfully mitigate the potential for Hui resistance or separatism. However, in enacting policies which promote the heavy-handed policing and regulating of the expression of Hui identity, the regime risks losing its ability to maintain control. In the year following my work in the field, a wave of Islamophobia swept across the Chinese internet, and the CCP intensified its scrutiny of Islamic communities, and placed greater restrictions on religious and cultural expression across China, including in Hui communities.⁵⁸ If it continues to crack down

⁵⁷ Lim, "China's Ethnic Policies in the Xinjiang Region."

⁵⁸ Benjamin Haas, "China Bans Religious Names for Muslim Babies in Xinjiang," *The Guardian*, April 24, 2017, sec. World news, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/apr/25/china-bans-religious-names-for-muslims-babies-in-xinjiang>; "Are China's Hui Muslims next to Face Crackdown?,"

on what it considers illegal or extremist ethnic or religious expression, the CCP may revive the salience of the external boundaries that separate the Hui from others. While the regime's willingness to allow internal contestation allows it to, thus far, maintain control and prevent the outbreak of restive, contentious politics, its overzealous urge to root out any heterodox ethnic expression may cause its grasp on ethnic politics to slip away.

South China Morning Post, accessed May 18, 2017, <http://www.scmp.com/week-asia/society/article/2078121/why-chinas-hui-muslims-fear-theyre-next-face-crackdown-religion>; "How Chinese Muslims Became the Target of Online Hate," *South China Morning Post*, accessed June 11, 2017, <http://www.scmp.com/week-asia/society/article/2052460/when-are-you-going-back-arabia-how-chinese-muslims-became-target>.

Appendix A: Table of Interview Respondents

Respondent code	Age	Gender	Ethnicity	Occupation	Highest Level of Education
BJ01082815	33	M	Hui	Software Editor	MA
BJ02082915	40	M	Hui	Imam	Jingxueyuan
BJ03083115	60	M	Hui	Mosque Caretaker	HS
BJ04090115	45	M	Hui	Cemetery Groundskeeper	Middle School
BJ05090115	45	M	Hui	Cemetery Groundskeeper	Middle School
BJ06090515	60	F	Hui	Novelty Shop Owner	HS
BJ07090615	55	M	Hui	Retiree	HS
BJ08091215	29	M	Hui	Publishing Editor	MA
BJ09091615	57	F	Hui	Taxi Driver	HS
BJ10091615	44	M	Hui	Real Estate and Finance	BA
BJ11091615	28	M	Hui	Ph.D. Student	Ph.D.
BJ12091615	33	M	Hui	Entrepreneur	BA
BJ13092015	32	M	Hui	Office Manager	BA
BJ14092415	40	M	Hui	Imam	Jingxueyuan
BJ15092615	40	F	Han	Architect	MA
BJ16100115	21	M	Han	Student	BA
JN17100615	32	F	Han	Info. Desk Manager	BA
JN18100615	48	F	Hui	Factory Worker	HS
JN19100815	38	M	Hui	Entrepreneur	HS
JN20101115	35	F	Han	Secretary	BA
JN21101215	45	M	Hui	Imam	Jingxueyuan
JN22101315	28	F	Hui	English Teacher	BA
JN23101515	50	M	Hui	Imam	Jingxueyuan
JN24101515	22	M	Hui	Real Estate	BA
JN25101915	29	M	Hui	Software Developer	MA
JN26101915	49	M	Hui	Imam	Jingxueyuan
JN27102015	44	F	Hui	Banker	BA
JN28102215	52	F	Hui	Secretary/Front Desk Staff	HS
BJ29102315	32	F	Hui	Visual Artist	MA
BJ30102415	70	M	Hui	Retiree	HS
JN31103015	69	M	Hui	Volunteer at Islamic Society	HS
JN32103115	52	M	Hui	Engineer	BA
JN33110115	42	M	Hui	Imam	Jingxueyuan
JN34110415	22	F	Hui	Airline Worker	Tech. School
JN35110515	38	F	Hui	Restaurateur	HS
JN36111015	44	F	Hui	Kindergarten Teacher	BA

JN37111115	49	F	Hui	Imam	Jingxueyuan
JN38111115	61	F	Hui	Mosque Manager	HS
JN39111115	26	F	Han	English Teacher	BA
JN40111415	30	M	Han	Corporate Spokesperson	BA
JN41112015	30	F	Han	English Teacher	BA
JN42112215	60	F	Hui	Restaurateur	HS
JN43112415	55	M	Hui	Tea Shop Owner	MA
JN44112515	18	M	Hui	Student	BA
JN45112515	18	M	Han	Student	BA
JN46112515	36	F	Hui	Ph.D. Student/Adjunct Faculty	Ph.D.
JN47112615	18	F	Hui	Student	BA
JN48112615	19	F	Hui	Student	BA
JN49120115	26	M	Han	Coffee Shop Owner	BA
JN50120315	18	M	Hui	Cook/Waiter	Middle School
JN51120315	40	M	Hui	Baker	HS
JN52120415	36	M	Hui	Factory Worker	BA
JN53120515	37	M	Han	Entrepreneur	BA
JN54120715	55	F	Hui	Imam	Jingxueyuan
JN55120815	68	M	Hui	Restaurateur	HS
JN56120915	31	M	Hui	Fitness Instructor	BA
JN57121015	31	F	Hui	Banker	BA
JN58121215	36	F	Hui	Homemaker	Middle School
JN59121215	62	F	Hui	Retiree	HS
JN60121215	62	M	Hui	Retiree	HS
JN61121615	55	F	Hui	Entrepreneur	HS
JN62122015	68	F	Hui	Retiree	Middle School
JN63122015	77	M	Hui	Author/Historian	MA
BJ64123015	40	M	Hui	Islamic Society Official	MA
BJ65010716	70	M	Hui	Professor/Author	MA
BJ66011016	40	F	Hui	Restaurateur	BA
YN67011716	26	M	Hui	MA Student	MA
YN68012016	31	F	Hui	Professor	Ph.D.
YN69012116	37	M	Hui	Imam	Jingxueyuan
YN70012116	26	M	Hui	Khalifa	Jingtang Jiaoyu
YN71012116	38	M	Hui	Khalifa	Jingtang Jiaoyu
YN72012216	46	M	Hui	Entrepreneur	BA
YN73012316	33	F	Han	Cashier at Islamic Goods Store	Middle School
YN74012416	35	M	Hui	Restaurateur	HS
YN75012616	29	F	Hui	Government Service Worker	BA

YN76012616	37	M	Hui	Restaurant Manager	BA
YN77012816	47	M	Hui	Imam	Jingtang Jiaoyu
YN78012916	40	F	Hui	Butcher	HS
YN79012916	45	F	Hui	Butcher	HS
YN80020416	29	F	Hui	Government Service Worker	BA
YN81020416	24	F	Hui	Government Service Worker	BA
YN82020716	40	M	Han	Restaurant Manager	BA
YN83021216	28	M	Hui	Restaurant Manager/Bakery Owner	HS
YN84021316	37	M	Hui	Software Engineer	MA
YN85021316	37	F	Hui	Restaurateur	BA
YN86021516	60	F	Hui	Islamic Goods Store Owner	HS
YN87021816	27	M	Hui	Restaurateur	Culinary School
YN88022016	45	F	Hui	Restaurateur	HS
YN89022016	25	F	Hui	Restaurateur	HS
YN90022116	35	M	Hui	Education Administration	BA
YN91022216	21	M	Hui	Butcher	HS
YN92022216	57	M	Hui	Administrator, Ningxia Academy of Social Sciences	Ph.D.
YN93022316	34	M	Hui	Ph.D. Student	Ph.D.
YN94022416	46	M	Hui	Restaurateur	HS
YN95022916	35	M	Hui	Office Worker	BA
YN96022916	33	F	Hui	Teacher	BA
YN97031716	50	F	Hui	Islamic Goods Store Owner	HS
YN98031716	34	M	Hui	Hotel Manager	BA
YN99031816	28	M	Hui	Restaurateur	HS
YN100032016	25	F	Hui	Hotel Receptionist	Tech. School
YN101032116	55	M	Hui	Imam	Jingxueyuan
YN102032116	33	M	Hui	Khalifa	Jingtang Jiaoyu
YN103032216	61	F	Han	Professor	Ph.D.
YN104032216	56	M	Hui	Professor	Ph.D.
YN105032316	30	M	Hui	Instructor at Jingxueyuan	MA
YN106032616	32	F	Han	MA Student/English Teacher	MA
YN107033016	36	M	Hui	Business Consultant	MA
YN108033016	32	F	Han	Business Consultant	MA
YN109033116	21	F	Hui	Student	BA
XN110041116	48	F	Hui	Islamic Goods Store Owner	HS
XN111041216	37	M	Salar	Islamic Goods Store Owner	HS
XN112041316	48	M	Salar	Teacher	MA
XN113041316	30	M	Hui	Chemical Engineer	BA

XN114041416	40	M	Hui	Imam	Jingxueyuan
XN115041516	52	M	Salar	Professor	Ph.D.
XN116041516	55	M	Hui	Retiree	BA
XN117041616	43	F	Hui	Professor	Ph.D.
XN118041816	40	M	Hui	Mosque Tour Guide	Jingxueyuan
XN119041916	28	F	Hui	Café Waitress	BA
XN120042016	39	F	Hui	Small Business Owner	HS
XN121042116	24	F	Hui	Teacher	BA
XN122042216	53	M	Hui	Government Service Worker	BA
XN123042316	26	M	Hui	MA Student	MA
XN124042516	51	M	Hui	Public Charity Operator	BA
XN125042616	50	M	Hui	Carpet Store Owner	HS
XN126042816	40	F	Salar	Islamic Goods Store Owner	HS
XN128043016	27	F	Hui	MA Student	MA
XN129050116	40	M	Salar	University Administrator	MA
XN130050416	25	F	Hui	Teacher	MA
XN132050616	35	F	Hui	Small Business Owner	HS
XN133050616	29	F	Hui	Unemployed	HS
XN135050916	60	M	Hui	Retiree	HS
XN136051216	30	M	Han	Butcher	HS
XN137051216	30	F	Hui	Tea Shop Owner	HS
XN138051316	45	M	Malay	Halal Food Consultant	MA
XN139051616	24	M	Hui	Office Worker	BA
XN140051516	28	M	Hui	Real Estate	BA
XN141051616	25	M	Hui	Taxi Driver	HS
XN142052116	35	M	Tu	Media Production/Film Director	BA
XN143052116	40	M	Hui	Professor	Ph.D.
XN144052316	26	F	Hui	Hotel Receptionist	HS
XN145052516	34	M	Hui	Small Business Owner	HS
XN146052816	59	M	Hui	Imam	Jingxueyuan
XN147052916	64	M	Hui	Imam	Jingxueyuan
XN148053016	59	M	Salar	Teacher	HS
XN149061416	46	F	Hui	Supermarket Cashier	HS
XN150061516	40	M	Hui	Imam	Jingxueyuan
XN151061716	35	F	Hui	Antique Dealer	HS
YN152011816	63	M	Hui	Professor	MA
YN153011816	39	M	Hui	Professor	Ph.D.

Appendix B: Glossary of Chinese language terms

阿訇 – *ahong*: imam

爱国爱教 – *aiguo aijiao*: literally, “love your country, love your faith”; a patriotic slogan of the Chinese Communist Party.

阿拉伯语/阿拉伯文 – *alaboyu/alabowen*: Arabic Language

白帽子 – *baimaozi*: Islamic prayer hat; literally “white hat”

本地 – *bendi*: local; usually used to describe people in contrast to *waidi*

波斯语/波斯文 – *bosiyu/bosiwen*: Persian language

拆迁 – *chai qian*: literally, “demolish and replace”; urban renewal where existing structures are destroyed and residents move to new housing.

城镇化/城市化 – *chengzhenhua/chengshihua*: urbanization

吃苦 – *chiku*: literally, “eating bitterness”; to undergo hardship.

打工 – *dagong*: to do temporary work, often involves wage labor for migrant workers.

大汉主义 – *dahan zhuyi*: Han Supremacy or Han Chauvinism.

淡化 – *danhua*: literally, “watered down”; often used in reference to secularized Hui.

单位 – *danwei*: work unit

东部 – *dongbu*: Eastern China.

番客 – *fanke*: literally, “foreign guests”; used as early as the Ming Dynasty, often to describe Hui and other Muslims in China

发展 – *fazhan*: economic development.

盖头 – *gaitou*: religious head covering, usually used in reference to hijab.

各地亩 – *Gedimu*: a non-Sufi, Hanafi school of Islam, originating in China. Derived from the Arabic *qadim* or, ‘the ancient ones’; also sometimes referred to as ‘old teaching’ (*lao jiao*, 老教)

拱北 – *gongbei*: mausoleums built to house the tombs of Sufi Muslim saints.

古尔邦节 – *gu’erbangjie*: Ei’d al-Adha, the celebration of Abraham’s voluntary sacrifice of Ishmael.

汉化 – *Hanhua*: Hanification

汉语 – *hanyu*: Chinese language; refers to spoken dialect.

汉语民族 – *hanyu minzu*: “Chinese-speaking nationality”; used in reference to both Han and Hui.

合格 – *hege*: “qualified”; used to denote Islamic orthodoxy (e.g. 合格的穆斯林)

户口 – *hukou*: household registration

家庭教育 – *jiating jiaoyu*: home education; refers to teaching children informally about Islam.

解经 – *jiejing*: exegesis, scriptural commentary on the Qur’an.

经名 – *jingming*: Islamic name; taken by Hui in addition to Chinese names.

经堂教育 – *jingtang jiaoyu*: Mosque education

经文 – *jingwen*: Qur’anic Arabic

经学院 – *jingxueyuan*: Qur’anic Studies Academy

纪念亡人 – *ji'nian wangren*: ceremonial commemoration or veneration of the deceased.
 开放 – *kaifang*: open-minded
 开斋节 – *kaizhaijie*: Ei'd al-Fitr, the celebration of the end of Ramadan
 老教 – *laojiao*: used to describe non-Yihewani schools of Chinese Islam, including, but not limited to, the Gedimu, and Sufi lineages.
 流动人口 – *liudong renkou*: literally “floating population”; describes migration from rural villages to cities.
 民族 – *minzu*: ethnic nationality
 民族精神 – *minzu jingshen*: *minzu* spirit, a phrase invoked by Chinese Republicans in the early 20th century.
 民族团结 – *minzu tuanjie*: “interethnic unity”
 穆斯林 – *Musilin*: Muslim
 内地 – *neidi*: refers to areas outside of northwest China; usually the Chinese coastal heartland
 年回 – *nian Hui*: literally, “yearly Hui”; Hui who only attend mosque at holidays
 牛肉拉面 – *niurou lamian*: hand-made beef noodles, a dish associated with *qingzhen* food and Hui culture.
 平房 – *pingfang*: single storey courtyard homes
 普通话 – *putonghua*: standard Mandarin dialect
 虔诚 – *qiancheng*: pious
 清真 – *qingzhen*: halal; mostly used in relation to food (e.g. 清真食品, 清真菜)
 清真言 – *qingzhenyan*: the *shahada*, the Islamic profession of faith.
 纱巾 – *shajin*: hijab, or other Islamic headcovering for women.
 少数民族 – *shaoshu minzu*: ethnic minority nationality
 世俗化 – *shisuhua*: secularization
 四合院 – *siheyuan*: four walled courtyard home, typical of traditional housing in Beijing
 素质 – *suzhi*: refined
 外地/外来 – *waidi/wailai*: outsider, often used in contrast to *bendi*
 稳定 – *wending*: stability
 维稳 – *weiwen*: ‘stability maintenance’; initiatives undertaken by the CCP.
 现代化 – *xiandaihua*: modernization
 小经/小二经 – *xiaojing/xiao'erjing*: A phonetic system using Arabic letters to approximate Chinese words.
 西北 – *xibei*: Northwest China; usually includes provinces of Gansu, Qinghai, Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, and Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region
 西部大开发 – *xibu dakaiifa*: “The Great Western Development Campaign”; comprehensive infrastructure, and economic development program targeting western China begun in 2000.
 洗礼 – *xili*: Islamic conversion ceremony
 新教 – *xinjiao*: see; Yihewani.

严打 – *yanda*: “Strike Hard”; Crackdown campaign conducted in Xinjiang, ostensibly to curb Radical Islamic terrorism.

羊肉串 – *yangrou chuan’r*: Chinese style barbecued lamb kebabs

伊赫瓦尼 – *Yihewani*: Chinese branch of the Ikhwan school of Hanafi Islamic thought. Sometimes colloquially referred to as “new teaching” (*xinjiao*, 新教)

移民 – *yimin*: migrant

移民城市 – *yimin chengshi*: “city of migrants”; often used by residents of Yinchuan to describe the city.

伊斯兰教 – *yisilanjiao*: Islam

油香 – *youxiang*: fried oil cakes often eaten by Hui at holidays.

脏,乱,差 – *zang, luan, cha*: literally, “dirty, disorderly, and dilapidated”; frequently used by Jinan residents to describe the Hui Quarter.

藏回 – *Zang-Hui*: Tibetan-Hui, particularly from Hualong Hui Autonomous County, in Qinghai.

主麻礼拜 – *zhuma libai*: Jum’uah, Friday afternoon prayers

祖籍 – *zuji*: ancestral hometown

Appendix C: Glossary of Chinese Place Names

- 北京 – Beijing
城东区 – Chengdong District of Xining
德恒隆 – Dehenglong village of Hualong Hui Autonomous County Qinghai
固原 – Guyan, Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region
化隆回族自治县 – Hualong Hui Autonomous County, Qinghai
回民小区 – HuiMin XiaoQu or Hui Quarter of Jinan
济南 – Jinan, Shandong
金凤区 – Jingfeng District, Yinchuan
卡里刚 – Kaligang, Hualong Hui Autonomous County, Qinghai
老斋村 – Laozhai Village, Jinan, Shandong
临夏回族自治州 – Linxia Hui Autonomous Prefecture, Gansu
纳家户 – Najiahu, Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region
南部山区 – Nanbu ShanQu, Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region (refers mostly to areas of Guyuan, Zhongwei)
南梁村 – Nanliang Village, Yinchuan, Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region
宁夏回族自治区 – Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region
牛街 – Niu Jie (“Oxen Street”), the major Hui neighborhood of Beijing
青海省 – Qinghai Province
山东省 – Shandong Province
同心县 – Tongxin County, Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region
韦州 – Weizhou, Tongxin County, Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region
吴忠 – Wuzhong, Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region
西夏区 – XiXia District, Yinchuan
西宁 – Xining, Qinghai
循化撒拉族自治县 – Xunhua Salar Autonomous County, Qinghai
银川 – Yinchuan, Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region
中华回乡文化园 – Hui Nationality Culture Park, Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region

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