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Chinese Society and Politics



# Dormant Hui Identity

*A Case Study of Migrant Hui in Hangzhou  
from the Perspective of Social Organization*

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## **Abstract**

*Hui* 回 is among the 10 officially recognized Islamic minzu 民族 (ethnic group; nationality) of China. To a difference from much previous work done on the Hui, this research project does not presume Hui as an ethnic group. Instead, issues considered by the target group to be of concern are analyzed.

The goal of this research is to attain better understanding of how migrant Hui identity has developed into that in present day Hangzhou. It is a case study exploring Hui ethnic, religious and regional identities from the perspective of social organization. The findings of this project are mainly based on more than 50 semi-structured interviews with the Islamic minzusu of Hui, Salar, Dongxiang, Bao'an, Uighurs, as well as the Han majority group of China.

The main indication is that Hui ethnicity is currently dormant in Hangzhou. While my interviewees may speak of themselves as Hui, this has not served to become a foundation for what Benedict Anderson terms as “deep, horizontal comradeship.” (Anderson, 1983/2006, p. 7). Instead, religion and regional identities appear to be more important factors of social organization. Islamic identity is usually more predominant in cases related to interaction with Han and the secular society it represents. Regional identities are typically more predominant in cases related to interaction among Muslims. The case of Hui in Hangzhou differs from the situation of Hui in locations such as Balong (Hillman, 2004) and Quanzhou (Fan, 2003/2009). Research indicates that Hui identity in these locations may be termed as ethnic from a circumstantialist perspective. The limited importance of Hangzhou Hui ethnicity in social organization does therefore not exclude an ethnic revival should circumstances change. This is why I have termed the situation of Hui in Hangzhou as dormant.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

Who are the *Hui* 回? Politicians, scholars, and Muslims have provided many answers to this question. Current Chinese scholars have described the Hui as “the osmosis of Islamic and Confucian culture” (Ma, 2001, p. 110). Former leader of the Chinese Nationalist Party Jiang Jieshi<sup>1</sup> praised them as “carriers of the righteous spirit of Muhammad” (quoted in Yu, 2012, p. 249). Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) officials cursed them as a “herd of sheep and dogs” who “understand no virtue but fear of power”<sup>2</sup>. While opinions are varied, few have remained unchallenged. It is a complex question and possibly has no definite answer. As such, it may be a daring question for a master’s thesis to investigate Hui identity. However, the American anthropologist Geertz (1993) once said it is by searching complexity that “truly creative developments” occur (p. 33). I do not presume to possess a final answer to who the Hui are. But I do believe my paper may increase understanding of Hui identity as it is perceived by themselves and others in Hangzhou.

I will in the introduction begin by presenting my research question. I will thereafter briefly discuss how Hui as an ethnic group has been defined and is currently understood in China. I will follow up by shortly explaining the general situation of Hui in China and Hangzhou. Hopefully, this introduction will be helpful to readers not already familiar with my topic. It will also provide useful background information concerning topics that are later discussed in my paper.

### The Research Question

The chosen method for investigating the question of Hui identity is qualitative research. I have investigated issues of concern of the Hui community in Hangzhou 杭州. I attempted to gain understanding of Hui identity by analysing these issues from the perspectives of discourse and actions. My research question is as follows: From the perspective of social organization, how has the identity of migrant Hui developed into that in present day Hangzhou?

By *Hui*, I refer to those officially designated as such by the Chinese government. This choice was made for two reasons. First, individuals so designated are, to the extent of my knowledge, usually willing to accept this designation. It has been a general policy of Chinese

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<sup>1</sup> Better known in English by the transliteration Chiang Kai-shek.

<sup>2</sup> *Continued manuscript of Shaanxi Province gazette* (Xuxiu Shaanxi Tongzhigao 续修陕西省通志稿). Quoted in Yu, 2012, p. 190.

authorities that designation as a specific kind of *minzu* 民族 (ethnic group; nationality) should not be forced (Wang, 1998, p. 177). Second, studying the Hui makes for a clear and definite demarcation of my research group.

My research question is partly based on the assumption that a Hui identity exists. This presumption may be a weakness. However, being Hui has officially enforced implications. This strengthens my assumption. Also, I am researching Hui identity in Hangzhou, a specific environment that could very likely have created a local version of Hui identity that would be interesting to investigate in its own right. Furthermore, even if being Hui meant no more to the individual than the direct effect of government-enforced implications, this would also be an interesting answer.

Issues of concern will be presented and reflected upon in Chapter 4. In Chapter 5, I use these reflections in discussing (a) how government discourse and actions have influenced Hui identity and (b) the relative importance of ethnic, religious, and regional identity in my target group. When I discuss ethnic identity, my focus is on its relevance for social organization and interaction. A discussion of ethnicity appears in Chapter 2.

### **Definition of *Hui* in China**

The Hui are one of 56 officially recognized *minzu* in China. With a population of more than 10 million, the Hui have become the third largest among all of China's *minzu*. They are also the largest among China's 10 *minzu* closely associated with Islam (Ningxia Zizhiqu Tongjiju, 2012). This association is government defined. As Gladney (2008) noted,

Muslim identity in China can best be described as ethno-religious, in that history, ethnicity, and astute nationality policy have left an undeniable mark on contemporary Muslim identity and it is almost impossible to discuss Islam without reference to ethnic and national identity. (p. 181)

The Hui were among the 38 *minzu* to be recognized at the first National Population Census in 1953 (Luo & He, 2012, p. 97). The Hui were the only *minzu* to be primarily defined on the basis of their religion. Ding Hong 丁宏 and Zhang Guojie 张国杰 (2002) suggested this was the case because the Communists, in their early period, were in need of allies. By defining the Hui as a *minzu*, the Communists could grant them associated political benefits (p. 72). This reasoning makes sense from an ideological perspective. The Communists could emphasize

Hui culture (*Huizu wenhua* 回族文化) instead of Hui religion (*Huijiao* 回教). They were not supporting religious groups; they were simply protecting minority rights. They would still be consistent in their ideology of atheism.

Many indicators support the argument of Ding and Zhang (2002). First, the Communists had the Long March to the Civil War in the northwest borderland city of Yan'an 延安. Yan'an was, "near Ningxia, a heavily populated Muslim area dominated at the time by Ma Hongkui" (Gladney, 2008, p. 189). Ma Hongkui 马鸿逵 was an influential Muslim warlord of his time (p. 189). Much of the theoretical framework of Chinese Communist ethnology took shape during this period (Yu, 2012, pp. 365-377). The Communists were in close contact with Muslims and other minority groups of the region. To befriend these minority groups, the Communists offered autonomy and respect of their religious traditions (pp. 365-377). These promises were written in such documents as the June 1936 "Declaration to the Hui People"<sup>3</sup> (p. 374) and the April 1940 "Outline on the Question of the Hui People" (p. 375)<sup>4</sup>.

Another indicator is the early expressed desire of certain Muslim factions to be recognized as a *minzu*. When the Nanjing National Assembly was held in 1946, seats were reserved for the four provinces of North East China (traditional Manchu territory), the Mongols, and the Tibetans (Chen, 2010a, p. 126). But no seat was reserved for the Hui because, although Sun Zhongshan<sup>5</sup> spoke of the Hui as one of the "five people" (*wuzu* 五族)<sup>6</sup>, Jiang Jieshi refused to recognize them as a *minzu*. Instead, he wanted, according to Yu Zhengui 余振贵 and other Chinese scholars, to assimilate the Hui (Yu, 2012, p. 256). The result was, in any case, furious protests from Muslim prominent individuals, such as Sun Shengwu 孙绳武, Zhao Mingyuan 赵明远, and Fu Tongxian 傅统先 (Chen, 2010a, p. 126). They demanded a quota of at least 34 Hui (at the time still referring to Muslims in general so it could include Salar, Bao'an, or even Uighurs). Similar demands by Hui individuals to be represented politically on the same terms as Mongols and Tibetans had already been made as early as 1928 (Yu, 2012, p. 247). If the Communists wanted the support of Chinese Muslims, granting them the title of *minzu* would be a natural choice.

Nevertheless, Chinese scholars of present day still try to interpret the Hui as a primordial ethnic identity that has taken shape across history. They usually start their inquiries by asking what year Islam arrived in China, whether it was during the years of Kaihuang 开皇 (581-

<sup>3</sup> Chinese Title: *Dui Huizu renmin de xuanyuan* 对回族人民的宣言.

<sup>4</sup> Chinese Title: *Guanyu Huihui minzu wenti de tigang* 关于回回民族问题的提纲.

<sup>5</sup> Better known in English by the transliteration Sun Yat-sen.

<sup>6</sup> Han, Hui, Tibetans, Mongols, and Manchu.

600), Wude 武德 (618-626), Zhenguan 贞观 (627-649), 651, 711, or 757 (Qin, 1999, pp. 3-4). They investigate such terms as Huihui 回回, Huihu 回鹘, and Huihe 回纥 to locate the ancestral origins of the Hui (Wang, 2010, p. 242). They do so even realizing the many problems related to this approach. For example, the terms *Huihui*, *Huihu*, and *Huihu* did not have the same meaning in ancient times as they have today. During the last centuries before the Communists came to power, the term was used to refer to Muslims in general. Even the Communists themselves applied the term this way<sup>7</sup>. During the Yuan dynasty (1279-1368), the term variously referred to Muslims, Christians, Gypsies, and Jews (Wang, 2012, p. 19). During the Tang dynasty (618-907), it referred to a small Chinese vassal who was neither Muslim nor had much to do with the Hui of later times (Cnf. Yu, 2012, p. 15; Zhou & Sha, 2002, pp. 53-61).

This approach to investigating the background of the Hui may have been influenced by Chinese encyclopaedias. The encyclopaedic definition of *minzu* has changed little in China since the 1950s. In the 1979 edition of *Cihai* 辞海, one of the most authoritative Chinese encyclopaedias, *minzu* is defined as follows:

General term for entities of people that have been created through the course of history and reached different stages of social development. . . . Having common language, common territory, common economy and common psychological make-up . . . They are unavoidable products from the age of capitalism . . . When all of the world has realised Communism, after a long period time . . . Then all *minzu* will develop into one single whole. (*Cihai* Bianji Weiyuanhui, 1979, p. 1804)

The 2010 edition of *Cihai* provides a very similar definition (Xia & Chen, 2010, p. 2734). “Common language, common territory, common economy and common psychological make-up” (p. 2734) are the four criteria of Joseph V. Stalin for defining ethnic groups. Chinese scholars have neither historically (Wang, 1998, p. 115) nor in the present ever been entirely

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<sup>7</sup> Consider the 1922 “Manifest of the [Chinese] Communist Party” (Gongchandang de Xuanyan 共产党的宣言), in which Xinjiang is referred to as *The Borderland of Hui* (*Huijiang* 回疆; Yu, 2012, p. 366). The number of those later believed by the Communist Party to be Hui was, at the time, very few in the region. In the national census of 1953, Xinjiang was found to have no more than 13,430 Hui, 3.8% of all Hui in China at the time (Wang, 2010). The very large majority of those later termed *Uighurs* was concentrated in Xinjiang. In the census of 1953, they were numbered at about 3,600,100 individuals (Wang, 2010). It is obvious the manifest could not possibly have understood the term *Hui* as referring to what the Communists later claimed had always been the definition.

faithful to this definition. In the words of Yang Zhijuan 杨志娟, “[T]he composition of minzu in China is very complicated. It is close to impossible to use one standard to define them all” (Yang, 2000, p. 7). Justin J. Rudelson has, with James Millward, argued the Chinese project of mapping out minzu owes as much to Qing emperor Qianlong as to the Soviet Union (Rudelson, 1997, p. 21). But Stalin’s definition still has visible influences. In arguing for Hui “common language”, scholars such as Ma Hongyan 马红艳 (Ma, 2001) and Li Juan 李娟 (Li, Ma, & Ma, 2009) have pointed to loan words and calques from Arabic and Persian languages. Supporting the idea of a common psychological make-up, scholars such as Nie Aiwen 聂爱文 (2002) and Liu Chunyan 刘春艳 (2006) have focused on common Muslim traditions such as abstention from pork, emphasis on hygiene, and Islamic rites and festivals. As for the concepts of common economy and common territory, it was early concluded by the Chinese ethnologists to be of little use in defining Chinese minzu (Wang, 1998, p. 115), because far too many minzu appeared to lack these characteristics (p. 115).

Some Chinese scholars have realized the problems of dogmatic primordialism. Rather than assuming Hui are a mere by-product of the past, they have suggested considering the Hui as a title, a brand, a token an individual may hand in for political benefits. This has been the motivation for writings of academic papers, such as Ma Rong’s 马戎 2004 paper “New Perspective to Understand Ethnic Relations: De-politicalization of Ethnicity”<sup>8</sup> and later a whole compendium on the topic of same title in 2010 by Xie Lizhong 谢立中 (Luo, Zhang, Ma, & Qi, 2012, p. 231-232). The interesting implications for such a theory is, in the words of Prof. Fan Ke 范可 of Nanjing University, “if it was not for the policy of the government, the landscape of minzu in China would have been completely different from how we know it today” (Fan, 2003/2009, p. 69).

## Hui in China

An aspect of Hui identity that has caused many scholars to doubt its primordial qualities is the great geographic and cultural variation among Hui and how they define themselves (Gladney, 1991, pp. 321-323). This diversity may be because, after the Communists came to power, they defined all Muslims who did not fall under other categories of Muslim minzu (Uighur, Uzbek, Kazakh, Dongxiang, Salar, etc.) as Hui. It is also why there are very few Han Muslims. All those who were Muslim were simply singled out as Hui. Among those the

<sup>8</sup> Chinese title: "Lijie Minzu Zongjiao Wenti de Xinsilu: Shaoshuminzu Wenti de Qu Zhengzhihua 理解民族宗教问题的新思路: 少数民族问题的去政治化".

Chinese authorities labelled Hui are Hanhui 汉回<sup>9</sup>, Tuomao 托茂<sup>10</sup>, Yihui 彝回<sup>11</sup>, Kaqi 卡契<sup>12</sup>, Huidai 回傣<sup>13</sup>, and Baihui 白回<sup>14</sup> (Wang, 2012, pp. 49-50).



*Figure 1.* Distribution of Hui in China by province, region and direct-controlled municipality. Map made by author according to the 5th National Survey of 2000. Each star indicates 10,000 Hui. The allocation of stars within each province is arbitrary. Distribution is by household registration and not current living location. The largest concentration is in Ningxia with about 1.86 million Hui. The second is Gansu with 1.18 million Hui (Wang, 2012, pp. 183-184).

In the work *Anthropological Investigation of Muslims Along the Borderline of China*<sup>15</sup>, by Ding Mingjun 丁明俊, Hui in different regions of China were found to vary according to local conditions in terms of language, customs, social structure, and psychological make-up (Hu, Huang, Luo, Qi, & Shi, 2012, p. 173). Min Shengcai 敏生才 (2009), however, argued this diversity is but an expression of the Hui's "exceptionable ability to adapt to specific societies and different organic environments" (p. 26). In spite of the variation, Min believes

<sup>9</sup> This group of Hui are distinguished by both their similarity of physical features and culture to the majority group of Han. An interesting example is the Hui of Ludian 鲁甸 village in eastern Yunnan, who emphasized that one should equally respect Confucius and Allah (Ma, 2007, p. 87). This attitude is not representative of the greater number of Hanhui of the day.

<sup>10</sup> Mongolian Hui.

<sup>11</sup> Hui of the Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture (Liangshan Yizu Zizhizhou 凉山彝族自治州).

<sup>12</sup> Tibetan Hui.

<sup>13</sup> Thai Hui.

<sup>14</sup> Hui of the Dali Bai Autonomous Prefecture (Dali Baizu Zizhizhou 大理白族自治州).

<sup>15</sup> Chinese title: "Zhongguo bianyuan Musilin zuqun de renleixue kaocha 中国边缘穆斯林族群的考察."

the Hui to be, in the terminology of Ernest Gellner, an “entropy-resistant group” (quoted in Eriksen, 2010, p. 149). I do believe the argument of Min has a certain bias, as it assumes the existence of a primordial Hui identity. Yet this kind of explanation would readily be accepted in the perception of Hui in Hangzhou. And this kind of acceptance is vital if Hui identity as ethnic should be of any relevance in present day.

### **Hui in Hangzhou**

In the National Survey of 1953, local Hui households registered in the Zhejiang province included no more than 1,900 individuals (Wang, 2012, p. 182). In 2000, this number had grown to 19,600. This is a large increase which may be explained by the recognition of former Han as Hui from the families of Ding 丁 and Guo 郭<sup>16</sup>, as well as migration of Hui from other parts in China. This number does not account for the floating population of Hui. They do not have their households registered in the province and are, therefore, not registered locally in the national censuses. In the case of Hangzhou, the number of the floating population is rather significant. Concerning religion, according to the General Secretary of Hangzhou Islamic Association (HIA), Hui Qiu’e 回秋鹅, no less than nine of 10 attending services would be migrant Hui from outside Hangzhou. While the locally registered Hui may be less religiously inclined than migrants from northwest China, it is still a very large number.

Because of lack of statistics, it is difficult to evaluate the exact number of Hui in Hangzhou. However, the HIA estimated the entire Hui population in Hangzhou to be above 20,000 (personal communication, January, 2014). Among these, according to the Hangzhou Municipal Bureau of Ethnic and Religious Affairs (HERAB), more than 8,600 individuals are counted in local household registration in Hangzhou (personal communication, January, 2014). Another indicator is the number of Muslims visiting the mosque during the two major Muslim festivals. According to the HIA, in 2012, more than 3,000 Muslims attended during the Feast of Breaking of the Fast (*Kaizhaijie* 开斋节; Eid al-Fitr), and more than 4,000 attended during the Feast of the Sacrifice (*Guerbangjie* 古尔邦节, Eid al-Adha; HIA, 2013a, pp. 46–47).

Locals and the HIA informed me that there used to be a Hui community in the area around the Phoenix Mosque of Hangzhou, but urban planning caused the community

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<sup>16</sup> The Ding of Chendai 陈埭 and the Guo of Baiqi 百崎 in Fujian province applied for recognition as Hui in 1979 and received recognition shortly after (Guo, 2009a, p. 74). A large number of Ding and Guo family members in Zhejiang, especially Wenzhou 温州, have since then applied for and got accepted recognition as Hui (Liu & Guo, 1992, p. 36; Guo, 1995, p. 55).

gradually to disperse. The street in front of the mosque, South Song Dynasty Imperial Street (*Nansong Yujie* 南宋御街), has instead become one of the most busy tourist streets of Hangzhou. It is especially known for its famous brands of Chinese medicine. A few restaurants, a couple of butchers, and a supermarket run by Hui are all that remain of the Muslim community. Thus, the Muslims and Hui of Hangzhou are dispersed across the city, with only a handful living within the vicinity of the Phoenix Mosque.

Historically Hangzhou was one of the earliest cities with a countable Muslim community. The Muslims had come by the “Oceanic Silk Road” (*Haishang Sichou zhi Lu* 海上丝绸之路), “from the Persian Gulf and southern tip of the Arabian peninsula across the Indian Ocean to Canton and other port cities of Southeast China” (Pillsbury, 1981/2009a, p. 109). It is not without reason the Phoenix Mosque became known as one of the “Four Ancient Mosques of China”<sup>17</sup>. The current number of Muslims in Hangzhou may not be large for a city of its size. The metropolis has only one mosque and three incumbent imams<sup>18</sup>. However, the number of migrants from different parts of China is increasing daily. This situation, which is by no means unique for Hangzhou, makes an interesting environment for study. Not only could investigation of Muslims in Hangzhou cast light on issues of Hui identity, but it could also, as a by-product, offer new information on integration processes of alien migrant populations to urban areas.

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<sup>17</sup> The “Four Mosques of Ancient China” are (a) the Huaisheng Mosque (*Huaishengsi* 怀圣寺) or Lion Mosque (*Shizisi* 狮子寺) and its minaret (*Guangta* 光塔) of Guangzhou, (b) the Qingjing Mosque (*Qingjingsi* 清净寺) or Qilin Mosque (*Qilinsi* 麒麟寺) of Quanzhou, (c) the Xianhe Mosque (*Xianhesi* 仙鹤寺) or Libai Mosque (*Libaisi* 礼拜寺) of Yangzhou, and (d) the Zhenjiao Mosque (*Zhenjiaosi* 真教寺) or Phoenix Mosque (*Fenghuangsi* 凤凰寺) of Hangzhou (Qin, 1999, p. 16).

<sup>18</sup> The three imams are Ye Mansu 冶曼苏, Du Yongbo 杜永波, and Ma Maimaide 马麦麦得. During fieldwork in Shandong, I found the municipality of Tai’an 泰安 to have as many as 64 mosques. Some of these would have 3-4 imams. Even though Tai’an boasts a larger Hui population—in 2011, as many as 81,000 local household registered (TERAB, 2011, p. 1)—, the difference is very large. Hangzhou is in the process of constructing a new mosque in the district of Jianggan 江干, expected to be completed by the end of 2014 (HIA, 2013d). In China are a total of 35,000 mosques and 45,000 imams (Gao, 2013, pp. 2-3). About 70 percent of the mosques and 85 percent of the imams are located in the 12 western regions of China (Ma, 2013b, p. 305).

## Chapter 2: Theory

I suggest we can understand the identity of migrant Hui in Hangzhou by investigating issues of concern to a relatively large number of interviewees within my target group. This approach has been influenced by scholars who have conducted research on the Hui. Many of these scholars have tried to answer another, related question of how we can understand Hui ethnicity. This question presumes Hui identity is ethnic and that such ethnicity is important. This approach is probably highly related to the Chinese government terminology. Even though I do not agree with their assumptions, I find their painstaking efforts to describe Hui ethnicity to have revealed many useful insights.

### Hui Ethnicity

Two of the most basic theories of ethnicity are primordialism and circumstantialism, also called *instrumentalism* (Ma, 2006, p. 459). Following Nagata (1982), primordialism holds “ethnicity [as] emanating out of a corpus of basic, elemental, and irreducible (‘primordial’) loyalties, with a power and determinism uniquely their own” (pp. 88-89). Circumstantialism, on the other hand, views “ethnicity as a dependent variable, created and controlled by a broad combination of external interest and strategies, which invest it with a potential for mobilization and action” (pp. 88-89).

Basically, primordialism takes ethnicity as a result of a static common culture while circumstantialism sees ethnicity as a product of specific circumstances. An example of primordialism, Feng (2012) discussed the Hui as an ethnic group that has developed throughout history<sup>19</sup>. They possess certain common characteristics and an idea of common descent that has become the foundation for “deep, horizontal comradeship” (Anderson, 1983/2006, p. 7). An example of circumstantialism, Fan (2009, 2003/2009) indicated Fujian Hui of Quanzhou 泉州 municipality chose this identity to receive political gain from the government. The local government also received significant economic benefits in the process (Hu & Zhang, 2012, p. 75). Another very good example of circumstantialism is found in Hillman’s (2004) discussion of the Hui hamlet (*zirancun* 自然村) of Balong<sup>20</sup>. The Hui ethnic revival in the hamlet was initiated by a local entrepreneur, Ma Fu. The hope was to increase

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<sup>19</sup> The focus on the ethnic group as an imagined entity with common experiences and collective memory that has become the basis for ethnic loyalties sometimes is singled out as a theory in its own right. In such cases, it may be called *constructionalism* (Ma, 2006, p. 459).

<sup>20</sup> Located in the Landu village (*Langducun* 浪都村?) of the Shangri-la county (*Xianggelila* 香格里拉) (Hillman, 2004, p. 54).

local tourism (p. 57). His initiative became gradually more successful, actually far beyond his own intentions.

A popular understanding of circumstantialism is the approach by Barth (1969), which focused on the dichomatization between ethnic groups. The one may only be understood in terms of the other. This concept brings to mind the assertion of Leach (Quoted in Gladney 1991), who stated the Kachin could only define themselves as one entity by their insistence on not being Shan (p. 70). One who has attempted this approach in understanding Hui is Pillsbury (1981/2009b).

Gladney (1991), in reference to Keyes (1982) and his associates, suggested what he called the dialogical approach. This approach basically builds on the idea that one should combine the primordialist and circumstantialist approach. He suggested that ethnicity is “one meta-power that is constantly negotiated between the state and self” (Gladney, 1991, p. 332). On the one hand, the state provides for circumstances that influence the individual. On the other hand, primordial symbols of ethnicity may be used as tokens to swing the negotiation in one’s own favour (p. 77). An example is when the Hui of Quanzhou attempted to use their family trees to “prove” their ethnic identity (Ha, 2010).

What is the common element in all these understandings of ethnicity? According to the *Concise Oxford Dictionary of Sociology*,

Ethnicity defines individuals who consider themselves, or are considered by others, to share common characteristics which differentiate them from the other collectivities in a society, within which they develop distinct cultural behaviour. (Marshall, 1994, p. 157)

According to the *Concise Encyclopaedia of Sociology*,

Ethnic groups are fundamental units of social organization which consist of members who define themselves by a sense of common historical origins that may also include religious beliefs a distinct language or a shared culture. (Stone & Fritz, 2011, p. 195)

If one were to strictly follow the definition by Marshall, it would be difficult to define the Hui as an ethnic group. While both the Hui themselves and the society around them consider they share common characteristics, these characteristics do not differentiate them from other

Islamic minzu such as Salar<sup>21</sup>, Bao'an<sup>22</sup>, or Dongxiang<sup>23</sup>. The definition by Stone and Fritz excludes this requirement and emphasizes ethnic groups as “fundamental units of social organization” with perceived “common historical origins”. Common religious belief, language, and culture are not obligatory.

This second definition may be more feasible, for as Jenkins (2011) noted:

People who may appear to differ culturally may identify themselves as ethnic fellows, witness, for example, the global diversity that is ‘Jewishness.’ On the other hand, apparent cultural similarity does not preclude ethnic differentiation. An anthropologist from Mars might perceive Danes and Norwegians, for example, as co-ethnic. (Jenkins, 2011, pp. 196–197)

By encyclopaedic definition then, the question of estimating the importance of Hui ethnicity equals questioning to what extent these perceived “common historical origins” defined as ethnicity *actually matter in real life*. This is a common element in all the theories of ethnicity discussed above. When I discuss the ethnic qualities of Hui identity in Chapter 5, I will subscribe to Stone and Fritz’s definition with an emphasis on relevance in real-life social organization. As for classic theories of ethnicity, I am personally inclined to believe the circumstantialist and dialectic theories have greater explanatory power in understanding the Hui. That is, I agree with Fan (2009) and others in that the Hui could hardly be perceived as they are today were it not for the policies of the government.

### **Group Concerns**

In 2013, I completed a research paper on the situation of the Hui in the Tai’an Principality of Shandong. The aim of the project was twofold: (a) to gain preliminary experience before my work in Hangzhou and (b) to investigate the idea of whether an inter-generational collective mental memory existed among the Hui. Using historical events often

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<sup>21</sup> Associated with Xunhua and Hualong of Qinghai province, the Salar are descendants of the Salur tribe, later believed to have mixed with the Hui and Tibetans (Gao, 2013, p. 3). They number, according to the 5th National Population Census, 104,503 individuals (“Biao 1-6,” 2000).

<sup>22</sup> Descendants of Central Asia tribes driven to China by the Mongol invasion, the Bao’an are believed to have later mixed with Hui, Tibetans, Han, and Tu 土 (Gao, 2013, p. 3). They number, according to the 5th National Population Census, 16,505 individuals (“Biao 1-6,” 2000).

<sup>23</sup> Descendants of Central Asia tribes driven to China by the Mongol invasion, the Dongxiang are associated with Dongxiang Autonomous County of Gansu province. They are descendants of the Sarts of Samarkhand, later believed to have mixed with the local population (Gao, 2013, p. 3). They number, according to the 5th National Population Census, 513,805 individuals (“Biao 1-6,” 2000).

claimed by Chinese scholars to define the Hui, I found that only the ones especially interested would have any knowledge of these. My findings indicated, for most part, these events of the past were of limited relevance.

When I started my work in Hangzhou, I decided to change this approach. I came to the conclusion that it is better to focus on issues that are actually concerns of the individuals within a group in question rather than specifically asking for presumed indicators of ethnic consciousness. As was recommended in Eriksen's *Ethnicity and Nationalism* (2010), it is better "to focus on social interaction and social organization rather than 'cultural content'" (p. 43).

The issues of concern, or real-life issues as I have termed them in my title, were chosen according to two main criteria. First, they had to be of concern for a large number of my interviewees. This was measured by expressed interest and frequency of occurrence in the interviews. Second, they had to contain outward expressions of action and speech capable of providing useful reflections on the Hui identity.

### **Influence of Out-Group**

"No man is an island" is the opening of a famous poem by John Donne (quoted in Davies, 1994, p. 53). This is also one of the main messages of Halbwachs (1925/1992) in his book *The Social Frameworks of Memory*. He argued, as summarized by Coser (1992), "Memory needs continuous feeding from collective sources and is sustained by social and moral props. Just like God needs us, so memory needs others" (p. 25). It is obvious a study of groups such as Hui may not be entirely focused on individuals but needs a conception of how the individual is related with the larger group.

Gladney (1991) wrote of how Hui identity is "established though a process of social and political 'negotiation,' continuously changing, depending on relations of power and hierarchy" (p. 77). This statement presumes that the outcome of such negotiation is integrated into the group's individual members. Keyes (1982) believed this happens as an "individual appropriates it [the group identity] from a cultural source, that is, from the public display and traffic in symbols" (p. 10). But who are creating this "public display and traffic in symbols"? Gladney divided the creators into two main categories: (a) the ethnic group and (b) the state (pp. 332–333). In following the suggestion of Gladney, in Chapter 5, I briefly discuss how Hui identity as ethnicity may have been influenced by such out-group entities as the state.

### Chapter 3: Methodology

Chairman Mao Zedong is known to have branded those “having no [field] investigation” as “having no right to speak” (quoted in Ma, 2013b, p. 79). While restrictions on freedom of speech of this kind may hardly be advocated, the requirement of primary sources is a common standard in present-day academics. Therefore, in choosing a methodology, it is important to be aware of the possibilities and limitations of one’s method for collecting and analysing primary source material. Considering my thesis as an investigation into the perceptions of the Hui, I have decided to use a qualitative research method.

#### The Qualitative Research Method

The underlying inspiration for my fieldwork has been to provide what Geertz (1993) described as “thick description” (pp. 3-30). It contrasts with the kind of “thin and shallow” description criticized by Hui author Zhang Chengzhi 张承志 (1991/1999) as having “perverted the minds of scholars” (p. 81). A thick description should not only describe an action but explain its agents: “Who they think they are, what they think they are doing and to what end they think they are doing it” (quoted in Warnke, 2011, p. 45). To understand what the Hui think, I chose the method Luo and He (2012) described as the “method of induction” (*Guiniafa* 归纳法). Instead of starting with a theory of how the target group may think, I first gathered primary source material. Then, I applied induction to arrive at what I believe is a relatively accurate picture of reality (p. 131).

While I may be researching the Hui as a group, I believe investigating individual mental perceptions may most appropriately attain first-hand material of how people think. As Francis Bacon once stated, “All perceptions . . . [a]re according to the measure of the individual” (quoted in Isaacs, 1982, p. 29). My findings will therefore largely be based on semi-structured interviews, lasting for 30–60 minutes. The interviews were usually one-on-one, though some were conducted with as many as five individuals.

Two criticisms have commonly been voiced against qualitative research: (a) the question of representativeness and (b) the objectivity of the researcher. First, qualitative research often uses a limited number of research participants. The research participants chosen by the researcher may deviate from the average or may fail to represent the variations among subgroups within a group. However, the celebrated Chinese social anthropologist Fei Xiaotong 费孝通 said, “To claim that but one village is the prototype of all villages in our nation and to use it as representative of all villages of China, that is wrong. But to claim that

the village is a unique example and without commonality to others, that is also not correct” (quoted in Hu et al., 2012, p. 158). Second, it may be claimed the objectiveness of the researcher is tainted by subjective inclinations. This is a general issue in social sciences. While it is difficult to argue against this criticism, philosophical arguments such as “no-miracle” have been attempted: Correspondence between findings of social sciences and reality would be a miracle if they were without scientific value (Adam, 2007, p. 103). However, both criticisms are not unfounded. Thus, it is important to be aware of these weaknesses and to reflect on the boundaries of one’s research.

### **The Target Research Group**

One difficulty in the municipality of Hangzhou was locating the Hui. The former Hui living community in the vicinity of the Phoenix Mosque has dispersed, as was mentioned earlier. The most obvious solution would be to focus on interviewing visiting Hui in the Phoenix Mosque, as well as the remaining Muslim food facilities surrounding it. However, while I did interview some visitors at the mosque and the food facilities, I quickly realised the limitations of this approach. First, because the Phoenix Mosque is a tourist attraction, it lacked a suitable discrete location for the kind of interviews I intended to conduct. When requesting such a space, I was provided an office at the Phoenix Mosque Administration (PMA), but because this location was used daily by the PMA, I did not feel comfortable being there. Second, Hui visiting the mosque daily would usually be among the more pious Muslims. In answering all my questions, they would provide standard answers of a religious kind, before asking questions relating to the difference between Islam and Christianity. While these interviews were interesting enough, I did have my concerns about their representativeness of the greater number of Hui in Hangzhou. Third, this method would easily have the weakness of missing communication with those less inclined toward conversation. Fourth, the Hui visiting the mosque on a more casual basis would often only be the fathers or elders in their families.

Instead, I decided to focus on Muslim food facilities in Hangzhou. The vast majority of these food facilities are known by the name of their famous dish, *Lanzhou hand-pulled noodles* (*Lanzhou lamian* 兰州拉面). This approach had several merits. First, the food facilities provided far more discrete locations for conducting interviews than the mosque did. Second, I could contact Hui of various levels of religious conviction. It could be argued the choice of Muslim food (*qingzhen* 清真 or *halal*) would signify an expression of faith in Islam.

However, the choice of occupation is often more a pragmatic than religious one. Lanzhou hand-pulled noodles have become a brand in China, generating more income than if were they just hand-pulled noodles. Even Han are known to pretend to sell qingzhen (Ma, 2013, p. 318). As minority businesses, they receive significant tax benefits. Third, I did miss those less willing to have conversation. Fourth, considering the number of Hui represented by each facility was about five to six (my estimation) and HIA estimations of the number of facilities ranged from 500-600 to 800-900 (personal communication, January, 2013), using these facilities accounted for a quite large number of the migrant Hui population. Furthermore, Hui within this group have often been involved in other businesses as well, typically merchandising of *ophiocordyceps sinensis* (caterpillar fungus), transporting, or tanning. Sixth, as migrant Hui in an urban metropolis, they share a situation very similar to other Hui in many parts of China.

Another point worth emphasising is that this group represented what is often believed to be the less integrated Hui, being throughout their childhood more protected from the influence of mainstream Han culture. They have typically a low level of education and, thus, limited access to high salary occupations. Luo et al. (2012) noted that the demarcation between ethnic groups is more significant when structural differences appear (p. 231). If so, the importance of ethnic identity ought to be most visible within this group. In addition, their occupation reveals their identity as Muslim, making them more visible in Chinese society. This visibility could very likely strengthen the perception of otherness between groups.

To achieve a somewhat random selection of food facilities, I chose an area enclosed by four major roads in the western parts of Hangzhou<sup>24</sup>, covering approximately 20.4 square kilometres<sup>25</sup>. Figure 2 shows the location of visited facilities within this area. I visited 43 different facilities. I conducted interviews in 31 food facilities and was scheduled to return in 11 food facilities<sup>26</sup>. One food facility would not allow me to conduct interviews. Another had been closed because of urban reconstruction. Figure 3 shows a broader perspective of the central urban area of Hangzhou, as well as the location of important Islamic centres.

Most often I would interview one representative of each food facility. In other cases, group interviews would be conducted with as many as four or five. Among the individuals interviewed in the area shown in Figure 2 were 26 Hui, 10 Salar, two Dongxiang, and one

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<sup>24</sup> Gudun Road, Shixiang West Road, Mogan Road, and Tianmushan Road.

<sup>25</sup> Calculation made using Google Maps Area Calculator. Retrieved February 28, 2013, from <http://www.daflogics.com/projects-google-maps-area-calculator-tool.htm>

<sup>26</sup> This typically occurred during dinner or lunch periods. While I realize they may be interpreted as polite declines, I was never refused twice in cases when revisiting at a more convenient hour of the day. The revisited food facilities are marked as interviewed.

Bao'an. For the purpose of comparison and consistency, I also interviewed people not belonging to the majority group of the Hui. Most interviewees were men, but I also interviewed two Hui and two Salar women. Adding these interviews to those conducted beyond the area of figure 2, I based my findings concerning Hangzhou on more than 50 semi-structured interviews with Hui, Han, Salar (*Sala* 撒拉), Dongxiang 东乡, Bao'an 保安, and Uighurs (*Weiwu'er* 维吾尔).

In discussing the responses of non-official interviewees, I use the following abbreviations for belonging to a certain minzu: Hui (H), Salar (S), Dongxiang (D), Bao'an (B), Uighur (U), and Han (C). For sex differentiation, I will use the following: masculine (m) and feminine (f). I also provide information on the approximate ages of interviewees. For the purpose of anonymity, I round the number of the age to the closest number divisible by 5. For example, *Hm (35)* would refer to a male Hui in the 33–37 age group. The letter “M” is reserved for the interviewer.

For simplicity, I use the term *Muslim* when findings among the minzu of Hui, Salar, Dongxiang, and Bao'an correspond. This choice was made because such correspondence happened relatively often. When discussing findings from interviews with Uighurs, this will be mentioned specifically.

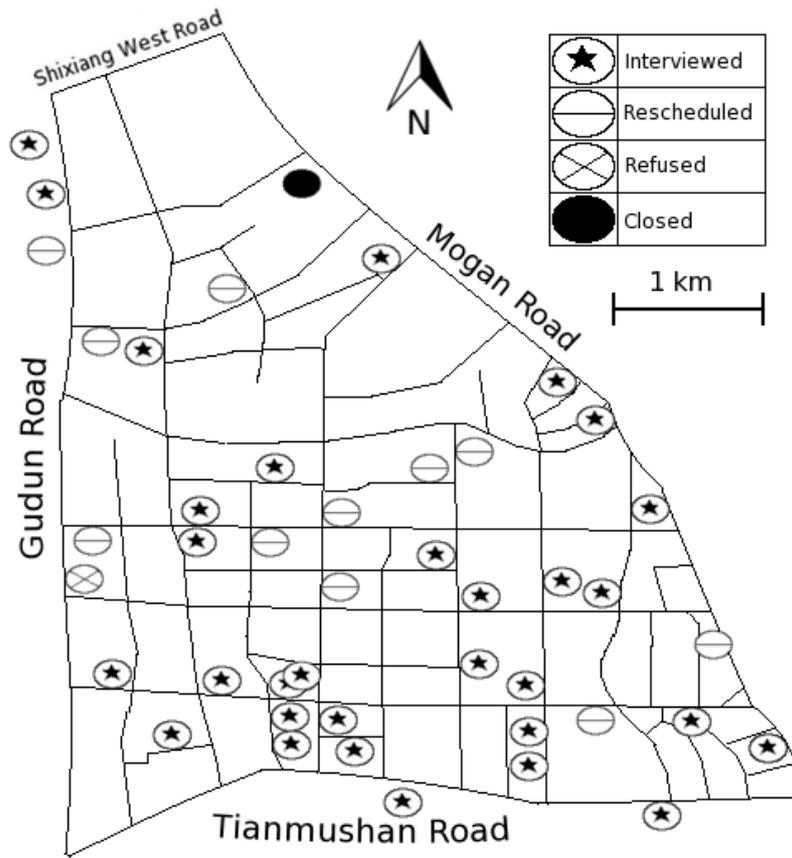


Figure 2. Food facilities in chosen geographical sample of Hangzhou.

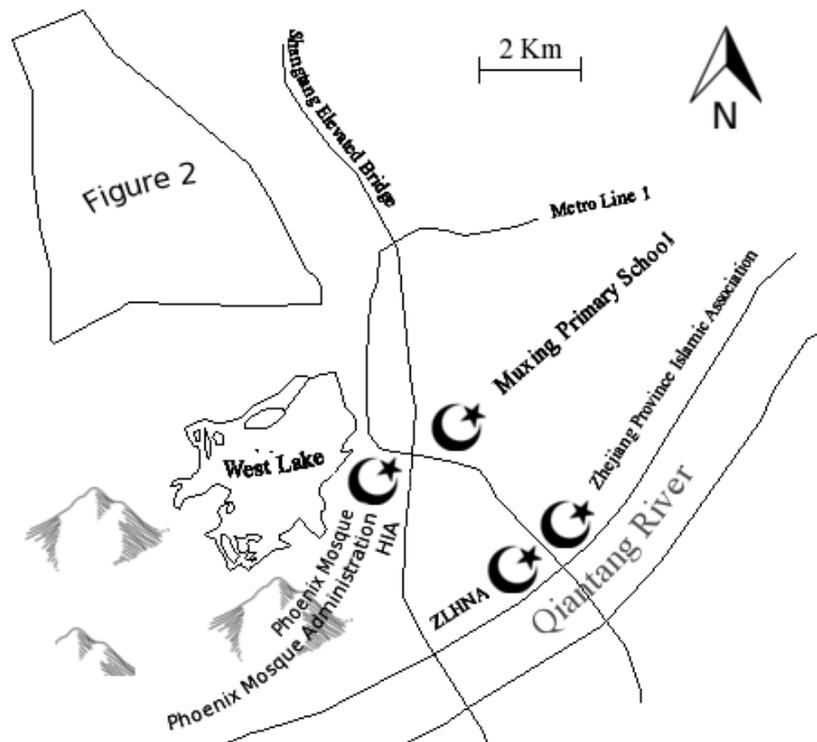


Figure 3. Islamic centers and location of chosen geographical sample in Hangzhou.

## Chapter 4: Findings

The first topic, “A Story of Hangzhou Hui,” is based on answers to inquiries about interviewees’ life stories. The investigation of this issue functions as an introduction to my target group. It also increases understanding of the life situations and world perceptions of migrant Hui in Hangzhou. The second topic, “The Question of Primary Education,” is concerned with effects of and reactions to the 2008 policy of local authorities to raise the threshold for entering primary schools in the municipality. It exemplifies how structural differences in social and economic positions in society may pertain. Luo et al. (2012) mentioned the existence of these kinds of structural differences may create a clearer borderline between ethnic groups (p. 231).

Third, “Hand-Pulled Noodles, Social Organization, and Public Security” addresses the existing institution of conflict solving. This topic was investigated to discover target group layers of identity that dominate in social organization. Fourth, “Segregation, Prejudice, and Self-Devaluation” addresses the social status of my interviewees in present-day Hangzhou. This topic is also related to structural differences and how they serve to exaggerate dichotomisation between population groups. Fifth, “Polygyny, Morality, and the Rule of Law” explores the question of ethnic authority. This section functions to explore the practical importance of religion in social organization.

Each section of chapter four is divided in two subsections. The first of these presents the *issues* based on my primary sources in Hangzhou. The second of these *reflects* on the issues, typically employing second hand literature. The overall findings of chapter 4 indicate that while theories of ethnicity would predict a mobilization of Hui ethnic identity, it appears that this identity is dormant in Hangzhou. Instead, the perceptions of my target group indicate the importance in social organization of religious and regional identities. The implications of the findings of chapter 4 for my research question will be further discussed in chapter 5.

### A Story of Hangzhou Hui

**Issue.** Many aspects of the life stories of most of my interviewees are surprisingly similar. First, I found very few examples of individuals not being former farmers, children of farmers, or grandchildren of farmers. Concerning their childhood, most would describe it as a time of hard labour:

M: Can you tell me what games you liked to play as a child?

Hm30: I mostly remember we were very poor. I could think of little but how to make more money.

Bm25: My childhood was truly bitter. We had no toys. We had no pocket money. If someone gave you 1 CNY, it would be as the happiest day of your life.

However, some would be more optimistic, remembering little but playing about.

There were primarily three main life stories. First, younger Muslims who had arrived in Hangzhou in the business of the food facilities would often be dropouts from middle or high school. Only a few had completed high school. Second were those with years of experience in a variety of occupations in such areas as Qinghai, Gansu, Tibet, Shanghai, and Guangzhou. The most typical occupations were in food facilities, marketing of *ophiocordyceps sinensis*, and different kinds of manual labour<sup>27</sup>. Third, some had recently left the plough in their fields for a new life in Hangzhou.

It was rare to find Muslims who claimed they had come to Hangzhou purely on their own initiative. They were usually invited or introduced by friends and relatives from their home region. As a result, most of those I interviewed would report coming from only a few areas of the northwest, such as Xining 西宁, Haidong 海东, and Hualong 化隆 of Qinghai province and Xunhua 循化, Lanzhou 兰州, and Linxia 临夏 of Gansu province<sup>28</sup>. An indication of this phenomenon is the large number of Salar among the food facilities shown in Figure 2. There are as many as 10 Salar food facilities in the area I located, but 26 Hui food facilities. In all of China, there are only about 100,000 Salar (“Biao 1-6”, 2000) while the

<sup>27</sup> It is interesting to compare this with the Hui of Lintan near Linxia. The Hui of Lintan are popularly known as “Tao merchants” (*Taoshang* 洮商) (Min, 2013a, p. 275). This group of Muslims numbers, according to Xinhua, about 4,000 individuals. Tao merchants are said to have had three phases in their activity since the opening of China. First, 1978-1982 was a period of small business, in which they tried to sell small items, such as buttons and a kind of butter called *suyou* 酥油 from Linxia to Tibet. Second, from 1983-1999, it was popular to buy Tibetan turquoise and sell it in areas such as Beijing and Hubei. Third, since 2000, the market demand for Tibetan *ophiocordyceps sinensis* began to increase. In Chinese, it is known as “Winter Bug Summer Grass” (*Dongchongxiacao* 冬虫夏草). The fungus-infected larva has acclaimed medical functions. Being both a plant and “animal”, it has the perfect balance of yin and yang (Min, 2013a, pp. 273–276).

<sup>28</sup> There are good reasons to believe that many of those reporting their home village as the provincial capitals of Xining and Lanzhou belong to the areas of Haidong or Linxia, respectively, because these provincial capitals are perceived as being in close vicinity to their own, less known, home areas. I usually discovered this assumption as correct after directly asking the interviewees if they were referring to Haidong or Linxia.

population of Hui exceeds more than 10,000,000 (Ningxia Zizhiqu Tongjiju, 2012).<sup>29</sup>

Food facility units in Hangzhou would often, but by no means always, represent a family. Without exception, the owners were males. The family-run food facilities were owned by the father of the family, in co-ownership with brothers or individuals of the same home village. The food facility could represent the livelihood of both parents, children, and sometimes grandparents. Food facilities not representing families would typically be run by one individual who may or may not have hired employees.

The Muslims would acquire their food facilities in one of primarily three ways. First, young Muslims would run their fathers' facilities. Second, Muslims having arrived in the previous few years would have bought already existing facilities from friends and relatives. Third, it was very common among Muslims who had been in Hangzhou a long time sometimes more than 10 or 20 years, to have started their own business from the bottom. This was also not unusual among Muslims who had arrived in recent years.

For those who came into their business by the second and third way, coming to Hangzhou had typically been a large investment.

Hm45: Our family was very poor; we had no source of income. I had to work on my own, and with my brothers. . . . The three of us were able to scratch together 10,000 CNY each by one year, giving us 30,000 CNY. We sold our cows, sheep, and a lot of items from our home. . . . It was really not easy to get 100,000 CNY at the time. Our home region was too poor.

Dm30: It cost me more than 450,000 CNY to get this shop up and going. . . . It has been five to six years now, and I did still not manage to repay my debt.

However, interviewees usually indicated the investment was well worth it.

The reactions toward Hangzhou would vary. The most common comment would be complaints of the hot weather. In general, however, Hangzhou was described as a city of civilized inhabitants, excelling in the areas of public security and living facilities. Most would report stable incomes in the past, but decline in the last couple of years. Some would attribute

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<sup>29</sup> Research Assistant Shayila 沙依拉 of the Norwegian Centre of Human Rights, former employee of the State Ethnic Affairs Commission (SEAC), has noted me the large the number of Salar in Hangzhou may be related to a former government project of 2003. The goal of the project was to support development of minorities in the North West, including the Salar of Qinghai. However, my interviewees perceived themselves as having come to Hangzhou by invitation from friends and relatives, and not by invitation from the government.

this decline to the global “financial crisis”.

**Reflection.** Poverty among the Muslims of northwest China is not new<sup>30</sup>. According to statistics from the 1990s, the relative number of Gansu Hui was larger than that of the Han in such occupations as farming, service, and business. The relative number of Gansu Han is greater than the Hui among white-collar workers, government officials, clerks, and factory workers. The number of white-collar workers among the Han (4.60%), for instance, was almost twice that among the Hui (2.46%; Ma, 2013a, 338-339).

What effect does poverty have on the attitudes of man? Certainly the mentality would be no more complex than that it is necessary, justified, and not shameful to search for the fulfilment of one’s basic needs. As has been emphasized by Imam Du Yongbo 杜永波, the need for “clothes, food, shelter and means of mobility” are the same among all minzu and regions (Du, 2013, p. 26). This mentality was also reflected among more religiously inclined Muslims in my interviews.

M: What has made the strongest impression on you during your time in Hangzhou?

Hm60: That would be the two great festivals each year . . . and the Jumu’ah when we all gather together. . . . There are so many people; they come from afar. Business is also very good at times of such events.

The elderly Muslims among my interviewees appeared to be the most active in religious activities. This could be understood as a consequence of these individuals having more time for spiritual matters, or it could be related to having grown up in a more religious environment than the current one. However, I also heard a more pragmatic explanation: “When people enclose the end of their days, they want to find something in which to find peace” (Hm35).

This kind of pragmatic attitude may, of course, have its negative effects, such as less

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<sup>30</sup> During the Qing dynasty, several large Muslim revolts occurred in the Qinghai and Gansu regions, from the *Zheherenye* 哲合忍也 (Jahriyya) Sufi uprisings of 1781 (Yu, 2012, pp. 177-180) to the tumultuous age of the 1862–1873 Muslim revolt of Shaanxi. This last revolt had included the “18 Great Military Camps” (*Shiba Daying* 十八大营) of 200,000 men and four centres of resistance in Jinjibao 金积堡, Hezhou 河州, Xining, and Suzhou 肃州 (Yu, 2012, pp. 193-197). Large numbers of Muslims had been massacred before and during the revolts and their lands confiscated (pp. 195-197). Qing general Zuo Zongtang 左宗棠 also decided, to solve the public security issues of the region for the next “hundred of years”, it would be necessary to move surviving Muslims “far away from the sight of man” to desolate areas in posterity known as the “three edges and two tips” (p. 196). Strict control of population movement was implemented. Yu argued that this diffusion of the Muslim population had a serious long-term impact on their economic development (p. 197).

concern for those not close friends or relatives. As one of my interviewees indicated, they simply did not care about consequences to others resulting from environmentally harmful choices, such of heating with coal (Sm25). I was also told many times that the alms-giving of *zakat* (*tianke* 天课) was not about concern for the poor or needy but for personal spiritual gain. Even in prompting Hangzhou Muslims to pray for the 2013 victims of the Sichuan Ya'an earthquake, the HIA chose not to plead in terms of kindness but personal reward from Allah (HIA, 2013b, p. 4).

Differences in social and economical status may increase dichotomization between different population groups. The life-stories of my interviewees reveals they perceive the inhabitants of Hangzhou as more modern and affluent than themselves. Barthian circumstantialism would in this aspect predict an ethnic mobilization in Hangzhou.

### **The Question of Primary Education**

**Issue.** In 2008, the General Office of Hangzhou People's Government (HPGGO) published the "Hangzhou Municipality Compulsory Education Level City Migrant Workforce Children School Enrolment Administration Provisional Measures", hereafter "Provisional Measures". Article 3, paragraph 4, of the "Provisional Measures" stated it is required of the migrant labour workers who wish to enrol their children in the school system of Hangzhou to provide "documentation of one of the parents or legal guardians payment of social insurance fee."

When I talked to my interviewees, many of them complained about this particular paragraph. Some reported they had been forced by the regulation to send their children back to the schools of the northwest. Others were in grief for their children being as old as 10–11 years old without having gotten into primary school. I was even asked by a 5-year-old child whether I could help him get into the school system. Many understood this paragraph as effectively terminating their children's opportunities to enter the primary schools of Hangzhou.

In addition, they were not certain about the exact meaning of the term *social insurance*. They often talked about old-age pensions. They talked of a fee of about 600–700 a month, and some mentioned they had to pay a little more than 10,000 CNY a year.

Hm65: It is too expensive. We cannot afford it. We have too many people in our family. Business has not been good as of lately.

Other complaints about article 3, paragraph 4, of the “provisional solution” was that it added to an already complicated list of documents required for getting their children into primary school.

Hm50: Eighty per cent of the people where we come from have never learned to read; they are illiterate. They have very superficial consciousness on legal matters. They do not figure out these things before the children are 7-8 years old and none of the schools want them. You have to begin collecting documentation when the children are 5-6 years old. The social insurance needs 13 months. The temporary resident permit may take as long as 2 years. Some forget renewing it. And the identity card (*shenfenzheng* 身份证) can only be issued in the northwest. In Hangzhou, they will not do it.

My interviewees repeatedly told me they were unable to understand government documents regulating the rules for entrance to primary school. When I asked them why they did not go to the HEB or the HIA for support, the replies were mixed. The ones who had formerly gotten their children into the school system and for whom it did not pose any problem would usually boast of the HEB taking especially good care of minorities. However, for those who had not gotten their children into the school system and who had visited the HEB for support, the replies were completely opposite.

Dm30: They shoed me out of the building. . . . I did not know what documents I needed. . . . They gave me a piece of white paper. “Take it,” they said, “Go have a look at it.” I cannot read; what is the point in giving it to me? Please explain it for me, tell me what I need. . . . The government does not care. If you die of hunger, they still do not care. But if you have money? They fawn on you.

Interviewees generally indicated the HEB had been very helpful to minorities before the 2008 declaration of the “Provisional Measures”. I even heard examples of when the government had closed an eye to lack of documentation in individual cases.

What made the government change its attitude? Why did it raise the requirements for entering the school system? After a long discussion with the Chief of Compulsory and Preschool Education, Jiang Feng, I understood it was basically, first, because of the number

of migrant workers having increased explosively in the last few years. Although the number of migrant workers' children applying for school entrance in Hangzhou in 2002 had only been about 20,000, they had already become more than 240,000 in 2013. They already accounted for about 44 per cent of the students. Second, the primary schools of Hangzhou were at full capacity. Originally, the rules did not permit more than 35 students in one classroom. Now there are many schools with more than 45 students per classroom. Those already in the school system started to complain. Third, central government subsidies for students were granted according to household registration and not according to where the students attended their classes. Fourth, many parents attempted to fake living in Hangzhou to get their children into a more developed school system. This increased the problem.

As a result, the HEB saw no other solution than changing the rules. They decided to pass article 3, paragraph 4, of the "Provisional Measures". Because the "Social Insurance Law" prescribes social insurance for workers in China, they saw it as a fitting hindrance to parents to "raise the threshold" (*tigao menkan* 提高门槛). As Jiang Feng said, "We had to set a standard."

During my interviews in both the HIA and Muxing Hui Primary School, the parents were blamed for the problem: (a) Many of the parents did not have business licenses. (b) Many of the parents brought their children to Hangzhou without first properly checking the local policy. (c) If they really cared about their children, they would not have brought them to Hangzhou. Migrant labourers often move, and the children would have a more stable life by being left in the school system of the northwest.

**Reflection.** Poverty and poor education have always gone hand in hand. In a 2008 conference between HEB and HERAB, it was argued that increased efforts should be made to get the children of minority migrants into the classrooms (HEB, n.d.). However, authorities still blamed illiterate peasants for not knowing regulations well enough to make responsible decisions for the children by coming to Hangzhou. Primary education is, according to the "Compulsory Education Law", a political right of all Chinese inhabitants (NPCSC, 2006, §4; §6). Furthermore, it is an UN-defined fundamental human right (U.N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights, § 26). It is also one of the rights prescribed by the Chinese government ratified "International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights" (ICESCR, § 13).

According to statistics from the 1990s, the overall rate of illiteracy among the Hui was about 33.11%. This is more than 10% higher than the 21.53% rate of illiteracy among the Han (Ma, 2013, p. 336). In the Gansu region, the 65.19% rate of illiteracy among the Hui was

almost than twice that of local Han (p. 337). On a national scale, 82.85% of women over 55 were found to be illiterate. Illiteracy among women in the age group 15-24 was found to be “only” 29.94% (p. 339). As I have mentioned, the demarcation between ethnic groups is believed to become more obvious when structural differences appear.

However, the neglect in Hangzhou may be more structural than intended. In the words of Jiang Feng of HEB, “The law of compulsory education has conferred responsibility according to household registration. . . . Hangzhou is but volunteering to accept a burden. . . . If I have a bedroom for five people, how may I dare to accept 10 guests?” The Chinese household system links “identity, official status and welfare” according to household registration (Wong & Huen, 1998, p. 974). It was intended “to save city and state coffers from massive rural onslaughts” (p. 975). With the funds for children being in the northwest, one may perhaps feel inclined to forgive Hangzhou authorities. It is not without expenses to construct new school facilities. However, Zhejiang is among the richest of Chinese provinces. Therefore, it should not be impossible to relocate funds locally to construct new primary schools. Furthermore, according to the “Regulations on Urban Ethnic Work” (SEAC, 1993, § 9), it is the responsibility of urban authorities to set priorities for the development of education among minority groups. From such a perspective, Hangzhou authorities are not just doing “volunteer” work.

One could also argue the requirement of parents to pay social insurance to allow their children into the school system is a direct violation of the “Zhejiang Province Minority Rights Guarantee Regulations” (ZERAC, 2002). Article 17 clearly stated: “Minority students of primary and secondary education are not to pay incidental costs.” The term *incidental costs* (*zafei* 杂费) was, in its implementation, more likely intended to refer to extra costs of school books, school uniforms, and the like. However, by demanding social insurance as a prerequisite of primary education, along with premature discontinuation of payments resulting in social benefits not being received, it has already become a *de facto* “incidental cost”. It easily brings to mind the popular saying so often used to blame local Chinese politicians: “Those above make policy measures, those below make countering measures” (*shang you zhengce, xia you duice* 上有政策, 下有对策) (Hao, 2013, p. 17).

My findings reveal that the decision of Hangzhou authorities to “raise the threshold,” first of all is perceived to affect low-income and low-education groups. This decision would naturally increase the already existing differences between the Hui and the more affluent local Han of Hangzhou. Theories of ethnicity would therefore again predict the mobilization of

ethnic identity.

### **Hand-Pulled Noodles, Social Organization, and Public Security**

**Issue.** Interviewees who had arrived in Hangzhou in the 1990s usually reported high incomes in the early days. The citizens of Hangzhou who had never seen how hand-pulled noodles were made became very fascinated (Hm50). Having higher returns of household entrepreneurship in the early period of market reform is a general trend in China. It has been suggested this is caused by an increase in wages (Walder, 2002, p. 249). However, in the case of the Lanzhou pulled-noodles market in Hangzhou, it was probably caused more by increased competition as more Muslim minorities moved to the city.

From a dogmatic perspective of microeconomics, this development may be seen as a step in the direction of a greater free market. As such, it is a socioeconomic benefit, providing cheaper products for consumers (Mankiw, 2012, pp. 313-318). However, from the perspective of individual families, this development may threaten their entire livelihoods, and when basic interests are at stake, it may easily cause conflict.

Dm30: If you open a food facility next to my own, I will try speaking to you. If you do not listen, I will break you to pieces (*zhijie zale ni* 直接砸了你).

HERAB reported, in the period 2003–2010, it to be at least 10 instances of street fights related to Lanzhou pulled-noodles food facilities in the Xihu District of Hangzhou (Jin, 2010b). The local Hui were familiar with such conflicts, not only in Hangzhou, but also in Shanghai, Nanjing, and other Zhejiang cities. According to Zhejiang Province Lanzhou Hand-Pulled Noodles Association (ZLHNA) in the neighbouring city of Ningbo 宁波, more than 100 individuals participated in a street fight. Ten were seriously injured; five were slightly injured (personal communication, January, 2013). The case was triggered by two food facilities located as close as 170 meters to one another. As the ZLPA chose to use this example rather than an example from Hangzhou, it could indicate this is about as large as these conflicts get in Zhejiang<sup>31</sup>.

According to former President Ma of ZLHNA Xihu District Division (ZLHNAXD),

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<sup>31</sup> To set this in perspective, according to official numbers, in 1999, no less than 32,000 instances of group conflict occurred, of which 125 had more than 1,000 participants. Some conflicts were reported to have had more than 10,000 participants. In all, 364,000 individuals were reported to have participated in group conflicts that year (Ma, 2013a, pp. 300–301).

before 2005, an implicit agreement among Muslims from the Gansu region was established to keep a distance among food facilities of at least 1,000 meters. As conflicts started to occur after an increased number of migrants to Hangzhou, the rules had to be changed. In 2005, a contract between a large numbers of food facilities of Hangzhou indicated to keep a distance between food facilities of at least 500 meters. However, the conflicts kept occurring.

In response to constant quarrels, the ZLHNA was established in April 19, 2011. From the date of its establishment until March 3, 2012, it was involved in solving 40 cases of conflicts between food facilities in Zhejiang. It was also involved in 16 cases of quarrels with the government related to urban planning (ZLHNA, 2012). It was decided that its associate food facilities should agree to the general agreement of a distance of 500 meters in Hangzhou. Exceptions would be made for (a) flourishing areas, in which a distance of 300 meters should be acceptable, and (b) suburban areas, in which a distance of 600 meters should be respected.

The ZLHNA is a purely non-governmental organization, established on the initiative of concerned food-facility owners. Its leaders are chosen by general consent. Its initial successes gained the organization some credit. However, the organization struggles with funding and legitimacy. Despite the “Circular of Zhejiang Province Lanzhou Pulled-Noodles Association” (ZLHNA, 2012) claiming the organization shall collect an annual fee of 300-1,200 CNY from each of its members, as well as 20% of financial solutions in each conflict as a mediation fee, this method of funding has not been implemented. According to Standing President Ma Jinzhong 马进忠 of the ZLHNA, the association claims more than 300 members, but because annual fees are not paid, the association generates very little income. The 20% mediation fees are rarely realised, though association members may receive support for travel expenses. As for legitimacy, according to former President Ma of the ZLHNA, XD,

I have left the organization for two years. Why? It is because people do not listen to us. . . . They used to listen, but slowly more and more started to ignore us. “Okay”, they say, “and who are you may I ask?” . . . It became hopeless; in the end I did not want to be part of it. (personal communication, January, 2013)

When I was doing interviews among Muslims in the area shown in Figure 2, I found most of my interviewees were oblivious to the existence of the organization. As for the rule of distance between food facilities, it was merely seen as an unwritten rule. The understanding of the distance prescribed by this “unwritten rule” was variously 400 meters, 500 meters, 700 meters, or 1,000 meters. Others would claim there was no such rule. Even Secretary General

Hui Qiu'e of the HIA would express explicit disregard of the work of the ZLHNA:

Those northwesterners make their own business rules. It is utterly ridiculous. . . . It is just something they have made up on their own. (personal communication, January, 2013)

Thus, it is not difficult to understand why the association seeks recognition from authorities to receive legitimation for its work. Standing President Ma Jinzhong claimed the Muslims of Gansu would ask the organization for guidance should conflict arise. However, in his experience, conflicts seldom occurred between Muslims from Gansu but would usually be interregional. In such cases, the organization would not be able to mediate on its own.

In the case of interregional conflicts, county representatives from different regions would have to be involved. The term *Head of Office* (HO) (*Banshichuzhuren* 办事处主任) is well known among Muslims in Hangzhou. It refers to representatives from local bureaus and agencies of ethnic and religious affairs from the northwest (personal communication, January, 2013). I was often told of the HOs of both Hualong and Xunhua. They come to Hangzhou from time to time to mediate in conflicts. As representatives of the government, they have greater legitimacy than the local organization. Still, I was informed by food facilities owners currently in conflict that they had to pay significantly high fees for intervention in individual cases.

Another institution active in solving problems is the HIA. Located in the Phoenix Mosque, the association is largely represented by its imams and daily administration. According to the third issue of the *Muslim of Hangzhou*, the HIA has been active in solving conflicts related to the printing of articles “humiliating the religion of Islam” (Jin, 2010c, p. 11) or addressing hand-pulled noodles street fights (p. 11), urban planning (Jin, 2010a, p. 9) and inter-minzu conflict (HIA, 2010, pp. 19-20). Both HOs and HIA operate in close co-operation with HERAB.

**Reflection.** Allowing minorities to resolve internal conflicts by their own rules is an

ancient tradition in China<sup>32</sup>. As Lucian W. Pye (1975) has noted, the nationalists adopted a position of “indirect rule” toward northwest minorities (p. 493). In addition, the Communists have since proclaimed the PRC established the Hui autonomous regions of Ningxia and several other autonomous Hui prefectures and counties (Gladney, 1987, p. 496).

Thus, it is not surprising to find that organizations such as the HIA or the ZLHNA are seen in the system of Chinese security political thinking as “grass-roots units” for preventing conflict among minzu (Jin, 2013, p. 57). They are encouraged to provide information to the HERAB and to function as mediators before conflict escalates. They are, in return, encouraged to negotiate on behalf of and are informed about related cases concerning the groups they represent. As President Ma Jinzhong of the ZLHNA indicated,

If it is a small issue and we are able to mediate it on our own, they [the public security bureau] will not intervene. If it is a big issue . . . , the offended may be released from custody if we are able to mediate the case. (personal communication, January, 2013)

An interesting example is provided in the HIA article “New Mechanism of Investigation and Mediation, Prompting the Great Solidarity Among Minzu.” This article reports on a case in which a migrant Hui of Anhui assaulted a local petrol guard with a broken bottle (*xunfang duiyuan* 巡防队员). Hearing of the event, the whole family of the Hui man came to Hangzhou. They feared the police would be partial towards the Han. They further accused the petrol guard of having peeked at the man’s mother and daughter when they were in the shower. The family of the petrol guard became furious. The family of the Hui then visited the HIA to demand justice. They insisted, if justice could not be found, they would “find their own solution”. Ultimately, the HIA were able to convince the family of the petrol guard not to demand legal punishment of the Hui but to accept a financial solution (HIA, 2010, pp. 19–20).

The case in Hangzhou resembles the situation in northwest China. Local authorities have also in these areas attempted to use prominent Muslims and their institutions to solve issues

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<sup>32</sup> Because of worries of “barbarians” (*Manliao* 变獠) intermingling with the locals of Guangzhou, it was decided by Tang emperor Wenzong (836–840) that it would be better to gather all the foreigners in so-called *fanfang* 蕃坊 (foreigner's living quarters; Yu, 2012, p. 24). In 851, the Moroccan traveller Ibn Batutta observed the Muslims within these quarters were judged in legal matters according to the Quran, the hadiths, and the customs of Islam (pp. 24–25). This tradition continued during Song (p. 51). During Yuan, the Department of the Qadi (*Hadisuo* 哈的所 or *Hadisi* 哈的司) was established with similar functions (p. 76). A setback in the autonomy of Muslim minorities was caused by the assimilation policies of Ming (Yang, 2000, pp. 4–5). This happened in spite of the royal family’s alleged Muslim affiliation (Dillon, 1999, pp. 29–30). However, the early Qing emperors still tried to rule its northwestern subjects by means of Islamic law (pp. 128–173).

related to Muslims. For example, in 2006, Wuzhong 吴忠 of Ningxia was reported to have 327 imams appointed as honorary heads of birth planning associations (Sun & Sun, 2012, p. 103). Similarly, in 2007, government authorities of Lingwu 灵武 municipality of Ningxia were reported to have hired 561 imams as voluntary mediators of legal administration (p. 104).

Despite the apparent freedoms of the HIA in solving issues among Muslims, they, nevertheless, have no power in decision-making. They only have power in mediating. Furthermore, the mediation is usually directed toward achieving political goals of the government. One example is its function to convince Muslims to yield to the demands of the government concerning policies of urban planning (Jin, p. 2010a, p. 9). The HIA is not economically independent, nor does it give any pretence of making its decisions independently of the government. It is, in the words of Hui Qiu'e, "the link between the government and the religious society" (personal communication, January, 2013).

The most important indication in this section is that loyalties in social organization are better explained by regional identities rather than by belonging to a certain category of minzu. This is especially evident by the legitimacy issues of the ZLHNA, as well as the role of the HOs in coordinating activities among Hui from different regions. This will be further discussed in Chapter 5.

### **Segregation, Prejudice, and Self-Devaluation**

**Issue.** When young Hangzhou Han are asked about their knowledge of the Hui, they might say the Hui are Muslims. They might even know the Hui do not eat pork. However, they probably could not say anything more. Perhaps, they would point out that minorities are "apt in singing and skilled at dance" (*nenggeshanwu* 能歌善舞) and that they wear "fancy clothing". One reason the young Han of Hangzhou do not know anything more about the Hui arises from the limitations of what their primary school books, such as *Common Knowledge of Minzu* (Minzu Tuanjie Jiaoyu Jiaocai Bianxie Zu, 2009), tells them. The information about minorities being "apt in singing and skilled at dance" is also part of the continuous propaganda of the Communist Party, aimed at proving the unity among minzu and the bliss in which they all live. An example of such performance was the opening scene of the 2014 Chinese New Year celebration evening performance.

When one asks why Muslims do not eat pork, problems begin to appear. Almost all my Han interviewees would reply that Muslims pray to the pig as their god. Even those who learned after their primary schooling that Muslims believe pigs are unclean were not really

sure which of the statements was true. Thus, it is not surprising they would, from time to time, raise this question with Muslims. Of course, to Muslims this question sounds like asking, "Is not this Allah of yours a pig?"

As for Chinese Muslims having lived with Han Chinese for ages, this question is by no means a new one. Some would grind their teeth and refuse to answer. Others would slowly try to explain. It is only when Han Chinese do not listen, that is, when they are perceived as insisting on crossing the line Muslims like to define as their "breaking point" (*dixian* 底线), that true anger arises. How did the Han Chinese come to believe Muslims chose the pig as their god? Who are the ones telling the young ones this story? Do they have any conflict of interest with the Muslims? The initial answer to this question is that they have learned it from their friend and teachers.

Cf20: I was told so in my primary school. Even our teachers of political history tell us this.

How serious is this misunderstanding? While I did not consult more than about 10 Han concerning the issue, I found the responses more than sufficient for my purpose. They all mentioned this might be the reason, whether they were doctoral students or only high school graduates. However, it was only after I interviewed representatives of the Muxing 穆兴 (lit. Muslims Arise) Hui Primary School that I truly realised the scope of this misunderstanding.

Muxing is the only Muslim primary school of Hangzhou. Therefore, I was concerned with what measures the leadership had implemented to decrease existing misunderstandings among minzu. Because they did not really understand my question, I specifically asked whether they ever tried to explain to their students why Muslims do not eat pork. First, I was told by the headmaster that the reason "could be because they pray to the pig as their god". Then, the party secretary strongly affirmed that they "do indeed pray to the pig as their god".

In 1904, Muxing was established by the Phoenix Mosque as a course exclusively for Muslims, known as the *Huiwenban* 回文班 (HIA, 2013c, p. 11). The goal was to decrease illiteracy and to increase practical knowledge among Hangzhou Muslims (Wang, 2010, p. 158). It became known by its current name in 1914. The Communists later integrated it into the public school system in 1954 (HIA, 2013c, p. 14). Since then, it lost its character as an institution of religious education. According to the headmaster, only a very few Muslim students and no Muslim teachers remain. It keeps its name from history, not because it

actually teaches anything related to Islam. As such, the name is misleading. Still, the Primary School does receive donations from the Phoenix Mosque (personal communication, January, 2014). These donations may perhaps be of a highly secular character. However, it is strange that the same primary school to which many Hangzhou Muslims want to send their children teaches its students “knowledge” considered a direct insult against Islam by Muslims.

I became curious as to how a Han sees the Hui. I learned from the Muslims I interviewed that they would often be mistaken for Uighurs of Xinjiang. Many were quite unsatisfied with this label. The Uighurs of Xinjiang are associated with separatist troublemakers.

Hm30: There is nothing else they [the Han] dislike more than our white caps [taqiyah]. . . . They think we are Uighurs. . . . First, they [the Uighurs] leave a bad impression on the Han, and then the Han believe we are Uighur as well.

Hm20: I was once at the repair shop to fix our rice cooker. . . . The owner of the shop told me that if he were Xi Jinping, he would “kill all minorities.”

The Uighurs of Xinjiang are also associated with stealing.

Dm30: Let us say you are standing behind someone. The person turns around and sees you wearing a white cap. He immediately walks away; he does not want to stand beside you.

Some would be asked whether they were terrorists.

M: How do you react when they ask you about it?

Hm35: What else can you do than smile and shake it off? You cannot explain to people this kind of thing.

The above prejudices towards Uighurs correspond with the findings of Kaltman (2007). Asking the Hans directly, I was told they associated Muslims with violence and theft and considered them crude and unhygienic.

Cf20: My mother always told me, if you meet one of those on the street, you have to be very careful. . . . They are different from us Han; they are more aggressive. . . .

When we see them, we are always afraid whether or not they are doing something unspoken of . . . such as stealing. . . . We are really afraid to talk with them; we fear we may say something wrong.

Cf25: We used to have two people selling “slice cake” (*qiegao* 切糕) near our place. They were those kind of people [Muslims]. I thought it [the cake] looked very beautiful. It looked like a flower. I wanted to have a try. He said if you buy it, how much do you want? I said I wanted this big apiece. He said if I slice it off, you must pay. I did not think that much. I did not know how heavy one piece is. It is really compact you know. One small piece costs 100 CNY. I was shocked. . . . I felt defrauded. He was a cheater. . . . Many reported the cakes to be dirty. Only a few defrauded Han would buy, so the cakes would become more than 5-6 years old. . . . Later the Bureau of Public Security took care of it. All those salesmen of slice cake were sent back to Xinjiang. . . . So I really don’t like the minorities of the northwest.<sup>33</sup>

Muslims were further described as “barbarian” (*yeman* 野蛮) by both Han and many of the Muslims themselves. They were described as lacking culture and having crude behaviour. While they varied, tendencies toward self-devaluation were quite common among the Muslims of Hangzhou.

Prejudice against the Han was also expressed by some Muslims. They believed them to be crude and unhygienic, indicating they wear too little in the summer, they drink, they smoke, and they are far too open-minded. They were also criticized as being highly superstitious and praising celebrities as though they were gods. According to some Muslims, the Han are the manifestation of immorality.

Despite such criticisms, most of the Muslims I interviewed did not believe the relationship between Muslims and Han to be intrinsically bad. In fact, they believed the situation in Hangzhou to be better than what they were used to in the northwest. As already mentioned, many of them were inclined to agree with descriptions of the Han as crude barbarians.

**Reflection.** Prejudice of the Muslims has been quiet common throughout Chinese

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<sup>33</sup> There is an old saying about slice cake: “Huihui has two knives. With one he chops mutton and beef; with the other he chops slice cake” (Ma, 2013a, p. 313). It is unclear whether *Huihui* in this saying refers to Hui or Uighurs, but the context would suggest the latter.

history<sup>34</sup>. Prejudice of Muslims survived both during the Nationalist and the Communist eras. Cases of print articles claiming the god of Muslims is a pig are well documented during the Nationalist era (Yu, 2012, pp. 264–269). Similarly well known are the casualties suffered by Islam during the Cultural Revolution, including the 1975 massacre of about 1,000 Muslims of Shadian in Yunnan province (Gladney, 2003, p. 461). It should not be surprising to find the HIA mentioning published articles “insulting the Muslim faith” in Hangzhou since the 1990s (Jin, 2010c, p. 11). Some Chinese scholars have argued the publishing of such articles are in the past. They are the results of “implementations by the exploiting class [the Nationalists] to safeguard their own authoritative rule” (Ma, 2013b, pp. 216–217). However, it is simply not true that all problems dissolved once the Communists came to power.

Present day prejudice of Muslims has to some extent been attributed to Chinese media.

Um25: The media always says bad things about us. Only a few [Uighurs] do those kind of thing. . . . They do not mention the Han are no better. Before that event [the “terrorist” attack on Ürümqi July 5, 2008], . . . my friend saw the Hans with knives and weapons.”

Concerning separatist activity, the Chinese media have readily accepted the American discourse of war on terrorism. This discourse is perceived as harming the image of all Muslim minzu in China. This has happen in spite of article 25, paragraph 4, of the “Regulations on Administration of Publishing” (SC, 2011a) and article 3, paragraph 4, of the “Regulations on Administration of Audio-Visual Production” (SC, 2011b) clearly stating that all media products are not allowed to have content “instigating hate, prejudice or disrupting unity among minzu.”

The HIA and Chinese authorities have described the relationship between Hui and Han as “harmonic”. From both a historical perspective and the findings I have presented, it appears that many in Chinese society doubt this assertion. However, the few conflicts between Muslims and local citizens are puzzling. Despite misunderstandings of Islam and Muslims being more predominant in Hangzhou, my interviewees did not perceive conflicts as much as they did in the northwest. As a matter of fact, conflicts among Muslims seem much more common.

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<sup>34</sup> Even if the early Qing emperors of Kangxi 康熙, Jiaqing 嘉庆, and Qianlong 乾隆 made efforts to criticize prejudice against Muslims among its bureaucracy, they were not able to prevent massive slaughter in the midst of and during the late Qing period (Yu, 2012, pp. 128–229; Israeli, 1978, p. 141).

Jin Binggao 金炳镐 (2013) argued the larger number of group conflicts in present China tend to be caused primarily by conflicts of interest (p. 59). There have not been many Muslims in Hangzhou during the last centuries. Although newly arrived Muslims compete with one another in the hand-pulled noodles market, they do not compete with Han. However, while the Muslims may have few conflicts of interest with the Han majority, they have not increased interactions of friendship. Instead, a protective attitude of “mutual ignorance” (*hubuxiangfan* 互不相犯) has been adopted. Both my Muslim interviewees and my Han interviewees repeated frequently that they simply did not care what the other did. They may think of each other as crude, filthy, and immoral, but as long as direct confrontation can be avoided, there is no reason for antagonism. It was my general impression that both the Muslims and the Han made a strong effort to achieve this goal. They made no effort to befriend one another and had little exchange of speech beyond the conversations between a shopkeeper and his customers. The Muslims and Han of Hangzhou were both making a strong attempt at living in their own separate worlds. However, as Addis (1997) pointed out, “[T]o tolerate is not necessarily to respect” (p. 119). Thus, it may be overstatement to describe a relationship of mere “absence of conflict” as harmonic.

The existing Han discourse describing Muslims as being of low culture may partially account for their self-ascription as barbarians. It may also have been caused by the general valuation of education in Chinese society. This valuation has caused illiteracy to become a social stigma. As Prof. Christopher Harbsmeier of Oslo University mentioned in his lecture, “Language and Logic in Traditional China”, in Hangzhou in Autumn 2013, disregard of individuals with perceived low levels of education is quite common even against Han. This happens in spite of the material well-being of the individuals. Goffman (1963/1975) noted people with social stigma are believed to try to cover it up through a variety of methods of concealment (pp. 99–100). Although many of my interviewees did seem uncomfortable with their level of education, none were ashamed to admit they were Muslim. From this perspective, the tendency of self-ascription as barbarian ought to decrease as the general level of education increases, regardless of the Han ascription.

Lack of integration is a common trait of the rural workforce in urban areas. Xia Guofeng 夏国峰 (2011) argued this is, to a large extent, caused by different modes of mentality (p. 15). From this perspective, the state of mutual ignorance may not be unique to Muslim migrants, even if it is more visible because of the additional factor of religious conviction. Nevertheless, this chapter does reveal dichotomization between Hui and the local population of Hangzhou.

This would from a Barthian circumstantialist perspective again predict the mobilization of ethnic identity.

### **Polygyny, Morality, and the Rule of Law**

**Issue.** It is difficult to estimate the occurrence of polygyny based on my interviews. Some had never heard of it, some claimed it was very common, and others claimed it did not happen very often. Hui from urban areas such as Lanzhou or Hangzhou were often unfamiliar with the concept. Dongxiang, Salar, and Hui I asked from rural areas were typically aware of it.

Sf20: It is common to have two wives.

M: Would you allow your husband to do so?

Sf20: No.

Hm45: The law forbids it; the nation does not allow us to do such. But in our religion it is not a problem. One man can have several wives, as many as seven.

I was assured government restrictions against polygamy did not pose an issue.

M: But will not the local authorities react against it?

Hm15: The authorities.

M: They do not know of it?

Hm15: They do not speak of it.

Dm20: Of course the imam performs the ceremony of marriage. . . . We never inform the government. . . . If I want to marry a woman, and the government would not allow it, it would be unacceptable.

The HIA claimed there had never been such instances in Hangzhou. Secretary General Hui Qiu'e assured me this kind of marriage only happens in Islamic countries. They had only a case with a man from Iran and a Hui woman, to whom they had refused marriage because of his inability to provide documentation of his civil status as unmarried.

Although farmers could afford two wives, only a few rich people, for example, those working in the sale of Chinese medicine, could afford to have four or five. As for those

working in the food facilities of Hangzhou, it would not be too uncommon to leave one of their wives back in the northwest while bringing the other with them. Quarrels between the wives would “naturally” occur quite often.

**Reflection.** The historical freedoms provided by Chinese authorities for minorities have been mentioned previously. However, it might be puzzling to find apparent tolerance of traditions running outright against officially declared morality. Such may be because of local authorities having limited knowledge of the phenomena, or it may be that they are aware of it but do not see it as something they should get involved in. Kukhatas (1997) argued that “persuasion is always preferable to force, morally speaking, so it would be better to allow the effects of interaction between peoples and communities of different moral outlook to work towards the elimination of dubious customs” (p. 89). They may also see little potential gain in enforcing the law in a case in which their interests are not at stake.

Feng Yujun 冯玉军 (2013) is one of many scholars who suggested Chinese authorities should use religion as a tool for enforcing the rule of law (pp. 200–207) because religious groups such as the Muslims are believed to perceive the Quran as a source of morality superior to the law. I was assured by one of my interviewees that this use of religion would not be a problem because the Quran covers far more than the law does (Hm60). As Kant noted, a man may be strong in challenging contemporary knowledge while still blindly following the ethics taught by his mother (quoted in Liu, 2012, p. 134). However, it is not impossible for the Quran to lack correspondence with Chinese law. As Mou Zhongjian 牟钟鉴 (2013) pointed out, religion is a double-edged sword (pp. 7–8).

My interviewees seemed little bothered by the fact that polygyny was against the law. Some would defend polygynists from the perspective of it being common in such Western countries as Saudi Arabia and Libya. Others would talk of polygynists as fickle. However, others claimed polygyny is against the laws of the Quran because the Quran allows more than one wife only in times of war.

Chinese authorities, in cases where religious teachings and law do not correspond, feel compelled to reinterpret their content (Zhou & Shen, p. 117). Thus, scholars such as Ding Jun 丁俊 (2013) emphasized the importance of controlling the education of religious leaders. In addition, article 27 of the “Regulations on Religious Affairs” (SC, 2004) prescribed government authorization of all religious personnel, be it an imam or the reincarnation of

Dalai Lama.<sup>35</sup>

Another aspect related to the topic of morality and the rule of law is the nonchalant attitude towards corruption. Complaints were often made about the current assignment of hajj passports in the northwest. “You have at least to pay more than 40,000 CNY. . . . There are too many people who want to go these days. . . . You have to go through the back door” (Hm30). I was also informed it was supposed to cost no more than a few hundred CNY. However, paying bribes did not seem to be immoral for my interviewees. It was simply the reality of society. In an article condemning both receiving and paying bribes, Imam Ye Mansu 冶曼苏 (2013) admits, “Everybody knows that in order to get things done, you have to use valuables to open relations. If you do not do this, nothing will ever get done.” (p. 24).

The most important indication in this section is that loyalties in social organization may be better explained by religious identity rather than by belonging to a certain category of minzu. This will be further discussed in Chapter 5.

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<sup>35</sup> Reinterpretation of Islam to suit changes in society is not something new in China. It was done during both the Ming and the Qing dynasties by Muslim scholars such as Ma Zhu 马注, Wang Daiyu 王岱舆, Liu Zhi 刘智, and Ma Dexin 马德心, who tried to understand Islam in neo-Confucian terms of *li* 理 (principle) and *qi* 气 (vital force) (Gui, 2011, p. 44). Yang Wenjiong 杨文迥 argued this was a necessary means of adaptation to survive as a minority group in China (cited in Min, 2013b, pp. 184–185).

## Chapter 5: Discussion

In this chapter, I briefly discuss how Hui identity as ethnic tentatively could have taken shape because of influence from out-group entities, such as the state. In later sections, I compare this concept with the findings in Chapter 4. The general discussion of Hui identity as ethnic indicates that Hui ethnicity may have been of some importance in specific regions of the northwest. The discussion of Hui identity as religious indicates that Islamic identity is most relevant in cases related to interaction with the non-Muslim population. The discussion of Hui identity as regional indicates that regional identities have the greater explanatory power when it comes to loyalties among Muslims. I summarize my discussion in Chapter 6.

### Hui Identity and the “Public Display and Traffic in Symbols”

How important is the ethnic aspect of Hui identity? Pillsbury (1981/2009b) argued the Hui primarily defined themselves by not being ethnic Han (p. 513). The differences between Hui and Han identified by Pillsbury were all related to Islam: (a) consuming or abstaining from pork, drugs, and gambling and (b) monotheism as opposed to polytheism. As noted by Nagata (1982), religion may, under certain conditions, “play a primordial role” (p. 92). Yang Deliang 杨德亮 (2005) further pointed out the restrictions on marriage of the Han based on religion has been important in the idea of the Hui “common historical origins”. Thus, one could consider the idea of whether this has been the case for Hui ethnicity, creating the basis for a “deep, horizontal comradeship” (Anderson, 2006, p. 7).

At first, this hypothesis appears reasonable, considering the popular saying among Hui: “All Hui under heaven are one family” (*tianxia Huihui yi jia ren* 天下回回一家人). The saying originally referred to Hui as religion rather than ethnicity. However, it is theoretically possible that this later developed into something more. From the primordialist perspective, this concept points toward Hui having become an ethnicity.

The government has provided all those considered Hui with an identity card indicating it is their ethnic identity. This identity card may be used to obtain specific political rights, including bonus points for the scores in the National Higher Education Entrance Examination (HEB, 2013), tax exemptions (SEAC, 1993, § 26), incidental fee exemptions (ZERAC, 2002, § 17), local autonomy (NPCSC, 2001), and a variety of other law-defined entitlements, such as special treatment in legislation (NPCSC, 2000, § 66), congressional elections (NPCSC, 2004b), distribution of development subsidies (NPCSC, 2004a, § 4), promotion of party cadres (NCCPC, 2012, § 6), protection of customs and religious beliefs (SEAC, n.d.),

protection of minority criminals (NPCSC, 1994b, § 52), and coverage in television broadcasts (SC, 1997, § 4). In his article “The Drafting of Minzu Law”, Shu Hua 舒华 (2012) mentioned no less than 50 national laws and regulations concerning the rights of minzu (pp. 67–72). From the circumstantialist perspective, this information supports the claim of Hui having become an ethnicity.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, it has been argued the actions of the government have had a large influence on the willingness of former Han to be defined as ethnic Hui. An example is the Ding and Guo families in Fujian province, who applied for recognition as Hui in 1979 (Guo, 2009a, p. 74). If government influence is what made these and other individuals desire to be recognized as Hui, then the official definition of what is Hui ought to have been of some importance.

From the aspect of discourse, the government defined Hui in two ways: as Chinese and as an ethnic group (Cnf. Hu et al., 2012, p. 210). The government readily accepted Fei Xiaotong’s description of the 56 minzu as “one single entity of many primordials” (*Zhonghua Minzu Duoyuan Yiti* 中华民族多元一体) (Wang, 1998, p. 557). Despite their difference, all ethnic groups have something in common. They are all part of one great family. They are brothers and sisters who love their ancestral country of China. As an ethnic group, the government has defined the Hui as a Muslim minority. Other than this, they are similar to all other minorities, described as having “magnificent clothing” (Minzu Tuanjie Jiaoyu Jiaocai Bianxie Zu, 2009, pp. 23–29), “exotic food” (pp. 36–43), “rich literature and arts” (pp. 44–51), “colorful festivals” (pp. 58–66), and willingness to protect the nation against all separatism and foreign invaders (pp. 67–73). They are typically depicted as attractive young women wearing colorful clothing (pp. 8, 24–27, 46).

Chinese academia has also made its contribution to the government discourse on the Hui. They tend to delve into historical materials to try to prove the primordialist “truth” of the Hui. They have not only described in abstract terms how the concept of the Hui is a gradual creation of history (Chen, 2010b, p. 14) but have also given painstaking effort to discussing whether historical events and individuals belong to this minority group. One very interesting example is the discussion of the Yuan poet Sadula 萨都刺 (Wang, 2010, pp. 285–286). While some argued he was a Hui, others believed he was a Mongol. Despite a heated discussion among scholars, stretching from the concept of *dashiman* 答失蛮 to the family tree of Sadula, no definite answer was provided (p. 286).

The HIA also supports the idea of Hui as an ethnic group. The HIA is closely associated

with the HERAB. It relies economically on official funding and gives no pretence of being an independently acting institution. The message forwarded by HIA and the imams is a mixture of Islam and political propaganda. The entrance slogan of the HIA office summarizes this quite well: “Love the nation as you love your faith, progress forward in unity. Be righteous in conduct and mend your virtue, serve society well.” In other words, the HIA tells the Hui they should (a) support the Communist party and (b) be righteous in conduct. They further assure the Hui these words are in accord with the Quran. As I was told by Secretary General Hui Qiu’e, “No one loves the nation more than Hui. . . . The Quran says you should love your nation as the bird loves its nest” (personal communication, January, 2014). Further, as Imam Ma Maimaide wrote in his article “The Dream of Hui, the Dream of China”, “The dream of Hui is a small square in a big square: You are in me and I am in you; Unity among minzu; a strong and rich nation; our ancestral land on the rise.” (M. Ma, 2013, p. 39). Religious institutions are prescribed by law to pertain to this message (SC, 2004, § 3). The message has not been without influence. As a daily mosque visitor told me, “We are Muslims. Chinese Muslims. We love China . . . , so we support the Party. But we do not love the Party” (Hm35). This statement is similar to the opinion of former Zheherenye leader Ma Jincheng 马进城, who allegedly indicated that “to resist the rule of the heathens is against the will of Allah” (Zhang, 1991/1999, p. 235). HIA argues with scholars, such as Bai Shouyi 白寿彝 (1983), that a most striking characteristic of Hui ethnicity is their exceptional devotion to serve the nation.

It is of little doubt then that Keyes’ (1982) “public display and traffic in symbols” (p. 10) would predict the mobilization of Hui ethnic identity. Authorities, academia and organizations such as the HIA continuously teach the Hui they are ethnic Hui and that this ethnicity is of importance. However, as I now will show, this has in Hangzhou not resulted in Hui ethnic identity becoming of significant importance in actual social organization.

### **Hui Identity as Ethnic**

**Discourse.** From the perspective of discourse, my interviewees would often speak of themselves as Hui. For example, when Hui talked of “crossing the line”, they would typically define this line as ethnic and not religious (*minzu dixian* 民族底线). What it meant for them to be ethnic Hui generally meant (a) not to commit fraud; (b) not to speak evil of their neighbours; (c) not to drink, smoke, or gamble; and (d) to be sincere in prayer. These are also what they considered to be typical Islamic virtues. This corresponds with Gladney’s (1991)

general observation of northwest Hui in the 1990s: that they define themselves primarily in terms of their Islamic faith (pp. 321–322). When I asked Salar interviewees the same question concerning what it meant for them to be Muslim, the answers were almost identical.

Despite their common religious convictions, Uighurs were seen by Hui as very different. As mentioned in Chapter 4, none of the Muslims I interviewed felt comfortable being associated with Uighurs. In addition, the Uighurs I interviewed did not feel very comfortable being compared with Hui. To the Uighurs, Hui are too similar to Han.

**Actions.** As discussed previously, in most cases, migrant Muslims in Hangzhou reported to be introduced to the municipality by friends and relatives. These friends and relatives typically belonged to the same group of *minzu*. This phenomenon is especially obvious in the case of the Salar, who, as noted, own a number of food facilities in the area represented in Figure 2 that are largely disproportionate to the number of Salar in China. When I interviewed Hui and Salar from the same region, this did not equal the Hui having Salar friends and vice versa. Thus, the social organization in the local areas appears to be divided along ethnicity. However, as I am researching the situation in Hangzhou and not the northwest, this information is of limited relevance.

### **Hui Identity as Religious**

**Discourse.** The term *Hui* was often used interchangeably with *Muslim*. Even the Salar would refer to themselves as *Hui* when asked. It was only after inquiring specifically that I was told they were Salar. Even if their reason for calling themselves *Hui* was only because they feared I, as a foreigner, would be unfamiliar with the term *Salar*, it still indicates that the Salar are quite comfortable being identified with Hui. All the Han and Salar I asked did not believe there were many cultural differences between the two *minzu*. Neither did they believe there were many differences with Dongxiang or Bao'an.

As discussed in Chapter 4, my interviewees believed the Quran to be above the law as a moral authority. Just as Confucianism was explained in terms of Islam to the Muslims during the Qing dynasty, the present Chinese authorities have had to hire imams to explain its laws by referring to the Quran.

**Actions.** As discussed in Chapter 4, religious institutions such as the HIA and prominent religious leaders such as the imams would often be involved when disputes occurred with non-Muslims. Such disputes occurred in cases when articles “insulting the faith” were published, when non-Muslim individuals attempted to open food facilities, when Muslims broke the law of the non-Muslim government, when the non-Muslim government reacted

toward group conflict, and when there were issues of urban reconstruction. The HIA was also active in implementing measures to decrease misunderstandings concerning the Muslim food habits mentioned in Chapter 4. For example, they had provided posters for all the Muslim food facilities in Hangzhou and hung a poster explaining Islamic customs on the gate of the Phoenix Mosque.

As noted in Chapter 4, a clear line of “mutual ignorance” existed with the non-Muslim population of Hangzhou. The Han who were willing to convert to Islam and learn by heart the teachings of the Quran were more than welcome to do so. In fact, my findings in both Shandong and Hangzhou indicate the interviewees were happy when the number of those agreeing in their beliefs increased. The Han who had converted to Islam were perceived as “very faithful”. They had become members of the family. When I was visiting the village of Gangshang 岗上 in the Tai’an 泰安 Municipality of Shandong, I was informed by the local Imam Jin 金 that only one Han family used to live in the village, but it had “already been converted to Islam. It had already become Hui.”

An exception to the above observations was the Uighurs. As briefly mentioned in Chapter 4, the other Muslims were not very happy to be associated with them. The Uighurs were seen as different in both language and appearance. Several of the typical prejudgments of Uighurs were found among the Hui. Neither the Hui nor the Uighurs I interviewed were interested in making friends with one another. A Turfan Uighur insisted it was unacceptable for a Uighur to marry a Hui. “We are more traditional. We can only marry those of our own kind” (Um25). They believed one should not mix ethnic blood in such way. Another Uighur family from Southern Xinjiang I interviewed in Hangzhou was also sceptical concerning marriage with local Muslims of Hangzhou. I never heard other Muslims indicating any objections against marriage with Uighurs as a principle. I also was told about examples of such marriage. Sadly, my data in Hangzhou is too sparse on this topic to draw any conclusions. Despite their existing dissatisfaction with being associated with Uighurs, some Hui and other Muslims would partly try to defend the “excessive” (*guofen* 过分) actions of the Uighurs by reference to their low level of education and limited “cultivation of character” (*suzhi* 素质).

### **Hui Identity as Regional**

**Discourse.** My interviewees often spoke of their perceived difficulty in communicating with Hui from other regions because of variations in dialects. The only language they had in

common with the Hui from other regions was Mandarin. Thus, it may not be strange that most Salar I interviewed willingly described themselves as a variant of Hui, with language being, to my observance, the main characteristic separating the two groups.

As discussed in Chapter 4, the Hui are often seen as poor and poorly educated. The relatively high level of illiteracy among the Hui compared to the Han appears to be structural. The demarcation between ethnic groups may be more obvious in cases in which structural differences appear. The northwestern regions include, according to official data, more than 70% of the Muslims in China (Ma, 2013, p. 305). The northwestern regions are associated with poverty. As also mentioned in Chapter 4, this kind of structural difference may cause different modes of mentality from those of individuals from other regions.

**Actions.** In dealing with Hui beyond their own home regions, my interviewees did not show any obvious signs of “comradeship” toward these others. They were all perceived as Muslims. While Hui did, at times, speak of themselves as “us Hui”, doing so did not prevent them from arguing over spaces of commercial activity with Hui from other regions, just as they would with Salar or Dongxiang. When the Hui of Gansu attempted to organize themselves by means of the ZLHNA, they were able to successfully rally only those of their own region. As Israeli (1978) observed concerning the historic situation of Islam in China, “Local congregations were completely independent of each other and recognized no outside authority in the county, the province or the Empire” (p. 42).

My Muslim interviewees claimed to have many interactions with Muslims of their own region, such as a group of Salar from Xunhua played basketball twice a week. When a Dongxiang told me he had no one to play basketball with in Hangzhou, I told him that there was such Muslim activity. He seemed at first very positive. However, when I mentioned it was an activity by Muslims of one region, not mentioning them being Salar, he immediately concluded it was not an option.

My Hui interviewees had limited communication with Hui from regions of China other than their own. For example, when I communicated with a Hui from northeast China, he perceived himself as having great difficulty in socializing with the Hui of the northwest. He said they did not seem to want to be friends with him. In spite of living 20 meters away from another Hui food facility, he had no Hui friends. He was very interested in learning more about Islam and wanted his children to receive religious education. A former imam of Shandong had often come to visit his food facility. However, he was not on good terms with the new imam from the northwest.

Many of my Hui interviewees had experience in marketing *ophiocordyceps sinensis* in

Tibet. However, they all appeared to have very little contact with the Kaqi Hui. They were perceived as very different from themselves.

None of the Hui living in the area shown in Figure 2 knew any of the local Hui of Hangzhou. They had met them when they visited their food facility. However, they were perceived as different and difficult to communicate with. The interviewees only knew these customers were Hui because they said so. They were perceived as having little knowledge of Islam and as being far too “hanicized” (*hanhua* 汉化). In addition, some Gansu Hui running food facilities would employ only Han of their own region to make food. Ma Jianlong claimed Muslims find this practice unacceptable (2013a, p. 321). However, it did not seem to bother the Hui of Gansu, despite the Hans in question drinking alcoholic beverages and smoking.

## Chapter 6: Conclusion.

My empirical findings indicate that Hui ethnicity in Hangzhou is currently dormant. It does not serve to solve contradictions with the non-Muslim population as well as religious loyalties do. It does not predict patterns of social interaction as well as regional loyalties do. It does not provide for group cohesion as well as do either of the above-mentioned loyalties.

This is contradictory to the predictions of ethnic theory. Hui share a common religious identity. As noted by Nagata (1982), religion may, under certain conditions, “play a primordial role” (p. 92). This would from a primordialist perspective predict the formation of a Hui ethnicity. The Hui among my research subjects are of lower social and economical status than Han. Luo et al. (2012) has noted that the demarcation between ethnic groups is more significant when structural differences appear. This ought to increase dichotomization between Hui and Han. Such dichotomization, from a Barthian circumstantialist perspective, predicts the mobilization of Hui ethnicity. Furthermore, as I have discussed in chapter 5, government discourse has defined my target group as a minzu. This again would predict the formation of Hui ethnicity.

The reason Hui ethnicity has not become an important factor of social organization in Hangzhou, may be related to that religious identity as Muslim is not limited to Hui, but is something shared in common with other minzu as well. It may also be related to that the importance of regional loyalties in social organization overshadows the importance of ethnic identity.

However, the apparent lack of explanatory power of Hui ethnic identity in understanding the social organization among present-day migrant Hui in Hangzhou does not necessarily mean that Hui ethnicity is irrelevant in the whole of China. Qualitative research has limitations. Hangzhou is only one city among many in China, and the situation could well be different in other locations. Therefore I do not exclude the possibility that similar circumstances as those in Hangzhou may have triggered the mobilization of Hui ethnicity elsewhere.

Previous research on Hui (Fan, 2003/2009) indicates that the idea of Hui ethnicity is invoked in situations in which ethnicity is seen as the scale of measurement for political rights. As I have spoken of in Chapter 1, this has also been the case during the Nationalist and Communist eras. As noted by Glazer and Moynihan (1975), a “striking” characteristic of modern time is the extent to which ethnic groups have started to be “defined in terms of interest, *as an interest group*” (pp. 7-8). The Hui of Hangzhou have long since gotten these

political rights secured by Chinese law. Therefore, they do not need to mobilize ethnic identity in order to achieve these benefits. This observation suggests that should circumstances change and ethnic mobilization become a requirement of political benefits once more, such mobilization may certainly take form. Indeed, the theories of ethnicity would suggest Hui ethnicity has fertile ground in which it may grow in Hangzhou. Lu Xun once said (quoted in Yu, 2012), “When an era is about to decline, the Hui are determined to act. This is a proven fact of history” (p. 270). But for now, at least, the ethnic identity of Hui in Hangzhou is dormant.

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