

ASEAN, “China is a big country and other countries are small countries and that is just a fact.” Much of the writing about China concentrates on its use of soft power to project itself as the dominant force in the region, and the nation-state that will bring about a new order in the world. China aspires to be a nation-state that does not have to play by the rules written by Western states, especially the United States, in the creation of the postwar international system.

Part Five, “The Rise of China and East Asia,” comprises four chapters directly related to the use of soft power including the interrelation of Chinese business internationalization and the state, China’s cyber diplomacy, the expansion of Chinese correspondents around the world, and the Chinese use of public diplomacy and soft powers as a means to advance its global agenda, as well as a chapter on the American policy of economic de-coupling and the potential for a new cold war. Ingrid d’Hooghe and Frank Pieke’s “State-Led Globalization, or How Hard is China’s Soft Power?” does an excellent job of explaining the types of soft power deployed by China, as well as the purpose and means of its deployment. Finally, Richard McGregor and Hervé Lemabieu’s “Decoupling the US Economy: Preparations for a New Cold War?” is an excellent examination of the merits and demerits of decoupling for both states, as well as the probabilities of decoupling leading to a new, and this time truly East-West, Cold War.

In summary, I can highly recommend *Global East Asia* as a general reader for anyone interested in either East Asian relations or globalization. More specifically, many chapters in this book will make excellent reading assignments for a variety of courses on either East Asia or globalization, depending on the subject matter and the chapter.

doi:10.1017/S147959142100067X

Pure and True: The Everyday Politics of Ethnicity for China’s Hui Muslims

By David R. Stroup. University of Washington Press, 2022. 268 pages.
Hardback, US\$£99.00, ISBN: 9780295749822. Paperback, \$30.00,
ISBN: 9780295749839.

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(Received 3 January 2022; accepted 3 January 2022)

This book is bound to be one of the last sustained exercises in street-level ethnographic fieldwork with Chinese Muslim for years to come. Conducting fieldwork with Chinese Muslims has been challenging for a number of years, and is now next to impossible given government policies such as the “People’s War on Terror” and the campaign to “Sinicize” Islam and other religious traditions deemed insufficiently acculturated into “traditional” forms of Chinese religiosity. Given the circumstances, it is an excellent book written against all odds.

The book is about China’s largest Muslim minority according to the 2011 population census – not the Turkic-speaking Uyghurs in Xinjiang, but the Sinophone and diasporic Hui. It examines the ways Hui manage the internal and external boundaries of their collective identity in four cities, as well as the way this, in turn, is managed by the Chinese state and Communist Party. Stroup has chosen the sites for field research wisely, holding key parameters constant while exploring interesting variation. On the one hand, all sites are Hui neighborhoods in cities that have recently experienced urban renewal.

On the other hand, two are urban enclaves in cities of China's industrial and political heartland (Beijing and Henan) where Hui and other minorities are small, whereas the other two are in cities of China's less developed Northwest (Yinchuan and Xining) where Hui and other minorities make up a significant share of the local population.

Borrowing from sociologists Fox and Miller-Idriss (2008), Stroup systematically examines the role of "choosing," "talking," "consuming," and "performing" in the way Hui construct the boundaries of their identity, both externally vis-à-vis Han and internally vis-à-vis other Hui. This helps him organize the material, collected during extended periods of fieldwork between 2014 and 2016, including as many as 156 interviews lasting between 10 min and 2 h, into four core chapters. A neat summary in the second half of the concluding chapter (pp. 134–149) culminates in what we may take as the headline finding from Stroup's fieldwork: "the more frequently evoked 'them' in relation to discussion about Hui identity was not the majority Han but rather others seen as being differently – and perhaps improperly – Hui" (p. 149).

The first core chapter, on "choosing," is on how people sort themselves as Hui, for example at the time of a population census, and how this may constrain or enable subsequent choices, for example when it comes to finding a marriage partner. In either case, the choice is constrained. Regarding ethnic categorization, Stroup highlights constraints and incentives set by the Chinese state through the *minzu* system of ethnic categorization alongside community expectations related to cultural preservation and group survival. Regarding the choice of marriage partners, the focus is on community expectations, most notably that a Hui should marry another Hui. These expectations affect Hui more heavily when they are female, strictly religious, and living in an area where the community is large and expectations are strong. Yet, Stroup suggests that, beneath the surface, state policies of ethnic categorization and positive discrimination, rather than community pressure, shape the exercise of choice. Is it true that state policies rather than community pressure are the prime mover behind Hui endogamy? If this is so, then fluctuations in positive and/or negative discrimination by the state should coincide with fluctuations in the relative frequency of Hui endogamy. Data to test this proposition would be available.

The second core chapter, on "talking," discusses the role of Arabic and local dialects in constituting internal and external boundaries of Hui identity. While many respondents seem to believe that proficiency in Arabic sets an external marker distinguishing Hui from Han, in practice it rather distinguishes Hui from other Hui because, for obvious reasons, not everyone is able to learn Quranic Arabic to the same level. Some Hui can recite substantial portions of the Quran in the original language, whereas others are only able to recite the confession of faith (*shahada*) while using select Arab phrases for signaling purposes. Even more so, local dialects solidify internal divisions between Hui rather than establishing a shared marker of distinction from the Han. While such dialects may contain Arabic, Persian, or Turkic loan words or expressions, the Hui fall into many different dialect groups. Idiomatic proficiency varies between generations and sedentary versus migrant demographics. As in the case of "choosing," Stroup asserts that the state foments such divisions, for example by creating disparities in the availability of Arabic-learning resources. While this line of reasoning appears tenuous, it is true that, unlike other ethnic minorities in China, the Hui lack a shared language. Not only does this constitute a relative weakness that learning Arabic, Quranic, or otherwise, cannot compensate, but it may also encourage internal divisions of various sorts, such as how much Arabic a "proper" Hui should know and how many "Muslim" expressions he or she should use. Whether or not the elusive definition of the Hui as an "ethnic" minority is intentional is another question.

The third core chapter, on "consuming," focuses on dietary issues such as the Islamic prohibition of pork and alcohol, as well as the prescription and promotion of *halal* food, which, in China, is also known as *qingzhen*. *Halal* or *qingzhen* food is not only a marker of identity for Hui, but also attracts Han customers, who attribute superior food safety or find it particularly tasty and healthy. Precisely, because anybody can go to an "ethnic" restaurant and consume *qingzhen* as a brand, the value of *halal* food as an external marker of identity is diminished. Therefore, only strict observance of dietary codes, over and above what your average *qingzhen* restaurant offers, can set one apart as a Hui. This, in turn,

activates internal more than external boundaries of collective identity. For example, Hui who would consume neither pork nor alcohol might look down on Hui who might drink a beer with their roast mutton. Similarly, Hui who boycott Han-owned *qingzhen* restaurants as fake may look down on Hui who frequent such places. The former might view the latter as *danhua*, or “Hanified.” Stroup explains these internal divisions with the failure of the Chinese state to standardize *qingzhen* food and regulate its quality. This raises the counterfactual question of whether Hui would use food less as a marker of internal distinctions if the state mandated clearer standards. Holier-than-thou attitudes surrounding who cooks how and who eats what are an old story, and it is debatable whether and to what extent the state drives food-related bigotry. To find out, one could test whether, in Chinese provinces with more stringent *qingzhen* regulation, there is less food-related contestation among Hui. This would have to be so for Stroup’s theory to hold.

The fourth core chapter, on “performing,” discusses official and informal performances of identity. As part of its authoritarian brand of multiculturalism, the Chinese state sponsors and supports public rituals to display minority culture, including religious worship, on select occasions such as festivals. Stroup emphasizes that this “serves as grounds for further, renewed contestation and fragmentation of in-group consensus concerning the appropriate level of piety and observance and the proper content of Hui religious devotion” (p. 115). One reason for this is that many community members find public displays of minority culture and dress code insufficiently authentic, allowing them to look down on community members who willingly collaborate with such performances. Regardless, for many, the most important performances of identity happen “outside the purview of the state” (p. 124). Such rituals are celebrated in a multitude of different ways, for example depending on locality and sect, giving rise to further internal contestation. Thus, a *Yihewani* respondent in Xining finds that local adherents to *Salafi* Islam “tell us we’re not following Islam correctly, and we ought to do things like them” (cited on p. 119). Once again, this raises the question of whether this kind of internal contestation among Hui would be less intense in the absence of what McCarthy (2009) has called “communist multiculturalism.” It also raises the question of whether other ideologies to celebrate diversity, such as liberal multiculturalism in the West, have similar effects on minority identities.

Subsequent to presenting the core chapters, Stroup argues that migration has solidified internal distinctions between Hui. Migration from the countryside to large cities and from Western to Eastern China brings Hui from different backgrounds into close contact, making differences more visible, encouraging the construction of intersecting cleavages such as urban versus rural, modern versus traditional, secular versus religious, educated versus uneducated. “Rather than sharpening the ethnic boundary lines that differentiate the Hui from other groups, this contact between Hui from all walks of life heightens the salience of internal boundaries by highlighting cross-cutting cleavages” (p. 130). Thus, Stroup invokes migration in addition to state policies to explain the relative strength of internal delimitations of Hui identity.

Whether due to migration and/or state policies, internal contestation of identity makes the task of “authoritarian management” easier for the Chinese state and Communist Party because a minority absorbed in the negotiation and renegotiation of internal boundaries is less likely to engage in contentious politics. Urban renewal is a case in point. While other minorities sometimes protest against policies that might dislocate them from urban strongholds threatened by renewal, the Hui seem less prone to resistance. In fact, failure of Hui to resist urban renewal provides Stroup with a research puzzle to open the book, presenting the Hui as an “ideal case” for examining the non-occurrence of ethnic contestation (p. 8).

There is another possible reason for why the Hui seem less prone to ethnic contestation than other minorities. In China, there is a Han-centric socio-spatial hierarchy whereby different minorities receive differential treatment according to their real or perceived level of acculturation (Friedrichs 2017). For example, Turkic Uyghurs are at the receiving end of more repressive policies whereas “Sinicized” Hui enjoy a comparatively high level of accommodation. This, in turn, may explain why Hui tend to avoid ethnic contestation. They may have “learned” that being perceived as more docile

than other minorities upholds a favorable status quo, when compared to the harsher treatment meted out against less acculturated Muslim minorities.

It would be interesting, though beyond the scope of this review, to discuss the relative merits of this and other alternative or complementary explanations for the failure of the Hui to contest policies as often as other Muslim and non-Muslim minorities, such as Uyghurs or Tibetans. While Stroup largely fails to engage in the discussion of alternative and/or complementary accounts, this does not detract from the value of his ethnographic fieldwork, which is superb. Whether grounded in divide-and-rule (Stroup), socio-spatial hierarchy (Friedrichs), and/or something else, relatively benign Han–Hui and state–Hui relations may be unsettled by policies that are less sensitive in terms of calibrating relations between Han and state/party on the one hand, and various Muslim minorities on the other – like “People’s War on Terror” and Sinicization campaigns.

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doi:10.1017/S1479591422000018