

LOCALIZING THE TRANS/NATIONALLY MODERN IMAGINARY: ISLAMIC
“AUTHENTICITY” ON CHINA’S PERIPHERIES

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Due to increasing liberalization following China’s economic reforms, record numbers of Chinese Muslims have gone abroad to other parts of the Muslim world for study, religious pilgrimage (*hajj*) or work. Such direct interaction with the rest of the Muslim world has shaped how Hui-Muslims in China understand, imagine, and articulate their Islamic identity through nationalism, modernity, and Chinese state sovereignty. This dissertation asks how what I term the “transnationally modern” – that is, the imagined and experienced connections between China and the rest of the world that have emerged since China’s “opening up” in 1978 – is complicit in producing particular forms of Hui-Muslim religious “authenticity” in China. How, after decades of isolation, do Muslims in China legitimate their versions of Islam? I delve into this question by comparing two groups of Hui-Muslims in Yunnan Province: the urban, secular elite in the provincial capital Kunming, and the rural, religious elite in the Muslim enclave of Shadian. I examine how Muslims in each of these communities reconstructed their religious “authenticity” after the turmoil of the Cultural Revolution. In particular, I show how their proximity to urban centers of power and their embeddedness in dominant capitalist modes of production shaped the kinds of ethno-religious authenticity they produced. Drawing on two years of ethnographic field

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work and textual research in Yunnan, this study reveals the ways in which imagined connections with transnational Islam are localized within communal, regional, and national spaces. By attending to the ways in which Islam is uniquely localized in Yunnan, this research destabilizes both “Islam” and “China” as totalizing, monolithic forces that, whether through orthodox religious authority or through governmental disciplinary techniques, impose identities and practices on the peoples who participate in those worlds. Ultimately, I seek to illustrate the creative agency of socio-cultural actors. Additionally, this project broadens the debates on Islam, shifting academic literature on Islamic identity from an Arabocentric focus to a global one. By doing so, I re-situate Chinese Muslims within the broader global context, and show how they are connected to the rest of the Muslim world. This research further contributes to current debates about the consolidation of power at the margins of the Chinese state, the perceived threat of Muslim transnationalism, and the relation of historical narratives to concrete practices.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Lesley Rose Turnbull received her B.A. in Anthropology and History from the University of Texas at Austin in 2004. She completed an honors thesis in Anthropology that was based on field work she conducted in Yunnan in 2003. Titled “Marketing Difference: Dai/Han Ethnic Relations in a Tourist Paradise,” it focuses on ethnic relations between the Han and the Dai in Xishuangbanna, specifically through ethnically-driven sex-tourism. Turnbull received her M.A. in Anthropology at Cornell University in 2010.

For my father,
and in memory of my mother.

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Chapter One

Introduction

“It was the will of Allah”: Islamicizing Anti-Japanese Sentiment

One morning in May 2011, about a month after the Tōhoku earthquake and tsunami struck Japan, I visited one of the eleven mosques in the rural Muslim enclave of Shadian, Yunnan Province. With the largest mosque in China, Shadian is reportedly one of its wealthiest Muslim towns, and residents there, like many other pious Yunnanese Muslims, typically donated more than the requisite annual *zakāt*. Pious Muslims throughout Yunnan regularly described the importance of helping less fortunate non-believers, particularly impoverished ethnic minority groups within Yunnan, but also *pinkun* 贫困 (impoverished) and *kelian* 可怜 (pitiful) non-Muslims worldwide. When disaster struck in Africa or in India, they told me, Muslims were the first to send aid. When the Wenchuan earthquake struck Sichuan in 2008, Muslims in Yunnan were (according to said Muslims), among the first to send volunteers and donations. At the same time, Yunnanese Muslims strove to improve the living conditions of their fellow minority-nationalities, like the Miao near Shadian who “even lack roads.” Such generous acts were said to facilitate and signify the spiritual transcendence of those who performed them. According to my interlocutors, these pious Muslims recognized the oneness of Allah, and transcended political borders through their faith.

As I entered the mosque that morning in May, a small contingent of Hui-Muslim interlocutors in tow, I immediately noticed that graphic photographs of the Tōhoku disaster covered the lower half of the lengthy bulletin board that divided the main courtyard. Before I

read the texts pasted above them, I assumed that these horrific photographs were meant to solicit aid. Upon closer inspection, however, I observed to my astonishment that the texts blamed the victims, citing atrocities committed by Japan against China as justified reasons for Allah's wrath. Specifically, there were two types of writings pasted next to and above the photographs: verses from the Quran, which chronicled Allah's punishments of sinful non-believers, and short texts listing or describing atrocities (*baoxing* 暴行) committed by Japan against China. In addition to more recent international relations issues, most prominently Japan's refusal to acknowledge its war crimes, most of the listed atrocities described violent abuse during the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-45), such as the Japanese occupation of Manchuria and its use of civilians there as test subjects for biological weapons; the forced prostitution of so-called comfort women; and mostly explicitly the Rape of Nanjing (*Nanjing Datusha* 南京大屠杀) (1937-38), the six-week long assault in which Japanese soldiers systematically tortured, raped, and massacred an estimated 200,000 to 300,000 Chinese civilians (Chang 1997: 100-104).

The verses from the Quran plastered above each photo foretold imminent doom for non-believers. For instance, the following verses (here in English translation; the texts at the mosque were in the original Arabic and in Mandarin translation) come from a chapter that tells of the imminent and just punishment of the Kingdom of 'Ād, who in arrogance built the largest buildings ever to flaunt their power, and refused to heed warnings to worship Allah faithfully:

And as for 'Aad, they were destroyed by a screaming, violent wind Which Allah imposed upon them for seven nights and eight days in succession, so you would see the people therein fallen as if they were hollow trunks of

palm trees. 69: 6-7¹

When I asked my interlocutors about these verses, which describe how Allah sent a sandstorm that killed all of the people of ‘Ād, they said that considering Japan had been struck by two natural catastrophes, one of which was a “great wind” – just like in these Quranic verses – Japan’s disaster was clearly an act of retribution. Like the people of ‘Ād, the Japanese are non-believers and, according to my interlocutors, arrogant sinners who deserved Allah’s wrath. I pointed out that similar catastrophes befall other non-believers, such as the victims of the Wenchuan earthquake, and the Hui-Muslims had sent donations. Why was this any different?

“Because,” said one woman, “in this case, the Japanese deserved this punishment.”

Everyone nodded.

“Why?”

“Have you heard about the Rape of Nanjing? Read that list of Japanese atrocities. The Japanese are dogs, not human beings. It was the will of Allah.”

As I read the list, one of the men, Mr. Sun, a Shadian native and manager at one of the mines who was in his mid-fifties, pointed me toward the last line of this cluster of verses:²

And [We destroyed] Qarun and Pharaoh and Haman. And Moses had already come to them with clear evidences, and they were arrogant in the land, but they were not out runners [of Our punishment].
So each We seized for his sin; and among them were those upon whom We sent a storm of stones, and among them were those who were seized by the blast [from the sky], and among them were those whom We caused the earth to swallow, and among them were those whom We drowned. And Allah would not have wronged them, but it was they who were wronging

¹ . The Chinese translation of these verses is as follows: 至於阿德人，已为怒吼的暴风所毁灭。真主曾使暴风对著他们连刮了七夜八昼，你看阿德人倒仆在地上，好像空心的海枣树幹一样。

² . All names and identifying information have been changed throughout this dissertation.

themselves. 29: 39-40³

Mr. Sun explained patiently, “The Japanese chose to commit those brutal acts against China. They could have acted otherwise, but they did not. They offended Allah with their wickedness, and they deserved to suffer and die.”

Another man interrupted, smiling broadly, “We Chinese Muslims rejoice to see Allah punish the Japanese so.”

Flustered and still confused, I asked, “But you typically send donations, even to non-Muslims. How are Japanese crimes any different from other massacres? Would you send donations to Germany if it suffered such catastrophes?”

Mr. Sun said, “Yes, of course we would send donations to Germany. They have never harmed us. But the Japanese have committed crimes against China. That is why we are happy that they are suffering now, as we have.”

This incident, which happened after I had already been in the field for 16 months, surprised me perhaps more than any other. Throughout my time in Shadian, Hui-Muslims there had repeatedly insisted that they are oriented primarily toward the Islamic world, and that as ethnic and religious minorities in China, they do not concern themselves with “domestic politics” except where they themselves, and the practice of Islam, are concerned. They frequently lambasted the Chinese government for its oppression of Uyghurs in Xinjiang, while thanking Allah that in Shadian they could practice Islam freely, without (much) government intervention. Shadian Hui-Muslims endeavored to promote a positive image of Islam, one that advocated

³. The Chinese translation of these verses is as follows: (我曾毁灭) 戈伦、法老和哈曼。穆萨曾昭示他们许多明证，但他们在地方上自大，他们未能逃避天谴。每一个人，我都因他的罪过而加以惩罚，他们中有我曾使飞沙走石的暴风去伤害的，有为恐怖所袭击的，有我使他沦陷在地面下的，有被我溺杀的，真主不致亏枉他们，但他们亏枉了自己。

charity and compassion.

After seeing the display at the mosque, I asked Zhao Chen, a twenty-something Hui-Muslim madrassah student in Shadian, what she knew about it and the recent events in Japan. She suggested we visit an Internet café, where together we pored over blogs and Sina Weibo posts that read, for instance, “Never forget national humiliation!” (*wuwang guochi* 勿忘国耻), “Puny Japan [an ethnic slur] deserves death” (*xiao riben gaisi* 小日本该死), “It’s good that they’re dead. It’d be better if they all died” (*si de hao zuihao siguang* 死得好最好死光), and “Because it’s Japan, I’m happy.” (*yinwei shi riben wo kaixin* 因为是日本我开心). Such posts littered the Sino-blogsphere. According to Zhao Chen, it was only “natural” that the Hui would hate the Japanese, because the Hui are Chinese. However, many Chinese netizens posted their sympathies for Japan, and some mosque communities in Shadian did send donations to Japan. Back in Kunming, most of my Hui-Muslim interlocutors expressed shock, horror, and sadness at such a sudden and devastating catastrophe. Even the Chinese government donated to the post-disaster humanitarian effort, with the total amount of donations from China and its citizens reaching over 9 million USD.

Moreover, Muslims in Shadian tended to align themselves with the transnational community of Muslims, not with China. That the mosque committee had actively agreed on that anti-Japanese display – that they had selected those specific passages from the Quran, tracked down those graphic photos, and compiled the list of Japanese atrocities, and then, with the imam’s consent, publicly proclaimed their anti-Japanese sentiments in a mosque where the imam also declared that ethnicity and nationality had no significance – seemed to contradict their professed identities as transnational Muslims unencumbered by their nation-state. The public

rejoicing of Japanese deaths and suffering by pious Muslims only makes their nationalism more distinct.⁴ In this case, Yunnanese Muslims who typically aligned themselves with the transnational Umma became what I term “situationally nationalist.” That is, aspects of Chinese nationalism typically obscured by their professed identity as transnational Muslims – here, their anti-Japanese sentiment, cultivated by the CCP and the Chinese media – dominated their response to certain international events. Situational nationalism, similar to Uradyn Bulag’s (2010) notion of “collaborative nationalism,” is constructed with and against tensions between two or more dominant national powers, in this case, the P.R.C. and Japan, along with the imagined Islamic community. Unlike Bulag’s “collaborative nationalism,” however, Japan was hardly attempting to “befriend” Hui-Muslims in Shadian, and, furthermore, Hui-Muslim “situational nationalism” was constructed against Japan, not as the result of Japanese and Chinese competition over Muslim loyalty.

In some ways, Shadian Muslim situational nationalism was a strategic choice, one that temporarily pushed them out of peripheral China and into the nationalist core, legitimizing their place in the nation. At such times, Shadian Muslims praised the P.R.C.’s religious tolerance, referring to national policies and government bureaus that protect religion (so long as those protected patriotically worship in government sanctioned ways). In addition, they would favorably compare their own situations to non-Chinese Muslims, remarking that contemporary China is far more “modern” than most of the currently “backwards” Islamic world. Chinese

⁴ . A handful of Muslims in other parts of the world claimed that Japan had suffered these catastrophes because of their refusal to submit to Allah, although many more sent donations through Muslim charity organizations. What set these pious Yunnanese Muslims apart from their non-Chinese brethren, however, was their claim that Allah had punished Japan for the atrocities it had committed against China in the late 19th century and especially during the Second Sino-Japanese War. Many explicitly invoked the Rape of Nanjing as the cause for Allah’s wrath.

Muslim women, in particular, were viewed as exemplifying this modernity, because compared with their Muslim sisters in the rest of the world, Chinese Muslim women were liberated, educated, and well-respected.

Situational Nationalism and Affect

Like other forms of nationalism, situational nationalism was also deeply felt and experienced by those who expressed and practiced it.⁵ From time to time, Chinese Muslims expressed deep gratitude for living in China, or for benefitting from ethnic or religious policies, and they often expressed pride in their country's achievements. However, whereas Shadian Muslims often proclaimed their love for Islam and the Umma, the most profound nationalist sentiments they expressed to me were of anti-Japanese hate rather than pro-Chinese love. Certain categories of Yunnanese Muslims, such as hajjis, CCP members, and successful businesspeople, occasionally discussed their nationalism in pro-China terms, but the depth of emotion capable of expression through situational nationalism was perhaps most impressed upon me during a visit with some minority-nationality friends in the Xishuangbanna Dai Autonomous Prefecture in southern Yunnan.

During the winter of 2008, I escaped the harshness of Beijing by visiting friends in Xishuangbanna, known for its sunshine and hospitable Dai nationality. After a day of biking around the countryside, Pan Liling, a Wa-Dai tour guide I had met in 2004, suggested we meet up with a bunch of other friends, all *shaoshu minzu* 少数民族 (minority-nationalities), for dinner at a Hani place, followed by drinks. Eventually, we wound up at a night market, where, perched on small red plastic stools, we crowded around a table laden with Dai-style barbecue. We nibbled

⁵ . Anderson (2006) emphasizes the emotional component of nationalism, asking, for example, why is it that people are willing to sacrifice their lives for this concept?

on grilled eggplant stuffed with pork, spicy *luofei yu* 罗非鱼 (tilapia), pork wrapped in banana leaves, and grilled pineapple, while drinking rice wine and talking. We had been out drinking and eating for hours, and by 2 am (not that late by Banna standards), we were all very drunk. We somehow stumbled onto the contentious subject of Chinese history, and its glorious 5,000 years – a topic that riled me up. When I challenged the “5,000 years” myth, my friends pointed to Sima Qian’s *Records of the Grand Historian* and to the common descent of all Chinese from the Yellow Emperor. At some point during our discussion, I mentioned that 5,000 years ago Banna wasn’t even part of China. In fact, it is debatable that it was even “part of China” until the late Qing Dynasty, and even then its incorporation into the Imperium was soon shaken by the fall of the Qing and the subsequent rise of various regional warlords. Because these friends were a mix of Dai, Wa and Hani, I expected them to know and revel in the fact that this land had once been independent from the Chinese Empire. As a member of the Chickasaw Nation, and as a Texan, I am familiar with groups who are proud of having once been nations, and who may even be secessionist. Granted, it is problematic to apply the modern concept of a “nation,” with all its accoutrements, to pasts in which such a notion did not necessarily exist. Nevertheless, even though these places may have never existed as a modern nation, some people tend to treat them as such for purposes of pride, tourism, and as a means to distinguish one’s identity from that of an oppressor.

Although two of the five people agreed with me, arguing that the Dai in particular traditionally had their own “homeland” (*jiayuan* 家园), Sipsongpanna (Twelve Rice Growing Kingdoms), to which China had for centuries lacked access except through tribute relations, the other three people became incredibly upset. By the end of the night, Pan Liling, my closest friend

among them, was in tears and one of the men had stormed off angrily shouting, “China has always been China! Banna is part of China and always has been!” Pan Liling sobbed and passionately declared, “I would give my life for China. China is like my mother: even though sometimes I don’t like her, or what she does, if she ever became sick, I would do anything to help her, even die.” Such profound emotional attachment to what I viewed as an oppressive nation-state baffled me, particularly given the fact that in other situations, these same actors had aligned themselves with their respective minority-nationality group, all of which cross national borders in Southeast Asia.⁶ In December 2012, I recounted this event to my friend and colleague Kevin Carrico and his wife Leaf. Leaf suggested that my friends had only responded in this way because I am not Chinese, and that while they probably secretly relished their *shaoshu minzu* history, they would always put on a “patriotic” face for an outsider. Shadian Hui-Muslims similarly cultivated Chinese nationalism in its negative space; rather than originating in the love of their nation, their nationalist sentiments ricocheted off Japan, which they denounced in religious terms. In fact, their Islamic identity and religiosity enabled them to express Chinese nationalism while simultaneously distinguishing themselves from non-Muslim Chinese. Likewise, indigenous groups in Yunnan straddled nations in an emotional sense as well as a physical one. One of the primary questions that this dissertation revolves around is: how is such trans/nationalism cultivated, and how do people who are at once transnationals and (at times) nationalist reconcile these seemingly contradictory positions?

⁶ . Although ethnonyms differ, those called “Dai” in China also live in Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, and Vietnam; those called Hani reside also in Laos and Vietnam; and those called “Wa” also live in Myanmar and Thailand.

Nationalism and “Modernity”

In his Marxist historiography of the development of nations and nationalism, Eric Hobsbawm (1992) argues that modernity is “the basic characteristic” of the nation and that not until 1884 did the concept of *tierra* become attached to a state, showing how the national myth and the ways in which ideas of a glorious past become the basis for the creation of a national identity (especially by writers and politicians) (1992:15). Similarly, Ernst Gellner (1983) and Benedict Anderson (2006) articulate the now orthodox models nation and nationalism as socially constructed products of modernity. With the notable exception of Anderson’s (2006) paradigm⁷, in these models, modernity – viewed as a European invention – emanates from the West and hierarchically situates societies, claiming universality in an inevitable process through which all societies will eventually proceed. Critiques of such models abound (e.g., Chakrabarty 2002; Chatterjee 1993; Mitchell 2000). Partha Chatterjee (1993) critiques this notion that the “imagined community” emerged in the Americas and spread from there to Europe and, through colonialism, to other parts of the world, asking, “If [as Anderson’s theory argues] nationalisms in the rest of the world have to choose their imagined community from certain ‘modular’ forms already made available to them by Europe and the Americas, what do they have left to imagine?” (5). Chatterjee resolves tensions between material and spiritual domains in under colonial power, showing how anti-colonial nationalism “creates its own domains of sovereignty within colonial society well before it begins its political battle with the imperial power” (6). His model is particularly useful for anthropologists of non-Western societies who aim to reveal

⁷ . In this model, nation-states and nationalism, both closely linked to modernity, originated in the American colonies from which they spread to Europe and subsequently to Asia and Africa through colonialism.

the creative tensions in the invention of “imagined communities.”

Anderson’s theory of the nation as an “imagined community” has become the hegemonic paradigm with which most contemporary scholars of nationalism must engage; indeed contemporary scholarship on nationalism in China rarely deviates from this (e.g., see Gladney 1996:168,328; Harrell 2001:171; Tapp 2003; Anagnost 1997). Crucially, the notion of “imagined community” positions subjects as creative actors in the process of modernity. Moreover, in contemporary China, Anderson’s point that “‘imagined antiquity’” was central to establishing the idea of the nation is crucial for understanding people’s (at times overwhelming) emotional attachment to the past. However, when applied to the Chinese context, this theory also leaves much to be desired. Most obviously, Anderson overemphasizes the significance of capitalism in the creation of nations, neglecting how nationalism developed outside of capitalist systems. Furthermore, Anderson’s linking of literacy and nationalism is perhaps overly deterministic. What about the influence of other factors, especially other forms of communication such as radio, television, and Internet? Although these forms of technology developed later than did print, they have no doubt shaped nationalism and its spread. What challenges do such new forms of technology present for governments and national identities?

To this end, in this dissertation I attend to the local specifics of nationalism within China, specifically Kunming and Shadian Hui-Muslim communities. Even between those two communities, allegedly part of the same group, local socio-economic processes and indigenous attitudes differently shaped the development and character of nationalism. Departing from Anderson’s theory, which, despite whatever actual inequalities may exist among the people of a nation, “imagines” the community “as a deep, horizontal comradeship” (7), the Hui both

imagined themselves and are positioned in hierarchical – not horizontal – relationships within China. Scholars of ethnic nationalism in China have tended to focus on the nationalism of one particular *minzu* 民族 rather than analyze the ways in which those *minzu* imagine themselves as at once distinct from and part of the Chinese nation as a whole, the *Zhonghua minzu* 中华民族. In the case of Yunnanese Hui-Muslims, these hierarchical relationships dominate at the level of the Chinese nation as a whole, because even while imagining themselves as Chinese, they simultaneously position themselves as advancing ahead of the rest of the Chinese nation. They do this by relying upon their identification with the transnational Islamic community, which they strategically view as superior to the Chinese nation. At the same time, however, they laud China's economic development, which they say places them "above" non-Chinese Muslims. In this way, the seemingly peripheral Hui-Muslims of Yunnan Province re-center themselves on multiple transnational stages. This positioning, which I term the "trans/national modern imaginary" is multiple and strategically chosen at specific historical moments. Rather than resulting in a fragmented subject, it enables them to reconcile their multiple and even superficially contradictory subject positions by carving out a space both within and beyond the nation.

A major part of this project, then, is to re-situate Yunnanese Hui-Muslims within global Islam, and to re-center Islam. Although the majority of the world's Muslims reside in Asia, both the academy and the media tend to define Muslim identity in Arabocentric terms. Indeed, the top four Muslim countries by population are Indonesia, India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, all of which are in South and East Asia. And yet, Islamic studies largely focus on Middle Eastern countries, reinforcing the notion that Islamic "authenticity" radiates from a Middle Eastern center. My

dissertation research challenges this notion by examining the variety and diversity of locally produced Sino-Islamic “authenticity,” situated within a global understanding of Islam.

At the same time, I aim here to destabilize the notion of modernity as a unique force acting in the world. Rather, I argue that what we term “modernity” obscures the processes it attempts to describe. For one, the everyday use of the temporalized term “modern” to mean “contemporary” or “advanced” differs from how it is used in most scholarly treatments. Those, too, however, present problems, as “modernity” is deployed and characterized in myriad ways: as imaginings or ideological tropes (e.g., Appadurai 1996; Rofel 1992; Schein 2000; Knauff 2002); as a great transformation disrupting the pre-modern past from the modern present (e.g., Anderson 2006; Gellner 1983; Hobsbawm 1992; Habermas 1987; Wallerstein 1974); as various changes brought about by technological developments (e.g., Gellner 1983; Watson 2006; Chatterjee 1993); as the creation of certain modes of thought through Enlightenment rationality (e.g., Chakrabarty 2002; Chatterjee 1993; Mitchell 2000); as “identity spaces” produced through “commercial imperial systems” (Friedman 1994). In addition, while validly critiquing the concept of “modernity” as Eurocentric, quite a few anthropologists have pointed out that the notion of “alternative modernities” seems to create infinite possibilities for what “counts” as modern (Chakrabarty 2002; Knauff 2002; Mitchell 2000). Ethnographically, for instance, the alternative modernities paradigm dichotomizes the modern and non-modern. Because of the hierarchy involved in those terms, culturally relativistic ethnographers refuse to classify anyone as non-modern. Thus, everyone is modern and the meaning of modernity evaporates. Hence, Friedman (2002) identifies in the notion of alternative modernities a “politically correct approach to difference” (302). In addition, the “alternatively modern” emphasis on localized patterns

neglects to account for broader patterns of power and domination, such as the hegemonic force of global capitalism (Knauff 2002).

Can we reconcile such issues with alternative modernities? Although some would discard the notion of modernity entirely (e.g., Kelly 2002), Chakrabarty (2002) calls for a rigorous re-definition of the concept, arguing that it is too entrenched in our consciousness for us to abandon entirely. Such a definition, however, must also attend to “non-canonical” versions of modernity that challenge our current distinctions. Chakrabarty attempts to provide such a conceptualization in analyzing the ritual wearing of *khadi* by male Indian politicians. This practice, he argues, articulates both the heterogeneity involved in constructing modernity and modernity’s links to broader political-economic and socio-historical patterns. Similarly, Coronil’s (1997) notion of “subaltern modernities” expresses a notion of modernity as a globally dominant but not necessarily universal pattern.

Jonathan Friedman (1994; 2008), responding to issues surrounding our current notions of modernity, suggests that it is impractical either to discard the term entirely or to attempt to reform thoroughly our multiple understandings of it. Instead, we should carefully distinguish between its various uses. According to Friedman, modernity’s haphazard association with various traits that lack an underlying structure leads to misuse and misunderstanding of the term because its various uses are easily conflated. Moreover, although the current concept of “alternative modernities” implicitly and problematically locates itself within dependency relations, modernity of the center also remains inadequately theorized. Friedman attempts to redress this by elaborating a theory of modernity that is neither uniquely Western, nor constrained within a specific time-frame; rather, Friedman’s modernity is a conditional process

of “identity space” generated in “commercial imperial systems” (Friedman 1994).

By “identity space,” Friedman means a configuration of various, alternative identities structured by specific parameters that are generated by the rise of hegemonic powers in systems of commercial reproduction. Modernity then, in this conceptualization, is not merely a product but a structured process of cultural production; thus, he argues, cultural products of modernity may differ cross-culturally but its processes of cultural production are similar. Friedman therefore critiques approaches which overemphasize the mental aspects of the global and the modern. Although he concedes that an awareness of global interdependency is important, we must not neglect to analyze the interdependence itself, particularly because the global system produces real societal transformations.

Modernity, for Friedman, is not a “culturally defined identity with a fixed content”; rather, it is a situation, a condition that produces particular cultural structures associated with modernity (1994: 214). Configurations of various interrelated aspects combine to produce these structures; these intertwined elements are not autonomous but are rather “generated in and by sets of fundamental relations” (1994: 222). These “modern” constructs typically assumed to be “paradigmatic of Western culture” are actually structural, not culture-specific (1994: 212). Among these elements, the process of individualization, which engenders “a complex social process in which social and cosmological dissolution and the integration of the self occur as a simultaneity” is instrumental for the production of the other elements (1994: 221-222). This process leads to the emergence of the “modern individual” (caused by various factors including the relative decentralization of wealth) that distinguishes between the actual self (private) and the

role or representation of the self (public).⁸ Friedman argues that other structural constructs associated with modernity, such as ethnicity, democracy and alienation, would be impossible without the emergence of the modern individual.

Although Friedman's theory avoids many of the aforementioned problems with the concept of "modernity," like Anderson, he overemphasizes modernity's association with capitalism or, more broadly understood, "commercial imperial systems." In some ways Friedman's theory is quite useful for this project, particularly because it manages to overcome both the inherent Eurocentrism and the temporalization of other models, while also salvaging the concept itself. In addition, his structural theory of the emergence of the modern individuals has influenced how I attend to the processes of subject formation in contemporary Chinese Muslim communities. However, ultimately I have chosen to employ two synthetically related notions of "modernity," a structural one based on Friedman's theory as described here, and an ideological one based primarily on the specific imaginings of "modernity" as articulated by my interlocutors.

The Trans/national Modern Imaginary

Due to increasing liberalization following China's economic reforms, especially since the 1990s, record numbers of Chinese Muslims have gone abroad to other parts of the Muslim world, including Egypt, Syria, and Saudi Arabia, for study, religious pilgrimage (*hajj*) or work. Such direct interaction with the rest of the Muslim world has shaped how Hui-Muslims in China understand, imagine, and articulate their Islamic identity through nationalism, modernity, and Chinese state sovereignty. This dissertation asks how what I term the "transnationally modern" –

⁸ . Friedman posits a continuum of personhood ranging from the "social, holistic" to "individualistic", not a dichotomy. However, it seems that it is this dichotomization of the individual that creates the conditions for generating other modern structural constructs.

that is, the imagined and experienced connections between China and the rest of the world that have emerged since China's economic reforms and "opening up" in 1978 – is complicit in producing particular forms of Hui-Muslim religious "authenticity" in China. Specifically, it investigates how Yunnanese Muslims in two different communities – the rural Muslim enclave of Shadian and the provincial capital, Kunming – reconstructed their religious "authenticity" after the turmoil of the Cultural Revolution. In particular, I compare these two communities, and show how their proximity to urban centers of power and their embeddedness in dominant capitalist modes of production shaped the kinds of ethno-religious authenticity they produced. Drawing on two years of ethnographic field work and textual research in Yunnan, this research reveals the ways in which imagined connections with transnational Islam are localized within communal, regional, and national spaces. How, after decades of isolation, do Muslims in China legitimize their versions of Islam?

Background: Place

In this section, I follow classic ethnographic tradition and sketch out the "place" where I conducted field work. However, I also aim to highlight the fact that these "places" were hardly static; they continually shaped and were shaped by the peoples who inhabited them. That is not to suggest that places lack any sense of continuity, but rather, the political, economic, and cultural forces that appear to be territorially bound are in fact produced by the subjects who live in that territory even as that amalgam of forces produces those subjects. Over the course of my own relationship with Yunnan, I have observed, participated in, and been subjected to these processes. Based on my experiences there, I suggest that we should re-conceptualize the changes that are occurring in contemporary China, which are typically represented as a monumental

rupture in time, economy, and materiality, sparked by a sudden sprint toward capitalism. On the contrary, I seek to destabilize this temporalized trope of “modernity” and recover the ways in which local social actors re-fashion place, not through rupture but through subtle, continual processes. In particular, I focus on how local processes of change in Yunnan intersect and are interwoven with regional, national, and transnational processes. By comparing two very different sites within Yunnan, the provincial capital of Kunming, and the rural Muslim enclave of Shadian, this research sheds light on the significance of specific locality with regards to overstretched transformations such as “transnationalism.”



Map of Muslim Distribution. Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection.

Yunnan, “South of the Clouds”

Yunnan Province lies in the southwestern corner of contemporary China, and shares borders with Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar, and the Tibetan Autonomous Region, as well as with the Chinese provinces of Sichuan, Guizhou, and Guangxi. The bulk of the province is within G. William Skinner’s (1995) Yun-Gui “macroregion,” and extends from the Tibetan Plateau in the northwest, to subtropical rainforest in the south. This varied and vast geography contributes to its rich biological diversity. Although official historical records have incorporated Yunnan into “Chinese” territory since the southern expansion of the Han (ca. 109 BC), dominance by “Chinese” imperial powers was hardly continuous.⁹ Yunnan was the site of the Nanzhao (737-937) and Dali (937-1253) Kingdoms, among others.¹⁰ Once a place to send exiled officials, Yunnan has long been imagined as an exotic, remote paradise (Tapp 2008; Litzinger 2000; Yang Bin 2008). The province’s very name – “South of the Clouds” – conjures a romanticized vision of a mystical “Shangri-la” – indeed, the provincial government claims to have discovered James Hilton’s fictional utopia in northwest Yunnan.¹¹

⁹ . I have set “Chinese” off in quotation marks here to destabilize the notion of an unchanging, territorially and culturally monolithic China, throughout the oft-claimed “five thousand years of history.”

For more on the historical changes in Yunnan’s relationship to the Chinese Imperium, see Harrell (1995); Giersch (2006); Cooper (1871).

¹⁰ . The mid-19th century *Pingnan Guo* 平南国 (lit. “Pacified Southern Kingdom) was led by the Muslim leader Du Wenxiu.

¹¹ . In 2001, the name of the predominantly Tibetan Zhongdian County (*zhongdian xian*) 中甸县 was officially changed to Shangri-la County (*xianggelila xian* 香格里拉县), most likely in order to boost tourism. The words *shenqi* 神奇 (magical or mystical) and *shenmi* 神秘 (mysterious or mystical) are both used copiously in Yunnan tourism advertisements.



According to the 2010 National Census, Yunnan is one of the most ethnically diverse provinces, with minority-nationalities making up about one third of the total provincial population of 46 million. The Hui make up approximately 698,000 of Yunnan's population.¹²

Mining for mineral resources is Yunnan's leading industry, although the production of tobacco, tea, coffee, and other agricultural products remains a significant part of the economy. In recent decades, tourism has flourished, with approximately 200 million domestic tourists and 4.6 million international tourists in 2012.¹³ Although Yunnan's tourism industry owes much to the province's mild climate and stunning landscapes, the exoticization and eroticization of many of Yunnan's minority-nationality groups contribute significantly to the tourism boom. Notably, many of my Hui-Muslim interlocutors complained that the Hui were not perceived as exotic

¹² . It is estimated that there are approximately 23 million Muslims in China, 10 million of them Hui.

¹³ . Xinhua News Agency.

enough to benefit economically from tourism. In Shadian, some of my interlocutors told me that they hoped my “book” would open the gates to tourism there. In Kunming there is a travel agency that caters primarily to Muslims (Kunming Wanhao Muslim Travel Agency 昆明万豪穆斯林旅行社). While it occasionally offers visiting delegations of foreign or domestic Muslim leaders tours to historical Muslim sites in Yunnan, it mostly participates in the ethnic tourism of non-Muslim minority-nationalities.



Map of Yunnan Province, China, with Shadian added. Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection.

Why Yunnan?

Perhaps the most obvious question regarding “place” in this dissertation is why Yunnan? Anthropologists have flocked to Yunnan since at least the days of Malinowski’s and Radcliffe-Brown’s famous student Fei Xiatong (e.g., see Fei 1945), and the region has long attracted foreign missionaries, explorers, and “incidental ethnographers” such as Joseph Rock, who have documented much about its cultural, linguistic, and ethnic diversity (e.g., see Michaud 2007; Davies 1909; Clarke 1911; J. F. Rock 2007; J. F. C. Rock 1948; Sutton 1974; Goullart 2010). Moreover, the “exotic” and “colorful” non-Muslim minorities overshadow the Hui, who are much more culturally dominant in Northwestern China, particularly in the Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region.¹⁴ As many Han majority people told me during my field work, Yunnanese Hui are merely Han who abstain from pork.

Contrary to popular belief, the history of Hui in Yunnan is rich, varied, and complex, as are the ways in which contemporary Yunnanese Hui negotiate and refashion their relationships with and against the state, other ethnic groups, Islam, and the various processes that maintain and transform the contexts in which they live. Yunnanese Hui-Muslims are especially proud of their “illustrious” history, which they usually trace back to the Yuan Dynasty (1272-1368), when Kublai Khan’s invading armies, which included Muslims from Central Asia, conquered Yunnan. Scores of these Muslim soldiers and artisans settled in Yunnan, including the first governor of Yunnan Province, Sayyid Ajjal Shams al-Din Omar (Armijo 1997; Lipman 1997; Dillon 2013). Many contemporary Hui-Muslims in Yunnan and beyond trace their ancestry back to the celebrated governor. A smaller number of other Hui-Muslims, primarily in Kunming, claim to be

¹⁴ . See map of the distribution of Muslims in China, from the Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection at the University of Texas-Austin.

descended from Arab traders, who entered China via the Maritime Silk Road during the Tang Dynasty (618-907). In other legends, their ancestors were descended from the Prophet's maternal uncle and other *Sahabah* (companions of the Prophet), who purportedly came to China as emissaries in 618. Other famous Yunnanese Muslims, including the "Great Navigator" Zheng He, the "Confucian Muslim" Ma Zhu, and scholars such as Ma Jian, Na Zhong, and Na Xun, are lauded by local Hui and the Yunnanese government alike. The names of Sayyid Ajjal Shams al-Din Omar, Zheng He, Ma Jian, Na Zhong, and Na Xun, for instance, are inscribed on the outer wall of the Kunming Mingde Nationalities Middle School, adjacent to inscriptions bearing quotations by Confucius, Mao Zedong, and the Prophet Muhammad. The public juxtaposition of the names of these renowned Yunnanese Hui-Muslims with Confucius and Mao – not to mention the equalizing placement of Muhammad – at once incorporates these Muslim leaders into the Chinese pantheon and placates powerful Hui locals. In contrast, Du Wenxiu, the Muslim leader of the anti-Qing Panthay Rebellion (1856-1873) and self-styled Sultan of Dali, is today remembered as a folk hero but only rarely praised publicly (Atwill 2003; 2005).¹⁵

That the historical ramifications of the Panthay Rebellion extend into the present makes Yunnan a particularly compelling place to research the Hui. Even today, Hui-Muslims throughout Yunnan invoke the rebellion as a genocide, as the bulk of the Yunnanese Muslim population were slaughtered, along with many Hui cultural and religious traditions (Notar 2001; Armijo 2001).

Prior to the early 19th century, when an influx of Han migrants flooded the region and the Qing

¹⁵ . Beth Notar (2001) traces the representation of Du Wenxiu through 20th century Chinese scholarly and popular literature, showing how historical circumstances influenced the official interpretation of Du, who moved from being a folk hero in 1951 to being a traitor to the Maoist state in 1955. Du was later rehabilitated in the post-reform era, primarily as a "historical commodity" that Dali officials could exploit to boost tourism.

Imperium strengthened its hold, the multi-ethnic peoples in Yunnan lived relatively peacefully, in contrast to retrospective interpretations that characterize local relationships between Muslims and non-Muslims as inherently strained (Atwill 2005: 70; Wang Jianping 1995, 1996). At the time, non-Han peoples outnumbered the Han, with Yunnanese Muslims making up approximately ten percent of the provincial population of ten million (Atwill 2005: 29). The multi-ethnic rebellion, according to Atwill, stemmed not only from Qing anti-Hui discrimination but also from Yunnan's "transnational orientation" toward Southeast Asia, and local "resistance to the project of re-orienting Yunnan politically and culturally" toward China (2005:18, 63). After the rebellion, the province was devastated and its population halved (Atwill 2005:185). Beth Notar quotes a Hui interlocutor from Dali who says of the Panthay Rebellion, "Our community has never recovered" (Notar 2001: 63). In contemporary Yunnan Hui-Muslims (and others, including the state) interweave this history with that of other violent incidents.

Yunnan's "transnational orientation" toward Southeast Asia, and Yunnanese Muslims' intermittent alignment with the rest of the Muslim world also distinguishes Islam in Yunnan from what is practiced in other parts of China. Like most Chinese Muslims, Yunnanese Hui are Sunni Hanafi, although given the recent resurgence in Yunnan-Southeast Asian relations, it certainly is possible that Southeast Asian Shafi'i could influence Yunnanese Islamic practice.¹⁶ Yunnanese Muslims are especially renowned for their historical participation in long-distance trade (especially into Southeast Asia), and their contemporary business acumen, both of which connect them transnationally (Hill 1982; 1998; Forbes 1986a, 1986b, 1988, 1997; Sen and Chen 2009).

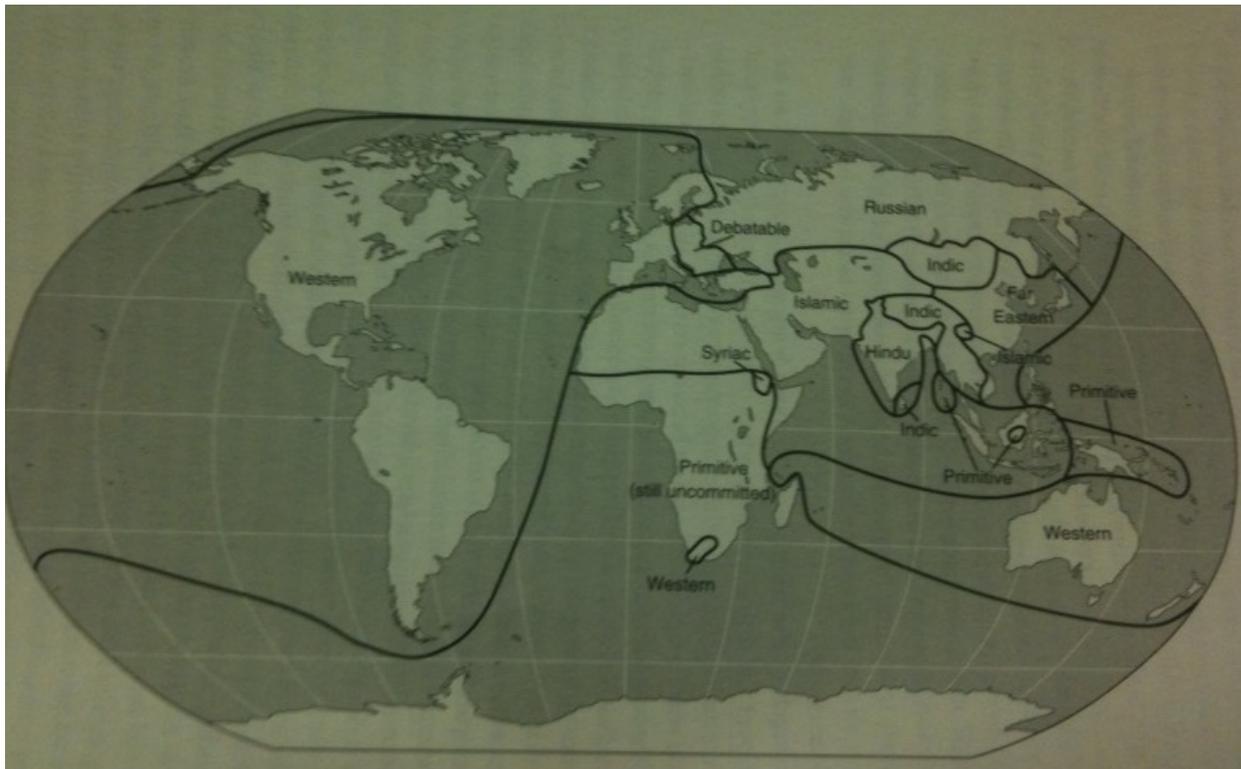
¹⁶ . In 2009, the province launched its "Gateway Project," which will further connect Southwest China to Southeast Asia through improved transportation infrastructure, increased foreign trade, and exchanges of university students, among other means.

Although relations with the rest of the Muslim world were largely (though not entirely) suspended during the Maoist years, historically Yunnanese Hui-Muslims have been relatively wealthy, and therefore have had the means to send local notables abroad to study and/or to make the pilgrimage. Even during World War II, a handful of elite Muslims, including some Yunnanese, studied in Egypt and made the pilgrimage to Mecca (Mao 2011; 2012).

In the post-reform era, Yunnanese Muslims have recovered their previous wealth, primarily by working in the mining industry and the commercial sector. As Muslims in other parts of China have repeatedly remarked to me, “Yunnanese Muslims are very wealthy.” Their wealth distinguishes them from Muslims in Northwestern China, the vast majority of whom are impoverished and politically disenfranchised. In contrast, Yunnanese Muslims are able to exert substantial local authority, and in some cases even relative political autonomy. Unlike Muslims in China’s Northwest, Yunnanese Hui – especially those in Muslim enclaves like Shadian – are granted relative leeway in practicing Islam. Additionally, prosperous Hui often invest their wealth into the community, further strengthening it. This has yielded significant benefits for the community with regards to education, as wealthy Hui regularly support Hui students, who in turn give back to the community, while, at the same time, education becomes increasingly valued among Hui-Muslims, and more become well-educated.

Although Yunnan is perceived as “peripheral” to China’s political and economic core, Beijing, in fact it serves as an important cross-cultural node of transnational influence. Yunnan’s Hui-Muslims, similarly, are uniquely positioned to mediate the changes that have occurred in the wake of China’s post-reform “opening up,” as they are at once peripheral to and part of China, Southeast Asia, and the Muslim world. This multiple positioning, for them, is neither

schizophrenic nor contradictory; rather, in most cases, they fluidly negotiate these worlds which make up their world.¹⁷



Toynbee's World Map of "Civilizations," Yunnan marked as Islamic. circa 1952 (Lewis and Wigen 1997)

Interlocutors from my primary field sites, Kunming and Shadian, negotiated these worlds in complex yet interrelated ways, which I aim to describe in this dissertation. These two sites differ considerably, and such differences certainly shaped the ways in which Hui-Muslims in each site negotiated their world. For instance, Kunming is the provincial capital, with a total population of nearly 4 million, approximately 140,000 of whom are Hui; the population of Shadian, in contrast, is approximately 20,000, with more than 95 percent Hui. Kunming seeks to “catch up” to coastal metropolises like Shanghai; Shadian now hosts China’s largest mosque, and

¹⁷ . Interestingly, Arnold Toynbee’s ca. 1952 world map of “civilizations” situates Yunnan within the Islamic realm (Lewis and Wigen 1997: 129). See map page 26.

seeks to Arabize further. These differences, however, were not rigid or reified, and the fluid migration and connections between these two sites wove together varying practices, beliefs, and imaginings.

Background: People

Although many of China's fifty-six nationalities (*minzu* 民族) are defined problematically, the Hui are arguably defined the most ambiguously. The Hui nationality classification apparently includes any person who does not fit the official ethnic criteria for one of the other nine Muslim nationalities, and yet identifies as either a Muslim or as a descendant of Muslims. While it excludes recent converts, this category includes a variety of linguistic groups, ethnic heritages, and cultural practices.

The term *Hui* 回 originated in the word for the Uyghur state, *Huihe* 回纥, although it did not become widespread until the Yuan Dynasty, when *Huihui* 回回 was used to refer to foreigners in general (Gladney 1996:18; Lipman 1997: xxiii). Gradually, the term *Huihui* 回回 came to mean "Muslim," and *Huijiao* 回教 (lit. Hui religion) came to mean Islam. Interestingly, several Yunnanese Han men asserted on separate occasions that the *Hui* 回 were termed such because *hui* 回 means "to return" and as foreigners, they were expected to do so. This seems like a xenophobic justification for (at times rampant) Yunnanese Han anti-Hui prejudice, though I cannot be certain. In any case, during the ethnic classification campaign (*minzu shibie* 民族识别) of the early P.R.C., the meaning of the term *Hui* 回 once again shifted, delineating the contemporary "ethno-religious" category (Mullaney 2011, 2004, 2010; Pan 2010; Fei 1978; Caffrey 2004; Lin 1986a; 1986b; Yang 1994; Gladney 1996). The eminent Hui historian Bai

Shouyi (1974) legitimated this distinction, arguing that *Hui* 回 did not mean Muslim – as some Muslims were not *Hui* 回 while some *Hui* 回 were not Muslims – and proposing to use the transliteration *Yisilan Jiao* 伊斯兰教 to mean Islam. Some scholars (e.g., Gladney 1996, 2004) argue that Hui ethnic consciousness arose as a result of the ethnic classification campaigns, whereas others (e.g., Atwill 2005) suggest that a shift in ethnic consciousness of Yunnanese Hui could have occurred as early as the 19th century, when the Qing Imperium discriminated against and then massacred Hui throughout the province.

In this dissertation, I refer alternately to the Hui as Hui or *Huizu*, Hui-Muslims, and Yunnanese Muslims. Each of these phrasings has a slightly different connotation. When emphasizing their ethnicity, *Huizu* employed that term, whereas Muslims, or Yunnanese Muslims used those terms (or Chinese Muslims) to emphasize their religiosity. Despite the fact that Atwill (2005), Gladney (1996), and others use the phrase Muslim Yunnanese (or Chinese), noting that the Yunnanese (or Chinese) Muslims includes non-Hui Muslims, too, when appropriate, I use the phrase Yunnanese (or Chinese) Muslims rather than Muslim Yunnanese (or Chinese) because that is how my interlocutors described themselves, that is, “*Women Yunnan (Zhongguo) Musilin*” 我们云南(中国)穆斯林. Based on conversations with Yunnanese Muslims, they meant to include non-Hui Muslims when speaking about themselves in religious terms. In order to encompass both the ethnic and religious aspects of Hui-ness, I frequently use the term Hui-Muslims. The term Hui is commonly used in scholarship, and provides a kind of shorthand for these complexities.

The Hui are the most widely dispersed minority-nationality in contemporary China, and quite possibly the most urbanized. The map of the distribution of Muslims in China on page 18

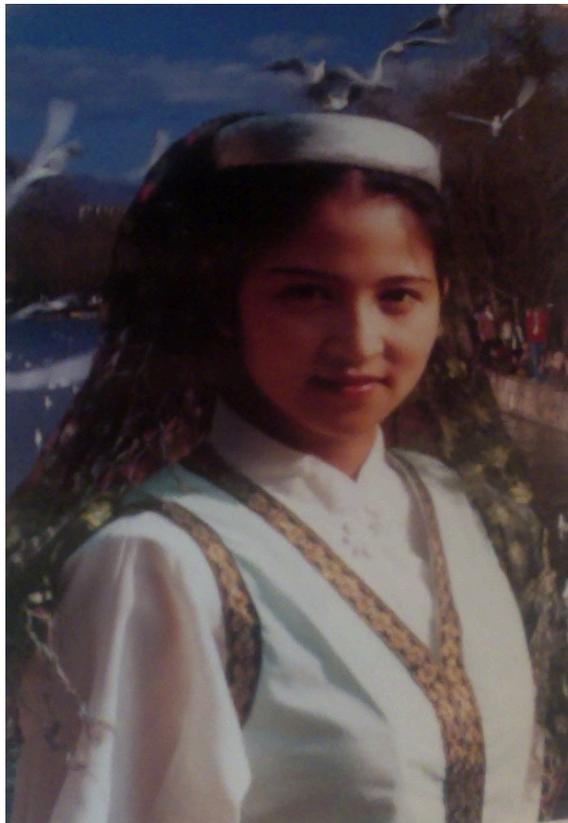
does not accurately depict the realities of Hui dispersal. Hui live in every major city in China, including places as distant from the Hui Northwestern “homelands” as Shandong, Harbin, and Quanzhou. Hui are also dispersed throughout rural areas. In Yunnan my interlocutors sometimes joked that “every village needs a Hui noodle shop”; it often seemed like every village had one.

A “Boring,” Urbanized Minzu

Of all of Yunnan’s *shaoshu minzu* 少数民族, however, the Hui are considered the most urbanized, and perhaps among the least “colorful.”¹⁸ The photograph of a young Hui woman on page 30 came from a book of postcards printed by Yunnan Science and Technology Press that depicts each of Yunnan’s 25 minority-nationalities in their official ethnic costumes, with their “traditional homeland” represented in the background. Not only is she wearing a somewhat masculinized version of Hui clothing, but also, since Green Lake Park is clearly the background, her apparent homeland is Kunming. With the exception of three religious and “ethnic” buildings (a Theravada stupa in the background of the Bulangzu; the Three Pagodas of Dali for the Baizu; Lijiang’s distinct architecture for Naxizu), the other 21 minority-nationalities are all portrayed as close to nature, surrounded by trees or mountains, implying their “innocence,” “wildness,” and lack of “modernity” – all common tropes in Yunnanese tourist literature. Whereas other nationalities in such depictions are feminized, the Hui is masculinized, in this case wearing a skullcap with a veil attached to the back, and the formal, stiff white clothing of men at prayer –

¹⁸ . The word *cai* 彩, which here connotes beauty and exoticism, appears frequently in tourism advertisements and everyday conversations. The dominant image is of the ethnic minorities living together “harmoniously” in Yunnan, their cultures mingling into “Colorful Clouds of Yunnan” (*caiyun zhinan* 彩云之南), at times imbuing the atmosphere with an “exotic, foreign mood” (*yiguo qingdiao* 异国情调).

an outfit unlike any I have ever seen a Yunnanese woman wear.¹⁹ Such an image conveys the dominant Han notions of the Hui as urbanized, but it also reveals Han anxieties about Hui status in Yunnan. As mentioned previously, the Hui are relatively powerful and wealthy within Yunnan. Han also regard the Hui as strong, fierce, and prone to violence. A Hui woman in masculinized clothing perhaps is meant to represent a feminized Hui man, thereby making the Hui appear less threatening to the Han.



Huizu, *Minority Nationalities of Yunnan*. 1999. Yunnan Science and Technology Press.

Han also view Hui as less “colorful,” interesting, or “authentic” than other minority-nationalities. At times Han interlocutors would rail against the “unfairness” of the Hui

¹⁹ . In the fall of 2007, while visiting Xi’an’s Muslim Quarter, an American friend of mine, Laura, tried to purchase a skullcap from a vendor near the Great Mosque. He refused, advising her that such hats were for Muslim men only.

“benefitting” from *youhui zhengce* 优惠政策, the so-called “preferential policies” that are often compared to affirmative action (Sautman 1998; Mackerras 2006; Zhou and Hill 2009).

According to these Han, the Hui did not “deserve” to reap the benefits of such policies, because they were, so to speak, only Han in Hui clothing. Countless Han informed me that “the only difference [between Han and Hui] is that Hui do not eat pork.” When I asked Yunnanese Han why Hui abstain from pork, they often expressed confusion or told bigoted stories that “explained” why. At least some of these stories have roots in the 19th century tensions that erupted between Yunnanese Han and Hui. For example, Han myths that the Hui are descended from pigs, or even that Zhu Bajie, the pig-man character from the classic novel *Journey to the West*, is the ancestor of the Hui, extend that far back (Atwill 2005).²⁰ Han men from near Yuxi recounted the following folk tale to explain Hui pork abstinence:

Long, long ago, the ancestor of the Hui had to escape from a monster. He ran and ran, and eventually hid in a cave, where a giant spider saved him. Spider (*zhizhu* 蜘蛛) sounds like pig (*zhu* 猪), so the Hui decided never again to eat pork.

When a relatively well-educated Han friend related that story to me, I laughed and asked him, “Then why do Muslims in other parts of the world abstain from pork? Is the word for spider the same in Arabic and Farsi as it is in Chinese?” He responded, “Oh, that’s a good point.” In comparison, although most of my urban Hui interlocutors contended that this practice distinguished them from the Han, many could not articulate exactly why they engaged in it. When asked, most replied something to the effect of “Because it is our tradition.” Some

²⁰ . Wang Jianping (personal communication) told me in 2009 that urban Hui often avoided pork without realizing its religious significance. A Beijing Hui told him that he avoided pork because Zhu Bajie was his ancestor.

explicitly mentioned Islam, but insisted that religion was not their own motivation for abstaining from pork. Pious Hui, particularly those from rural Muslim enclaves, in contrast, usually explained that pork abstinence primarily had religious significance. When I asked one imam in Shadian about it, he handed me a religious tract entitled “Why don’t Muslims eat pork?” (*weishenme Musilin bu chi zhurou* 为什么穆斯林不吃猪肉).

The Importance of Hui Pork Abstinence in Urban China

In contemporary urban China, as secularization has been effectuated in the name of modernization, pork abstinence has become the most salient marker of Hui-ness; it marks the Hui as “other” perhaps more than any other cultural practice, including religion.²¹ Even the government acknowledges that Muslims in China are especially sensitive to pork. Before the 2011 Chinese New Year, the Year of the Pig, the government banned pigs from appearing in any advertisements on the state-run CCTV, allegedly in order to protect the interests of Muslims and promote a more “harmonious” society. In fact, Hui do go to much further extremes to avoid pork than do Muslims in other parts of the world. Because pork is the most commonly consumed meat for Han, most Hui refuse to consume any dish – or even drink tea – in a Han home (Gillette 2005). Even though I never cooked pork, Hui friends who visited me at my apartment typically only drank canned or bottled beverages that they could open themselves. I even stocked paper cups so that I could serve hot tea. Many of these same friends did not believe in or practice

²¹ . There are many reasons for this. Among them, pork avoidance was a defining factor of identity during the Communist era because although religious practice was highly discouraged and, at times, not tolerated or even punished, most Hui were able to continue this specific practice up until the Cultural Revolution. According to Wang Jianping, Hui even received extra allocations of funds for meat during the early Maoist period because mutton and beef were more expensive than pork. In addition, since pork is the most commonly consumed meat of the Han, pork abstinence, a quotidian and prevalent practice, publicly distinguishes the Hui, who, for instance, typically cannot eat with their Han colleagues.

Islam. They spoke Chinese natively and appeared indistinguishable from the Han in dress, mannerisms, and phenotype. And yet, when classes let out at noon on the Yunnan University campus, we would stroll to the halal (*qingzhen* 清真) dining hall, where, away from the throngs of Han students and teachers, we would eat dishes that they asserted were healthier, cleaner and, of course, *qingzhen*.²² Hui-ness was thus spatially inscribed: by eating at a special dining hall they were at once marking themselves as Hui and distinguishing themselves from non-Hui students, not only through what they consumed, but also in where they consumed it. More to the point, Hui friends insisted that were they to consume pork accidentally, they would immediately vomit it up. Of course, they explained, it was unlikely that they would accidentally ingest pork because their very bodies reacted to its smell and taste. Pork avoidance was simultaneously voiced as a major marker of objective difference between Hui and Han, and subjectively lived, embodied, internalized as one's own desires.

In other countries, Muslims do not eat in separate dining halls, neither do they refuse to drink tea in non-Muslim homes. Hui notions of *qingzhen* (halal) are notoriously strict: if Hui must eat a meal in a Han home, then they will bring their own cooking pots and eating utensils so that they can avoid contact with any potentially pork-contaminated surfaces. One could argue, as some Han did, that in order to take advantage of the benefits of the Hui *minzu* category, Hui who neither believe in nor practice Islam need a strong marker of identity to separate them from the Han. Whether or not this is a conscious decision on the part of the Hui collective, or the consequence of multitudes of individual wills, this practice nevertheless serves to distinguish the

²² . *The concept of qingzhen* 清真, which literally means “pure and true,” is used to describe halal products as well as mosques, which are literally translated as “pure and true temples” *qingzhen si* 清真寺. For more about this concept, its etymology, history, and contemporary use, see Gladney (1996) and Gillette (2000).

Hui as a specific “nationality.” In urban Yunnan, pork abstinence is usually the most visible Hui practice, whereas in Shadian, halal foods were unmarked, with Han restaurants conspicuously christened *Hanzu Fandian* 汉族饭店 (Han nationality restaurant). As I aim to demonstrate in this dissertation, however, Yunnanese Hui, even in Kunming, cultivate their own sense of identity that goes well beyond pork abstinence.

Negotiating Research in Kunming and Shadian

Shortly after I arrived in Kunming, I met with several Hui scholars at universities there. At the time, my research permissions were restricted to the city, due to what the provincial government deemed to be “sensitive” (*mingan* 敏感) issues. A few of these Hui academics deplored the fact that I was confined to Kunming, explaining that rural “Hui culture” was richer and more “authentic.” They urged me to visit rural Hui villages, particularly Shadian, only to change their mind with their next breath, saying, “But that would be very dangerous!” More than one year later, I managed to gain access to Shadian, and it turned out to be the safest place I have visited in China, even though I was there when Osama bin Laden was killed. Cut off from Western media, and in the midst of people who believed – and celebrated – that Barack Obama is a Muslim, I assumed it was merely a rumor. Whenever Shadian locals asked me what I thought about the death of bin Laden, I would reply, “That’s highly unlikely. It’s probably just some government stunt.” To my amusement, the typical response was, “That’s right. Obama would never kill a fellow Muslim. And Allah would protect bin Laden.” When I received a frantic phone call from a close friend in Kunming, asking me if I was okay, considering that I was in an “extremist” Muslim town, and the U.S. had killed bin Laden, I could only laugh again.

In both Kunming and Shadian my Hui-Muslim interlocutors were relatively wealthy, and

in Kunming they were consistently well-educated.²³ Because retirees and students had more time to talk with me, they made up the majority of my urban interlocutors, although I also frequently socialized with young urban professionals, including academics, lawyers, schoolteachers, and businesspeople, some of whom I have known since my undergraduate days as an exchange student at Yunnan Normal University. In fact, perhaps the most honest answer to the question I posed earlier, “why Yunnan?” is that my own personal networks and *guanxi* 关系 (connections) are stronger there than anywhere else in China. As countless anthropologists of China have written, *guanxi* is indispensable for conducting field work there (see especially Yang 1994; Kipnis 1997; Yan 1996). If Lu Yuan, my longtime friend and former teacher, had not introduced me to her network of Muslim contacts in Kunming, I undoubtedly would not have managed to secure access to Shadian. In Shadian, most of my interlocutors were housewives, schoolteachers, and madrassah students, with a hearty sprinkling of imams, religious scholars and teachers, and businesspeople. In both places, the vast majority of my interlocutors were women, although I did not originally intend for that to be the case. As a woman myself, it was much easier to befriend and/or establish relationships with other women, largely due to (Chinese) cultural expectations that limit opposite sex platonic friendships, rather than Muslim proscriptions against male and female intermingling. Indeed, in Shadian parents encouraged their adult children to socialize with those of the opposite sex, in the hopes that romantic relationships would form and lead to marriage.²⁴

Ethnography and The Practice of Fieldwork

²³ . Pseudonyms are used consistently throughout this dissertation. Other identifiers, such as occupation, have also been altered.

²⁴ . I should note that in this regard, other Yunnanese Muslim enclaves, such as Najjiaying and Weishan, were much more conservative.

It is difficult to say precisely when I began to conduct my fieldwork in Yunnan, because I have been traveling there at least once a year since 2003, when I first dipped my feet into ethnography. Back then, as an undergraduate student on a study abroad program, my research focused on another ethnic minority group, the Dai. I had chosen to study in Yunnan, even though I spoke not a word of Chinese, because my maternal grandfather was stationed there during World War II. When I was growing up, he often reminisced about his time in Yunnan, recalling the red dirt that made him feel at home, and the exotic butterflies he caught in the mountains, which he sent back to LSU.

As I have returned to Yunnan over the years, my focus of research has shifted, but I have managed to foster some longterm relationships that form the core of my social network there. I met many of my interlocutors through extensions of these networks, so my relationships were rarely with separate individuals. Even in cases where I sought out new interlocutors, or where I met them randomly, these relationships were embedded in the complexities of the Yunnanese social world. My relationships with and to specific interlocutors shaped how they positioned me, what they shared, and how they shared it. Moreover, these relationships and the ways in which they were (re)created and maintained shed light on the cultural production of relationships in this context.

My relationships with people in my parents' generation, for instance, tended to be ones that evoked that of parent-to-child, whereas my relationship with the post-1980s generation was usually one of friendship. In contrast, to professors, I was a student, and to undergraduates an "older sister" (*jiejie* 姐姐). What we called one another usually indicated our relationship: for instance, I called professors *Laoshi* 老师 (teacher) or occasionally *Jiaoshou* 教授 (professor),

while people in my parents' generation were usually aunts and uncles. With my friends, I used their names, and they used mine: Tang Na 唐娜. Where applicable, I have chosen not to translate it to Lesley because they never called me by my English name and it simply sounds wrong reading it (especially given that some people snickered that with the "s" it sounds inauspicious).²⁵

A few months after I arrived in Kunming, I had the good fortune to meet the Dings, my Hui landlords. Their daughter, who was about the same age as I, was working "all alone" in Beijing, "far from [her] family." Because like their daughter, I, too, was far from my family, and all alone in Kunming, Mrs. Ding and her husband "adopted" me. Our relationship was very much that of parents-to-child, and the topics of our conversations tended to reflect that. Mrs. Ding was keen for me to learn the family history and genealogy (and she also nagged me to find a husband soon, before I finished my doctoral degree). This relationship was in stark contrast to the ones I had with interlocutors who were in my peer group, for example.

I choose to refer to my "interlocutors" as such primarily because other commonly used terms, such as "informant" or "collaborator," did not accurately describe our relationship, which was neither one in which my informants transmitted facts to me, nor one in which they participated in the writing process. "Interlocutor" seems to capture adequately the dialogic nature of our relationship(s). In some cases I use the word "friend" because using anything else to refer to a friend feels false.

To this end, much of my fieldwork was conversational. I did conduct interviews, but they were relatively unstructured, except in a few cases with officials or imams. In most cases, we

²⁵ . These folks mispronounced my name as *Lai-si-li* 来死力, which not only sounds ridiculous in English, but also pronounces the "s" like the word for death, *si*. Thusly transliterated, the name literally means something like "come death force."

would begin talking and the conversation would flow. Often I could not get a word in edgewise, such as when I spent afternoons in Mrs. Ding's tea shop, playing mahjong and chatting with her retired Hui lady friends, or when I joined my friends Su Jing and Ma Lian for nights of wine-drinking in their swanky apartments. At other times I felt more like a therapist than an fieldworker, such as when people privately revealed feelings of anomie, or recounted traumatic events. Although as a non-Muslim I could not pray in the mosques, I accompanied my interlocutors there, and to markets, madrasahs, meetings of Muslim Associations, as well as other places, including homes in the city, the countryside, and in between.

As a foreigner in Yunnan, I was conspicuously present (or absent). Some devout Muslims doggedly attempted to convert me to Islam. Other less devout ones tried to out-drink me. Throughout Yunnan, random people would come up and speak to me, which sometimes ended up leading to unexpected places and people. For example, when we briefly visited Najiaying together, the artist Colette Fu and I chanced upon preparations for a wedding feast, and were invited to attend. That same day, the imam invited us to meet him and his family. On my first day in Shadian, I met a group of women who happened to be involved in a local volunteer organization. As we chatted in the shade underneath the mosque where the rickshaws parked, two women slipped away, returning half an hour later with a pink, bejeweled hijab. "From now on, you should wear this," they told me. I had dressed conservatively, but I had not planned to wear a hijab if I could help it. I informed the women that I was not a Muslim. They said, "You should wear it anyway, to show your respect for Muslims here." So I did, and I wore it the entire time I lived in Shadian.

On one hand, wearing the hijab in the southern Yunnan heat was uncomfortable. It took

me a while to figure out how to fasten it correctly so that it would not slip, and even when I became accustomed to it it still made me feel overheated. On the other hand, it helped me establish rapport and fewer people tried to convert me. It also provided somewhat of a respite from my foreignness, since people often assumed I was a Uyghur. And yet, occasionally it reminded me that “the patriarchy” exerted considerable authority locally. When, for instance, I took a day trip to nearby Kaiyuan with a middle-aged couple, a group of teenagers noticed that I was a foreigner and followed me to snap some photos. My “uncle” immediately took offense on my behalf (even though I did not mind), yelling at them, “Do not photograph her! She is a Muslim woman!” They slunk away, and I felt dishonest since, as I had consistently told people, I am not Muslim. Later, when I was about to leave Shadian, some of the women asked me if I would take off my hijab once I returned home. I replied honestly that of course I would; I am not Muslim. They responded that once you put it on, you cannot take it off – it is a symbol of your connection with Allah. Such tensions made me empathize with my interlocutors, many of whom were negotiating similar contradictions within their own family, community, and self.

Anthropologists, always fond of self-criticism and “reflexivity,” have critiqued our tendencies to claim “ethnographic authority” vis-à-vis experience (see esp. Clifford 1983). Indeed, if our goal is, as Malinowski famously put it, “to grasp the native’s point of view” (1922: 25), then although experience is necessary, empathy is crucial. What ethnographers experience is inevitably liminal – “it is not the unmediated world of the ‘others’ but the world between ourselves and the other” (Hastrup 1992:116). Highlighting the dialectical relationships between self and other, subject and object, Kirsten Hastrup (1992) writes that “ethnographic practice implies intrusion and possibly, pain” (121). Although some anthropologists have responded to

the critique that all of us are positioned as subjects by (over)emphasizing their own subject positions and reflexivity, we cannot ethically or truthfully write about “others” without writing about ourselves. The question remains, how best to strike this balance, given our inevitably liminal positions?

In this dissertation, I have experimented somewhat with different ethnographic voices and techniques. In chapter two I prod the boundaries of fiction and ethnography by “fictively” crafting a day in the life of two Muslim women, one in each of my field sites. At times, inspired by Lila Abu-Lughod’s (1993) beautifully woven feminist ethnography of Bedouins in Egypt, I quote my interlocutors at length, so that they “speak” for themselves. Throughout this dissertation, I aim to thread together classical ethnographic “thick description,” life histories, interviews, and conversations, along with excerpts from occasional primary texts. In order to emphasize the history of Yunnanese Hui-Muslims, I rely primarily on the past tense during ethnographic sections. Methodologically, as analytically, I attempt to tease out and transcend multiple, salient tensions. These include the aforementioned tensions between self and other, subject and object, fiction and ethnography, along with “thick description” and theoretical analysis, discourse and practice.

As previously implied, my own positionality and reflexivity are mostly relegated to a subsidiary role. Although I “intruded” on people’s lives in the field, my aim here is to avoid intruding excessively in the writing itself. My voice and person are certainly present, but my hope is that the voices, histories, and personalities of the people I lived with for nearly two years eclipse my own presence. However, I should note that my positionality certainly influenced the ways in which people interacted with me, and both opened and foreclosed certain questions and

interpretations. Most notably, many of my interlocutors viewed me as a symbol of “modernity.” They sought my expertise on a variety of consumer goods, and used me to enhance their own “cosmopolitan modernity.” They enjoyed introducing me to their colleagues, relatives, and friends as their *waiguo pengyou* 外国朋友 (foreign friend), and presumably “gained face” by doing so. The young women relentlessly drug me shopping, especially to “Western” clothing stores, where they sought my advice about what was fashionable abroad. My knowledge of women’s fashion has since increased tenfold (at least).

My positionalities as a woman, a non-Muslim, a foreigner, an American, a Chickasaw, and even a scholar all similarly opened and foreclosed certain paths. As a woman, I soon learned not to meet a man (or men) for an interview or a coffee unless I had a girl friend with me. Some interlocutors who knew me primarily as a scholar were hesitant about answering my questions about the practice of Islam in Yunnan, saying, “You would know more about that.” Additionally, my youngest sister, then 14, spent the summer of 2010 with me in Yunnan. I found her a Mandarin tutor and hauled her with me to numerous meetings with interlocutors. Interestingly, everyone was excited upon meeting her, whether they simply wanted to catch a glimpse of a “little foreigner” or chose to have a sustained conversation (usually via my translation). My interlocutors declared that hosting my sister made me “too filial to be a Westerner,” and having her around certainly made some people more amenable to conversations and interviews. Her constant questions about China, Yunnan, and everything from the behavior of men on public transportation to the watered down soap in the few bathrooms that supplied it, resuscitated my own interests and enthusiasm. I realized that as I had grown accustomed to my surroundings, many of the questions that once animated me had ebbed out of my consciousness. Like my

interlocutors, I took much of Yunnanese everyday life for granted.

In Kunming, most of the Hui with whom I worked were very much concerned – one could even say obsessed – with their genealogical heritage. Many of these Hui asked me about my *zuxian* 祖先 (paternal ancestry). When I told them that, like me, my father and grandfather were Native American, they often remarked that Native Americans, like the Hui, had been persecuted and massacred. It amazed me that some of my most educated Hui interlocutors knew about the Trail of Tears and other stories of Native American suffering. According to schoolteacher friends in Kunming, high school students at elite, American-style schools learn this, and some older educated Hui had decided to read about this on their own. In other cases, my interlocutors claimed that Native Americans were indigenous Chinese peoples. These conversations about ancestry often sparked discussions about how to prove one's genealogical past, particularly when the historical records had been written and managed by an oppressor.

Much later, when I returned from the field and briefly stayed with my father and his family in Texas, I noticed how similar one of his bookshelves was to the ones I saw in educated, elite Hui households in Kunming. Like my Hui interlocutors, my father's bookshelf was stocked with books on Chickasaw history, culture, heritage, and language. Dad read his books on the Chickasaw similarly, and used them in similar ways – documenting our heritage through specific named relatives; following the migratory paths of our ancestors, forced and chosen; learning about Chickasaw traditions and practices, and how to embody Chickasawness – even persuading me to read some – just as one of my Hui interlocutors had attempted with her daughter, though my father was much more gentle about it.

One evening when I was over at her house for dinner, Jia Yufen lost her temper at her

daughter, Yuanyuan, 27, about not being “Hui” enough and not even recognizing that Hui are “real” *shaoshu minzu*. While Yuanyuan sprawled on the sofa watching the popular dating gameshow “If You Are the One” (*Fei Cheng Wu Rao* 非诚勿扰) Jia Yufen pulled down some *jiapu* 家谱 (genealogies) to show me. Jia Yufen’s paternal grandfather had been an imam in her hometown of Baoshan, and as we perused the text together, she began to tell me about the lives of the people mentioned on each page. After about half an hour, Yuanyuan looked over, rolled her eyes and said, “Ma! What are you doing? You’re boring Tang Na! No one is interested in that stuff.” Then to me, she turned and said, “Really, you don’t have to humor her. It’s all right. Come watch the show.” At this, Jia Yufen lost it. Over the months that I had spent time with the Jia family, I had occasionally seen Jia Yufen lose her temper at Yuanyuan, but this time she was clearly livid. “Tang Na *is* interested in this, she studies *shaoshu minzu* history and culture and will write a book about us *Huizu*. You are a *shaoshu minzu*; you should be interested in this too! It’s your heritage.” Yuanyuan, unfazed, retorted, “*Huizu* aren’t even real *shaoshu minzu*. It’s not as if we do anything interesting.” Unsurprisingly, Jia Yufen became increasingly angry. “You only think that because you have never taken the time to learn about your own history and heritage. You don’t even act Hui. You married a Han man who eats pork whenever you’re not at home! You celebrated Spring Festival with his family even though the food was not *qingzhen*. The Hui are real *shaoshu minzu*, but you’re not a real *Hui*. What kind of daughter are you, to neglect her heritage? You weren’t raised that way, but look at you, completely lacking in filial piety.”

In other contexts, I heard almost identical arguments. Jia Yufen was a close friend of my landlady Mrs. Ding and a frequent visitor to her tea shop. Over tea and cards, they often

discussed their frustrations with their daughters, both only children in their late twenties. On one level, the prevalence of such arguments shows the inter-generational strife due to what the older generation perceives as the younger's assimilation to the Han majority and lack of respect for one's own family and heritage. In fact, most of the Hui women I knew in Kunming who obsessed over genealogy had become interested in the subject largely to quell their own anxieties about their increasing assimilation. At another level, these arguments resonate with and originate in how most Han in Kunming talked about Huiness – it was seen as somehow a less “real” ethnic category to many Han than were other *shaoshu minzu*, especially the Dai, Bai, Miao, and others who could attract tourists and their *renminbi* 人民币. I suspect that many urban Hui I knew, especially the more secular ones, were, at least in part, responding to such Han perceptions when they emphasized their Huiness. When Jia Yufen berated her daughter for not acting “Hui” or being prouder of her heritage, she was certainly responding to Han perceptions of Huiness, at least in part. All of Jia Yufen's colleagues were Han, after all, and she dealt with Han perceptions of Huiness every day.

Negotiating “Authenticity”

In her examination of Australian multiculturalism, Elizabeth Povinelli (2002) points out that colonial legacies perpetuate inequalities not by requiring marginalized peoples to identify with the center, but by requiring them to perform authenticity. Similarly, in the context of China, Stevan Harrell (1995) argues that “civilizing projects” – interactions of inequality between the “civilizing center” and other groups – have significantly influenced peoples on China's periphery by engendering or strengthening group consciousness. State interactions with peripheral peoples no doubt impacted the ethnic consciousness and lived experiences of those peoples, however, as

Das and Poole (2004) point out, the politics and practices of the margins also shaped – and even constituted – the state. Despite their marginalization, Hui-Muslims in Yunnan are viewed suspiciously by the dominant Han majority as insufficiently “authentic.” Some Hui in Kunming, reacting to both anxieties about their own potential assimilation and anti-Hui hostilities, strive to cultivate a sense of “authenticity” that accommodates their lives as minorities within a majority Han urbanized center while also resisting assimilation. Although notions of “authenticity” problematically assume a bounded, static, homogenous “culture” that is “devoid of human agency” (Bendix 1989: 143), minorities such as the Hui use such notions to contest majority dominance. Practices which reproduce “authenticity” legitimize peripheral minorities, encompassing them within the center and making them constitutive of the state.

This reproduction of “authenticity” remains at the core of the processes described herein. Whether by examining the historical narratives of the Shadian Incident – in which Chairman Mao himself ordered the People’s Liberation Army to “suppress” an “uprising” of Hui villagers in Shadian, allegedly by razing the village and killing at least a thousand people – or by investigating the contemporary bureaucratic idiosyncrasies of the hajj application process in Yunnan, my research remains committed to unraveling how Chinese Muslims negotiate their identities with and against the state. My project shows that in contrast to previous assumed binaries, Hui-Muslims in China are neither an assimilated group nor a marginalized one, and their practices resist classification as submission to the state or resistance. For example, in the opening vignette to this chapter, “It was the will of Allah,” I show how pious Muslims in Yunnan rejoiced when the 2011 Tōhoku earthquake and tsunami struck Japan, claiming that Allah had punished Japan for the atrocities it had committed against China. In doing so, they at once

invoked Chinese nationalist, anti-Japanese sentiments and appealed to a wider Islamic cosmology with its concomitant Muslim identity.

By attending to the ways in which Islam is uniquely localized in Yunnan, this research destabilizes both “Islam” and “China” as totalizing, monolithic forces that, whether through orthodox religious authority or through governmental disciplinary techniques, impose identities and practices on the peoples who participate in those worlds. Ultimately, I seek to illustrate the creative agency of socio-cultural actors. In its exploration of the tensions between orthodoxy and orthopraxy, legitimacy and authenticity, this research adds nuance to understandings of the diversity of Islamic practice. Additionally, this project broadens the debates on Islam, shifting academic literature on Islamic identity from an Arabocentric focus to a global one. By doing so, I re-situate Chinese Muslims within the broader global context, and show how they are connected to the rest of the Muslim world. This research further contributes to current debates about the consolidation of power at the margins of the Chinese state, the perceived threat of Muslim transnationalism, and the relation of historical narratives to concrete practices.

Organization of Chapters

Collectively, the chapters presented here all intersect with the questions raised above. At the same time, each chapter seeks to destabilize and transcend specific sets of dichotomies. These tensions are woven into this dissertation as a whole, but each part focuses on ultimately transcending one set. Chapter two negotiates the tensions between urban and rural; chapter three between rupture (or part) and restoration (whole); chapter four between history and memory; and chapter five between nationalism and transnationalism. Chapter abstracts follow:

Chapter Two

In Pursuit of Islamic “Authenticity”: Localizing Muslim Identity on China’s Peripheries

In this ethnographic sketch, I analyze the complex processes of Sino-Islamic identity formation by examining the variety and diversity of locally produced “authenticity,” situated within a global understanding of Islam. Even within a single province, among a single official minzu that P.R.C. propaganda, media, and scholarship often construct as a unified, static group, localized practices and processes of identity formation are remarkably diverse. This chapter investigates how trans/national discourses and practices of Islamic authenticity are localized within two specific field sites: the provincial capital of Kunming, and the rural Muslim enclave of Shadian. Through describing a day in the life of a Muslim woman in each of my field sites, I show the ways in which local processes influence constructions of identity, authenticity, modernity, and trans/national belonging. I argue that as actors involved in their own self production, Hui-Muslims in Kunming and Shadian negotiated, appropriated, and contested both monolithic notions of Islam, and the official state-propagated minzu classificatory system, producing their own versions of authentic Hui-Muslim identities. What constituted authentic Hui-Muslim identity depended to a great extent upon the residence of the interlocutor. Finally, I show that although transnationalism was an important factor, ultimately these were locally produced versions of “authenticity,” dictated neither by some distant imam nor by some Beijing bureaucrat, but rather constructed in tandem with local processes of self and community (re)production, and shaped by local spatio-temporal practices.

Chapter Three

Out of Place: Rupture and the Restoration of the Urbanized Subject

According to the 2010 China National Census, the country's urban population surpassed that of its rural areas for the first time; and yet, urbanization implies much more than population changes, especially for the people who reside in these urban areas. How are the processes of urbanization contested and experienced? Recently, many scholars have debated how urbanization is changing China's cityscapes, specifically with regards to the formation of post-reform urban hierarchies, with some arguing that the dual force of privatization of property and urban living have reconfigured class and urban space. However, these arguments have not adequately addressed how this rapid urbanization, and its emergent middle-class aspirations, have shaped the lives of China's 23 million Muslim minority citizens, many of whom reside in urban areas. This chapter examines how rural Muslim minority migrants to the provincial capital of Kunming reconciled their religious subjectivities with the dominant secularism of Chinese urbanity. I juxtapose oral accounts of arriving in Kunming and negotiating urban life with descriptions of the changing cityscape in order to investigate the ways in which privatization, commercialization, and the fragmentation of communal space shapes constructions of subjectivity and religiosity. How do urbanized Hui in Kunming experience urbanization as Muslims? Specifically, I examine how the demolition of Kunming's Muslim Quarter and the subsequent dispersal of its Hui residents throughout the city shaped notions of Hui-Muslimness in Kunming and, how imaginings of "modernity" – symbolized in the very processes which displaced these Hui residents – influenced the meanings of being urban, Muslim, and Chinese. I argue that the rupture of displacement did not necessarily produce fragmented subjectivities;

instead, “authentic” selves were reconfigured within new contexts. Moreover, I argue that these processes of change both (re)created a collectivized Muslim identity, and reframed notions of “authenticity” and the “wholeness” of being Muslim. That is, the rupture experienced through physical dispersal, destruction, and fragmentation produced an impetus to collectivity. The subjective experiences of specific interlocutors differed, but all discursively reified an authentic claim to Muslim-ness. This research shows how new urban residents cultivated yearnings for an imagined modern future and how, in various ways, they adapted their religious subjectivities to align with these yearnings. Finally, this research foregrounds the creativity of mobile actors and emphasizes the experiences of people in the specific places they inhabit, taking into account the ways in which local infrastructures, bureaucratic systems, and other factors profoundly shape the lives of mobile people.

Chapter Four

“Crafting” History, Social Memory and Sovereignty: Yunnanese Hui Conflict Narratives

Scholars of Southwest China, both Western and Chinese, have continuously debated the political implications of Han-Hui ethnic conflicts in Yunnanese history (Bai Shouyi 1953; Israeli 1980, 2002; Ma Shaomei 1989; Wang 1996; Gladney 1996, 2004; Lipman 1997; Armijo 2001; Atwill 2005; Ma Ping 2008). This body of research focuses primarily on what actually happened during these conflicts. Who instigated the conflicts? Were they actually interethnic conflicts or were they more complex than that? What roles did the Qing Imperium, the P.R.C., and their agents play? While these inquiries are certainly important, they nevertheless neglect to address how these historical narratives continue to create meaning and produce lived social realities in Yunnan. By examining the narratives of Han-Hui conflict that circulate throughout contemporary

Yunnan, this chapter investigates not what actually happened but rather how what is said to have happened (re)produces particular relationships. Narratives of Yunnanese Han-Hui conflict tell us about more than just the oral history of Yunnan; they also illuminate various political and social relations, most saliently, the relationships between the Chinese state and its peoples. Narratives do not merely construct versions of history; they are always also involved in negotiating complex political processes and social relations. Specifically, I examine various versions of narratives of ethnic conflict in Yunnan – oral recountings that I heard during my fieldwork, as well as the “official” written version that the Chinese state propagates and the few “unofficial” written versions that circulate on the internet – and, through contextualization, demonstrate how these narratives are in fact (re)producing social relations and creating meaning in every day Yunnanese life by shaping the ways in which local people imagine and interact with the ethnic “other” and with the post-reform Chinese state. I argue that Yunnanese people use such narratives to articulate their understandings of ethnic relations and of state/local relations and that, furthermore, such articulations are in fact implicated in creating the very relationships being discussed. By closely investigating the meanings created through the recounting of conflict narratives, this chapter sheds new light on the political implications of Han-Hui ethnic conflicts in Yunnanese history and memory.

Chapter Five

Kowtowing to Beijing, Embracing the Umma: Yunnanese Hajj Narratives of Trans/ National Unity

Since China’s economic reforms in 1978, the numbers of Chinese Muslims who have participated in the hajj pilgrimage have soared, from nineteen in 1979 to over 13,000 in 2012.

The Chinese government, however, closely monitors these hajj experiences. By examining the hajj experiences of Hui-Muslims in Yunnan Province, this chapter addresses how Hui-Muslim trans/nationalisms are collaboratively constructed through the tensions between their dual peripherality and the varied techniques of the Chinese state. I examine local meanings and narratives of the hajj elicited through interviews, along with textual study of Chinese Muslim magazines and pilgrimage handbooks, in order to elucidate the processes which simultaneously inform and are informed by the specific meanings of Chinese sovereignty and Hui-Muslim trans/nationalisms in China. Although my interlocutors imagined the hajj application process as “transnational,” in practice, who gained authorization to perform the hajj was negotiated between PRC state agents at local branches of the Islamic Association and prospective hajji applicants. In particular, two requirements allowed for substantial local negotiation: 1) that a hajji must “represent” China well, and 2) that s/he must proclaim her loyalty to the Chinese nation above all else, in accordance with China’s *aiguo aijiao* (lit. love the state, love religion) policy, which stipulates that loyalty to the state must come first. I argue that despite my interlocutors’ yearnings for transnational “mobility” and its attendant cultural capital, the hajj application process ultimately engendered nationalist sentiment within those who secured authorization to perform the pilgrimage. Recognizing that the PRC restricts certain types of citizens from traveling abroad, Yunnanese prospective hajjis submitted themselves to bureaucratic requirements and professed their loyalty to the Chinese nation-state; this process at once empowered hajjis as creative agents active in their own self-production and engendered sentiment (*ganqing* 感情) toward the Chinese nation, toward China’s ascendancy in global capitalism, and toward Allah. At the same time, the hajj experience was dually transformative: through linguistic barriers and

state-organized tour groups plus China's place in global capitalism, it enhanced one's consciousness as a Chinese citizen; through spirituality, and encounters with non-Chinese Muslims, it heightened one's consciousness as a member of the Umma.

Chapter Two

In Pursuit of Islamic “Authenticity”: Localizing Muslim Identity on China’s Peripheries

“We *Huizu* have a genetic link to the Quran, so we are Muslims whether or not we practice the teachings of Islam.”

-Mr. Ding, 61, retired Kunming city employee, September 2010

“Ethnicity is irrelevant. What matters is that one believes in Allah and faithfully practices the teachings of Islam.”

-Mr. Ma, 58, administrator of the Shadian Great Mosque, May 2011

As the two quotations above illustrate, what constituted Islamic “authenticity” in Yunnan Province differed ontologically in different localities. During my two years of fieldwork among Hui-Muslims there, my interlocutors in both the provincial capital of Kunming and the rural Muslim enclave of Shadian positioned themselves as uniquely authentic Muslims, but they did so in distinctly different ways. While local Hui-Muslims in both places recognized the shifting, malleable, and processual nature of Hui-Muslim identity, they nevertheless envisioned and utilized essentialist categories to illustrate what constituted authentic and legitimate Hui practices. No matter their residence, my interlocutors relied on hierarchies of authenticity in which certain practices were viewed as inauthentic; however, what constituted authenticity was locally defined and negotiated. Furthermore, locally constituted constellations of discourses and practices of authenticity collaboratively reflected and shaped Hui-Muslim notions of trans/national belonging and modernity.

During my fieldwork among Hui in Kunming, I noticed that for most of the educated Hui elite with whom I worked, the state of being a Muslim was divorced from Islamic practice. Most of my interlocutors fervently declared their authenticity as Muslims, though few prayed five

times a day and many regularly imbibed alcohol. From my perspective, these Hui seemed quite secularized, despite their protests to the contrary.²⁶ As the first quotation above suggests, these urbanized, educated Hui elite positioned themselves as Muslims who were uniquely absolved from the duty to practice the teachings of Islam. Many of these Hui appropriated biological rhetoric as a means to make their own “authentic” Muslim ethnic identity, one that simultaneously linked them to both an imagined Arab past and an imagined modernity.²⁷ In these imaginings, the scientific glory and advancement of their Arab past merged with China’s current ascendancy in global capitalism to shape the ways in which they imagined their present identity as modern Muslim subjects of the Chinese nation-state. This identity as Muslims was predicated less on Islamic practice than on a mythologized genealogy that situates urban Hui at the center of the Muslim world.²⁸ In Kunming, urbanized Hui elite relied on localized practices of interpreting

²⁶ __. Interestingly, even those urban Hui who were atheists simultaneously claimed to be Muslims; for these individuals these positions were not contradictory. Ben Hillman (2004) mentions that when he asked a group of non-practicing Hui “youths studying in the county seat” if they were Muslims, they “answered [his] question as if it were absurd: ‘We are Hui — of course we’re Muslims’” (63-64). Perhaps we should not be so surprised by this: during the Ming, Qing, and Republican eras, and indeed up until the 1950s, the term *Hui* meant *Muslim* (see Lipman 1997:xxiii; Gladney 1996, 1998, 2004; Harrell 1995:34). It is arguable that residual meanings of the term *Hui* continue to operate within self and community understandings of Hui identity (Williams 1977).

²⁷ __. Regarding my use of the “imagined,” I intend to invoke both Arjun Appadurai’s (1996) sense of “imagination as social practice” and Benedict Anderson’s (2006 [1983]) “imagined communities,” particularly in the sense that imaginings “are to be distinguished not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined” (Anderson 2006:6).

²⁸ __. On biological “myths of descent” in the P.R.C., see Barry Sautman (1997). On Qing Dynasty Era mythologizing of the origins of Islam in China, see Ma Haiyun (2006). On the mythologized descent of the Guo and Ding lineages in Fujian, see Fan Ke (2003). On the life and legend of an oft-claimed ancestor, Sayyid 'Ajall Shams Al-Din, see Jacqueline Armijo-Hussein (1997). On genealogy as the basis for identity among Omani Muslims, see Mandana Limbert (2002). Compare to Aomar Boum’s (2011) analysis of the mythologized origins and imagined pasts of

lineages, genealogies, and oral stories of descent transmitted through generations, along with scientific notions of *minzu* 民族 (nationality), and cosmopolitan consumerist practices to construct a Hui-Muslim identity that prioritized ethnicity.²⁹

In contrast, my Hui interlocutors in the rural Muslim enclave of Shadian repeatedly emphasized Islamic practice as key to authenticity, asserting that ethnicity is irrelevant. Whenever I asked a question about *Huizu* 回族 (Hui nationality) in Shadian, I was promptly, and gently, chided: one's *minzu* (nationality) is of no importance; all that matters is whether or not one is a Muslim. In Shadian, even the language that Hui-Muslims used to describe themselves differed from Kunming Hui usage: whereas Kunming Hui largely appropriated the state-designated nationality category, *Huizu*, Hui-Muslims in Shadian preferred to describe themselves not as *Huizu* (Hui nationality) but as *Muslim* 穆斯林 (Muslim) or *Zhongguo Muslim* 中国穆斯林 (Chinese Muslim). Furthermore, Hui-Muslims in Shadian argued that true Islamic faith erodes in the secular city and that in order to preserve authentic forms of Islam, “real” Muslims fled the city and its secularizing, Hanifying influences for religious enclaves such as Shadian.

Throughout this chapter, I refer to an urban—rural dichotomy as a means to unpack how place influenced different localized notions of belonging. Although my interlocutors often reified

Saharan Jews.

²⁹ . Most of my interlocutors in Kunming argued that they had inherited “Muslimness” through their genetic descent from Arab, Persian, or Central Asian Muslims, while a few intellectuals redefined their concepts of Allah and thus held beliefs in Islam in tandem with belief in no God. Some of these Hui-Muslims vehemently opposed the secularizing policies of the multi-ethnic Chinese nation-state, and, like their brethren in Shadian, supported religious revival movements. Others, like my Hui landlord, sympathized with local state “modernizing” projects that embedded Kunming’s workers in a capitalist, consumerist economy, and insisted that Islam in Yunnan and Yunnan’s Muslim communities would benefit from closer engagements with secular state organizations.

this dichotomy, in actuality, the imagined urban—rural dichotomy is neither static nor clearly defined (see esp. Skinner 1976, 1995). What is perceived as “urban” or “rural” may shift depending on the residence of the viewer: for instance, a Miao peasant from the village outside of Shadian may view Gejiu as a city (indeed officially it is one), whereas a longterm urbanite in Kunming would view Gejiu as a *nongcun* 农村 (a rural area). However, for most Chinese people today, this urban—rural dichotomy is one of the most salient ways of organizing their world: it may not be absolutely fixed, and the values allocated to “urban” or “rural” certainly shift depending upon context, but this dichotomy shapes both how they imagine the world and how they live in it.

When I speak of “urban Hui” in this chapter, I do not mean simply “Hui who reside in urban areas.” The urban Hui to whom I refer were almost exclusively well-educated and often wealthy, but their defining trait for the purposes of this analysis is that they identified strongly as *Kunmingren* 昆明人 (people from Kunming). They have all lived in Kunming long term, and some grew up there. In contrast, urban-dwelling Hui who hailed from the countryside and expressed strong attachments to their rural hometowns did not necessarily share the discourses or practices of Huiness of longterm city dwellers. Hui who resided in rural Muslim enclaves like Shadian, Najiaying, and Weishan exhibited the most deeply religious practices, though even Hui from other rural parts of Yunnan had deeper attachments to Islam than most of those who grew up in the city or had strong ties to the city. Finally, note that not all Hui who resided in Shadian were from rural areas; some had left cities as distant as Kashgar and Dalian to live a religious and harmonious (*hexie* 和谐) life surrounded by other Muslims. This distribution accords with what Shadian Muslims argued: that “real” Muslims “fled the city” in search of an authentic

Muslim life, away from the corruptive influence of the city. For most urban Hui in Kunming, however, leaving the city was unthinkable: they had internalized and valorized the urban–rural hierarchy that saturates contemporary China, and that, while allowing for pastoral fantasy holidays in quaint or scenic rural destinations, discriminates against the rural in favor of the urban (see Jacka 2005; Siu 2007; Kipnis 2007).

For the purposes of this chapter, it is crucial to recognize that even though the rural—urban dichotomy is not static, Muslim lives in urban Kunming were quite different from lives in rural Muslim enclaves like Shadian.³⁰ The urbanized elite Hui-Muslims with whom I worked in Kunming had to negotiate the dominant capitalist modes of living there, which included work hours that did not accommodate prayer times, along with the lack of a spatially connected Muslim district, inconvenient distance from mosques, CCP religious restrictions, and other impediments to living a devout Muslim life. Some urban elite Hui negotiated this liminality by “passing” as Han in certain settings, even as their Hui-Muslim identity was deeply felt. Despite their ambivalence, urban Hui accommodated, negotiated, and contested locally dominant modes of living in ways that enabled them to assert their own claims to Islamic authenticity. In comparison, state agents and capitalist modes of production exerted less authority in Shadian, where Muslims were able to remake their religious authenticity after the turbulence of the Cultural Revolution.

³⁰ . In light of these differences in urban–rural patterns of Hui practice, I should mention that every Hui person I met during my fieldwork in Yunnan avoided pork, even if they drank excessively. That is not to say that they kept halal; some Hui in Kunming were willing to eat at non-halal restaurants so long as we did not order any pork. In addition, almost every household, urban or rural, religious or secular, possessed a copy of the Quran, typically keeping it in an honored place. These two cultural practices appeared to be the only ones which were consistently shared among all Hui I encountered in Yunnan.

Ethno-Religious Identity and Trans/National Belonging

Huizu 回族 is arguably the most ambiguous category of the ten Muslim *shaoshu minzu* 少数民族 (minority-nationalities) in China: although the Hui officially comprise a *minzu* 民族 (nationality), the *Huizu* category noticeably lacks the defined, unifying traits by which *minzu* were differentiated in accordance with the Stalinist model of nationality, that is, “common language, common territory, common economy, and common psychological nature manifested in a common culture” (Fei 1978; Lin 1986; Harrell 1995; Gladney 1996; Lipman 1997; Litzinger 2000; Allès 2000). While many of China’s 56 official *shaoshu minzu* groups lack such a unified definition (see Harrell 1995, 2001; Pan 1997, 2010; Litzinger 2000; Schein 2000; Tapp 2003), and certainly, as many scholars have argued, the *minzu shibie* 民族识别 (ethnic identification campaign) of the 1950s drew on imperial and Republican Chinese ethnic classification schemes in addition to the Stalinist model (Fei 1989; Mullaney 2004, 2011; Fiskesjö 2006; Yang 2008), the Hui category is especially problematic (Gladney 1996, 1998; Harrell 1995:33; Lipman 1997). Hui are scattered throughout China, claim descent from multiple ethnic groups, and while most speak some variant of Chinese, others speak Tibetan or other minority languages (Gladney 1996:32-34; Hillman 2004; Bai 2008) and some speak Chinese dialects that incorporate transliterated Persian and Arabic words (Wang 1996, 2001).³¹ Some scholars assert that belief in Islam ultimately defines the Hui (Bai 1994; Israeli 2002), yet as Dru Gladney (1996, 1998) attests, there are those who identify as Hui but who neither believe in nor practice any form of

³¹ _ . My own fieldwork in Shadian confirms this: Hui-Muslims there frequently peppered their conversations with transliterated Arabic and Persian words such as *hajji* 哈吉 as well as Arabic phrases like *Insha’Allah* إن شاء الله and *Alhamdulillah* الحمد لله.

Islam, such as the Ding lineage of Fujian, who petitioned the Chinese state for classification as Hui based on their Arab and Persian ancestry. Gladney (1996, 1998) posits a spectrum of Hui identities ranging from those, mostly located in Northwest China, who identify as Hui primarily on religious grounds, to those like the Ding lineage, whose identity is based on other characteristics, including descent from foreign Muslims, cultural practices (including abstaining from pork and endogamy) and a sense of a shared history.

While the state-propagated minzu classification scheme strives for scientific objectivity, it paradoxically enables multiple, conflicting practices and discourses to exist within a single minzu category. Hence, we see the spectrum of locally produced Hui ethnic identities that Gladney (1996, 1998) describes and the processual, context-specific minzu that Louisa Schein (2000), Nicholas Tapp (2002), Kevin Caffrey (2004), and others articulate. With this in mind, I aim to emphasize that although the minzu shibie campaign and its subsequent nationality-focused state policies profoundly shaped the ethnic consciousness of China's peoples, Han and minority alike (see esp. Gladney 1996), the process of engendering minzu identities was far more complex than simply imposing state-designated categories onto on-the-ground social realities (Hansen 1999; Schein 2000; Litzinger 2000; Tapp 2002; Caffrey 2004; Fan 2012). As Tapp (2002) argues, we must unravel the variety and diversity of authenticity by investigating locally produced constructions, particularly at the "sub-ethnic level," even when they are essentialist. In the case of Hui-Muslims in Yunnan, "sub-ethnic" notions of transnational belonging — to the Umma and to an imagined cosmopolitanism more generally — added yet another layer to the localized production of their identities. Local production of Hui-Muslim identities was thus collaboratively influenced by national identification projects and notions of national belonging,

notions of belonging to a specific minzu, and differentially formed notions of transnational belonging.

Below, I provide a glimpse of these divergent configurations of Hui-Muslim practices and discourses by imagining a day in the lives of two ideal-typical Hui-Muslim women, one living in Kunming, one in Shadian. For the purposes of this chapter, I focus primarily on how life is temporally and spatially structured, both in everyday practice and in imaginings of one's place in history, modernity, the Muslim world, and the Chinese state. By setting out details of the daily lives of these two women, I aim to elucidate how temporal and spatial structures of life, which are tied to urban or rural location, reflect and shape local identity formation. The two composites below are directly based on my field notes, although I have merged multiple days, conversations and interlocutors. During the “day in a life” sections, I use the ethnographic present in order to make the fictive aspects more visible, and to mark shifts from analytical passages.

Muslims in China are perceived as (at least) dually peripheral: as a group, they are peripheral both to the imagined center of the Islamic world and to mainstream Chinese cultural and political spheres. Yunnan's distance from China's urban and state centers — imagined and real, cultural, historical, economic, geographical, political — produces yet another layer of peripherality for Hui-Muslims there. Scholarly papers, local gazetteers, and popular Chinese discourses have long characterized Yunnan as remote (*pianpi* 偏僻) and peripheral (Skinner 1995; Giersch 2006; Tapp 2010); this was reinforced during the Qing, when Yunnan allegedly was plagued by a contagious miasma (*zhangqi* 瘴气) that afflicted Han government officials with malaria (Bello 2005; Zhang 2005). Even today, Yunnan is oriented not only toward Beijing but

also toward Southeast Asia (Evans 2000; Michaud 2007; Scott 2009),³² and Yunnan's reputation as a pleasant hub for tourists stems largely from being imagined as an exotic paradise far from China's metropolitan centers (Xu 2001; Hyde 2001; Davis 2005; Ateljevic and Swain 2006; Zhang 2010).

Kunming City: "Catching Up" with "Cosmopolitan Modernity"

Although Kunming may not be considered a major metropolitan center on par with Beijing, Shanghai, or Hong Kong, in the past decade the city has transformed from a far-flung provincial backwater into a shiny modern metropolis, complete with steel-and-glass skyscrapers, high-rise condominiums, luxurious gated communities, an IMAX cinema, three Starbucks coffee houses, and even a Marc Jacobs retailer. In 2012, city officials unveiled a new subway system and launched a new international airport, reportedly the fourth largest in China. In the wake of China's economic reforms, the real estate market is "booming," private enterprise is flourishing, and officials and some residents, responding to a sense that the city is "lagging behind," have encouraged massive development projects in an effort to "modernize" the city (Zhang 2010, 2006).

While many Kunming residents expressed optimism about the "progress" symbolized by these projects, even residents who welcomed these recent changes mourned the loss of a cherished cityscape. For Yunnanese Hui, especially those who lived in Kunming's Shuncheng Jie Muslim District, this loss is particularly poignant: in 2004, after prolonged protests and negotiations with the local Wuhua District government and the Sailun Real Estate Corporation,

³² . Both historically and today, trade, migration, and religion link Yunnanese Hui-Muslims to Southeast Asia. In Thailand they are called the Haw, in Burma the Panthay (Hill 1982; 1998; Forbes 1986a, 1986b, 1988, 1997; Sen and Chen 2009).

the historic Hui neighborhood was demolished, displacing thousands of Hui residents (Zhang 2010:153-156; Zhu 2005). While some residents and remnants of Shuncheng Jie's Muslim past remain, the site has been supplanted by a sprawling, shimmering temple to capitalist consumerism: an upscale shopping mall.

A Day in the Life of Mrs. Na of Kunming

Mrs. Na, 58, is a retired schoolteacher and homemaker who has long resided in Kunming. She wakes around 8 a.m. and prepares a breakfast of spicy *mixian* 米线 (rice noodles) for herself and her husband before he leaves for work. Everyday lives in Kunming are structured by the work patterns of capitalist production, and as such they generally do not accommodate scheduled prayer times, but rather conform to dominant Chinese temporalities with regards to sleeping, eating, and other aspects of daily life. After breakfast, Mrs. Na dons a pair of brown trousers and a long-sleeved aubergine blouse. She walks ten minutes through her luxuriously landscaped *xiaoqu* 小区 (residential community) to the bus stop where she takes a bus fifteen minutes to the nearest well-stocked *qingzhen* 清真 (halal) market. She can buy a few items closer to home, but ever since she and her husband moved out of the city center she has had to commute at least fifteen minutes by bus to buy quality *qingzhen* meat. It is even farther to the nearest *qingzhen* bakery.

Back at home, Mrs. Na phones her youngest brother in Ohio to update him on their parents' health problems. Her brother settled in the U.S. after attending a university there, and, like many urban Hui in Kunming, Mrs. Na values Western-style education, believing that Chinese-style education inhibits creative thinking. She had hoped that her daughter Lingling would go abroad to the U.S., U.K., or Australia for university, but, even though Lingling's

TOEFL and IELTS scores were high, she stayed in Kunming and attended Yunnan University. After Mrs. Na and her brother hang up, she begins preparing lunch and then watches a Qing dynasty soap opera. Kunming Hui consumption patterns are a bricolage of Chinese soap operas, Western-style university educations and Hui qingzhen foodstuffs; through these practices, they imagined themselves as an exceptionally modern minzu, a people with the illustrious heritage of an Arab past, and the cosmopolitan discernment to appropriate what is useful from the West and from present-day China.³³

When her husband comes home shortly after noon, Mrs. Na quickly prepares a lunch of *chaocai* 炒菜 (stir-fried dishes) and sits down to share it with him. They discuss the upcoming Mid-Autumn Festival holiday. “It’s not really our holiday, we should be celebrating Hui holidays. Why don’t you ever get those off?” she complains. “You know why. We Huizu technically have those days off, but if I miss work then, all my Han colleagues will notice and create problems for me. It’s much easier this way. We can still spend time together as a family on the Han holidays, even if they’re not really ours.”

After lunch, Mrs. Na phones some friends to arrange to play *majiang* 麻将 the day after tomorrow. Two of these friends are Hui women who were neighbors when she and her husband lived in the Muslim District in the city center. After the Muslim District was demolished in 2004,

³³ . Although consumer choices have certainly expanded in the wake of China’s economic reforms and opening up, these sweeping historical and economic changes did not suddenly conjure a smorgasbord of expanded choices from which an individual consumer could freely pick and choose: what was valued and by whom were locally and collectively constituted. Local everyday consumer practices were shaped by powerfully intertwined global, national, regional, and local processes that both disciplined and enabled space for these creative appropriations, negotiations, and contestations of consumer practice. Individual yearnings for cultural capital and the social mobility that ideally accompanied it, in the realm of education, for example, played out locally in complex and various ways.

most of its residents were dispersed throughout the city. Among other things, this has made it more difficult to buy qingzhen products and to arrange social gatherings with other Hui.

Mrs. Na's bookcase is stocked with books on Hui history and culture, along with genealogies, lineages, and biographies of famous Hui personages. Her sister recently sent her a new compilation of biographies of notable Hui from their home county in rural Yunnan. The biographies go back as far as the Yuan Dynasty, and Mrs. Na eagerly reads them to glean further insight into her own lineage and heritage. In their close readings of genealogies, biographies, and histories, Kunming Hui imagined a linear ancestral past structured by generations; spatially, this links them at once with the Arab world of their imagined past and with the intimate geography of their home counties. And yet, these genealogical links are quite speculative: in some cases, elite urban Hui claimed Arab or Persian rather than Central Asian descent, even though official historical documents indicate Central Asian descent for most Yunnanese Muslims. In a majority of cases, urban Hui relied on patrilineal descent to claim their authenticity as Muslims, despite the fact that nearly all Yunnanese Hui patrilineal lines were obliterated during the 1873 massacres that followed the Qing suppression of the Panthay Rebellion.

After reading for a while, Mrs. Na begins to prepare dinner. Her daughter Lingling is coming over, so she will make her favorite dish: *hongshao niurou* 红烧牛肉 (red-braised beef). Once both her husband and daughter have arrived, they all sit down to dinner together, complete with thimbles of *qingkejiu* 青稞酒 (barley wine). After several years as a businesswoman at a well-regarded local company in Kunming, Lingling has recently transferred to an international startup where she hopes her years of studying English can be put to good use. The family discusses how her job is progressing, and her mother guarantees Lingling's success. "We Huizu

have a long history as successful business people and traders. It's in our genes." After dinner, the family watches various game shows on TV until the parents go to bed, and Lingling returns to her apartment.

Localizing Identity Formation in Kunming

Although Hui-Muslims in Shadian often bemoaned the “corruptive” process of “Hanification” (*Hanhua* 汉化) that occurred in Kunming, the process of identity formation for Kunming Hui was much more complex than mere assimilation. Kunming Hui argued that although they remained Muslims, the turbulence of the past fifty years had contributed to the gradual erosion of their religious beliefs. Religious suppression during the Cultural Revolution, assignments to *danwei* 单位 (work units) in which Han were the majority, practical conformities to dominant temporal structures in order to ease work relations, the demolition of the Kunming Muslim District and subsequent dispersal of its residents — these events all recognizably contributed to shifts in Kunming Hui identity formation, but not only by diluting this identity. According to Kunming Hui, the erosion of their religious beliefs and their lack of opportunities to practice Islam engendered within them a sense of ambivalence about their identity as Hui-Muslims that eventually sparked in them a desire to cultivate a sense of “Huiness” that distinguished them from the Han majority.

Although some Hui in Kunming consumed alcohol and even married Han people, shared practices such as normative endogamy, pork abstinence, readings of lineages, and storytelling provided them with the means to distinguish themselves from the Han. As Mrs. Su, a fifty-three-year-old middle school teacher recounted in Kunming in October 2010:

When I was a young girl, I used to pray at the mosque with my mother. But then, during *Wenge* 文革 (the Cultural Revolution), such things were no longer allowed. At home my mother told me stories of our ancestors and still tried to get me to *nianjing* 念经 (recite the Quran), but the words meant nothing to me. They were just empty syllables, meaningless, and besides, that stuff just didn't interest me. Later, I was accepted to Yunnan Normal University and went to study in Kunming. I became a Chinese language teacher at a middle school there... Back then, no one wore the hijab. It was the 80s, we just didn't wear it. I didn't pray either, and I began to think that the only thing that really separated me from my Han colleagues was that I didn't eat pork... My mother always told me stories about our ancestors so eventually I became interested in studying *Huizu* history, culture and genealogy.

Through their own local practices, influenced by specific temporal and spatial modes, Kunming Hui constructed their own version of an authentic Hui-Muslim identity predicated not on Islamic religious practice but rather on practices of reading a genealogy that, due to mythologized descent from Arab traders and/or the Prophet, situated them at the center of the Muslim world. These genealogies were read as marking particular patrilineal descendants as authentic Muslims, whether or not the descendants in question practiced Islam. In the words of one self-proclaimed *sayyid*, “Why should I pray five times a day, or abstain from alcohol? I am the [patrilineal] descendant of *Sai Dianchi* 赛典赤 (Sayyid 'Ajall Shams Al-Din).³⁴ I have a genetic relationship with the Quran (*wo gen gulanjing you jiyin de guanxi* 我跟古兰经有基因的关系); there is no need [to practice Islam].”³⁵

Most Hui in Kunming proffered more than their word as descendants of sayyids or other notable Muslims, a category that could include Arab traders, imams, or religious scholars:³⁶ when

³⁴ _ . Sayyid 'Ajall Shams Al-Din, a Central Asian governor of Yunnan during the Yuan Dynasty, is an oft-claimed ancestor of Hui in Yunnan. See Armijo-Hussein (1997).

³⁵ . For more on Hui claims of descent from the Prophet, see Gao Fayuan's (2000) *Descendants of Prophet Mohammed: History of a Moslem family in China*.

³⁶ _ . Such notable persons were viewed as having an inextricable connection to the Holy Quran,

I further probed my interlocutors about the authenticity of their Islamic pasts, they “proved” to me the truth of their patrilineal descent by showing me genealogies, lineages, and biographies, at times handwritten but more often printed and bound, that traced their lineages back to unquestionably authentic ancestors. In practice, my interlocutors often moved between different texts to demonstrate who their notable ancestor was: that is, they might use multiple lineages and local genealogies to trace their ancestry back to a specific person, and then investigate that person’s life by way of local compendiums of biographies of notable personages. In this way, they used oral histories, lineages, and biographies to triangulate the validity of their claims.

Interestingly, my interlocutors figured their descent patrilineally, despite the well-known historical fact (at least among most educated Hui) that, after Du Wenxiu’s defeat in 1873,³⁷ Qing Imperial forces massacred up to 90 percent of the Yunnanese Hui population, of which the remaining survivors were primarily young women (Armijo 2001; Yang 1994). Statistically, at least some of these cases of “patrilineal” descent must be at least partially matrilineal. A Kunming Hui-Muslim woman of the Ding lineage acknowledged that “at least some” of the many Yunnanese Hui-Muslims who claim patrilineal descent from Sai Dianchi must be re-figuring that descent matrilineally, or through a combination of patrilineal and matrilineal descent. However, in her own case, she assured me that her patrilineal descent was indeed authentic: she traced her descent back to the Ding lineage in Fujian, and showed me documents

whether through *jiyin* 基因 (genes) or *xuetong* 血统 (“blood” lineage), as in the case of Arabs, or through religious authenticity, as in the case of imams or religious scholars, whose own ancestry was almost always traced back to an Arab, Persian, or Central Asian.

³⁷ __. On the Du Wenxiu or Panthay Rebellion, see Bai Shouyi (1953); Ju-k’ang T’ien (1981); Wang Jianping (1995); David Atwill (2005).

that “proved” that her patrilineal male ancestor and his “younger brother” left Fujian for Nanjing during the Ming Dynasty. She told me that the elder brother “remained Huizu” while “the younger brother became Hanzu.”³⁸ Her ancestors slowly migrated westward and only settled in Yunnan after the massacres of 1873.

Whether or not such reckonings of genealogical relationships and descent are true historically, they nevertheless shaped the ways in which my interlocutors articulated and practiced their ethnic identity in present-day Kunming. In discussing the Ding lineage of Fujian, Dru Gladney (1996) notes that, “The importance of [the Ding] genealogy is not its authenticity, but its acceptance by the current members of the Ding clan in validating their descent from foreign Muslim ancestors” (377 n. 22). Indeed, we should read genealogies of Hui-Muslims in Kunming similarly.

To an extent, authentic identity for Kunming Hui precluded religious practice: because a solid ethnic pedigree could absolve one of the religious obligation to practice Islam, a known Hui-Muslim who did not pray five times a day could be, among certain elite urban Hui, viewed as more ethnically authentic than one who had to prove his Huiness. While this was most commonly explained casually, as in, “Of course he doesn’t pray regularly; he’s a descendant of the Prophet,” a conversation with a mixed group of Hui and Han men that I observed and participated in during my first forays into fieldwork especially illuminates how Hui-Muslims in Kunming employed this sense of primordial ethnicity in order to define their Muslim (and hence,

³⁸ . It is fascinating that she employs 20th century terminology here, both in her use of the minzu category and in her re-figuring of the elder— younger brother relationship, one so often used in post-1949 propaganda to show the Han elder brother guiding the shaoshu minzu younger brothers. Because she was certainly familiar with this typical hierarchical relationship, her appropriation potentially suggests a resistance to and re-working of it.

religious) authenticity. After I outlined my intended research on Yunnanese Hui to a group of officials, a Han man piped up:

Hui in Yunnan aren't interesting; here the only thing that separates them from the Han is that they don't eat pork. They don't sing or dance like the other *shaoshu minzu* (minority nationalities), so what's the point in studying them? You should either choose a different *minzu* to study or go to Ningxia [Hui Autonomous Prefecture] to study real Hui who actually pray.

Clearly offended, a Hui man interjected:

No, she should study Hui here. We're as interesting as any other *shaoshu minzu* in Yunnan, even if we don't sing or dance... Ningxia Hui are just backwards (*luohou* 落后) and impoverished (*pinkun* 贫困) converts to Islam. Of course they have to pray: they're not real Hui; they are just the descendants of Han who converted, and they lack any Arab or Persian ancestry. If they were descendants of Arabs, do you think they would be so poor? No, they lack the gene for commerce, ha... Besides, those Ningxia Hui are uncivilized (*bu wenming* 不文明) and of low quality (*suzhi hen di* 素质很低)...They just ask Allah to help them, and they never help themselves... Here in Kunming, we Hui are advanced and modern, due to our Arab and Persian ancestry. We are the authentic Huizu.

In this re-positioning of Hui-Muslim authenticity, Kunming Hui disparaged prayer and the practice of “religious converts,” instead articulating a uniquely Muslim modernity in which their own lack of prayer at once signified their authenticity as “true” descendants of “real” Muslims, and as vanguards of modernity, commerce, and science, further symbolized in their use of genetic “science” to assert their claims of authenticity. Here, Kunming Hui’s hierarchical situating of themselves vis-à-vis other, less authentic, religious Hui, and other non-Muslim Chinese, resonates with how Stacy Pigg (1996) untangles the ways in which the absence of traditional belief can become a marker of a modern identity: through voicing a lack of belief in shamanistic practices, “cosmopolitan villagers” in Nepal hierarchically positioned themselves as

“modern,” “scientific,” and “advanced” in relationship to other, shaman-believing villagers.

Moreover, whereas encounters between Shadian’s Muslims and other Muslims heightened their consciousness of being members of the Umma, Kunming Hui rarely encountered foreign Muslims. Instead, encounters with other Hui or with Han often, though not always, enhanced the ethnic consciousness of Kunming Hui rather than their sense of religious community. In this sense, the cosmopolitanism of urban elite Hui-Muslims was largely imagined.³⁹ Furthermore, in Kunming, Hui-Muslims relied on an imagined past of Islamic advancement and modernity to position themselves *within* China’s modernization narrative. Thus imagined, Kunming Hui were dually modern, advancing ahead of the Han, who lacked claims to a glorious Islamic past, and ahead of non-Chinese Muslims, who lacked claims to China’s ascendancy in global capitalism.

Shadian: Preserving the “Tradition of Islamic Modernity”

Not far from the Vietnam border, Shadian *qu* 区 (administrative district) is a cluster of hamlets under the administration of Gejiu City, Honghe Hani and Yi Autonomous Prefecture, in a region populated mostly by ethnic minority groups. My interlocutors there reported that approximately 95 percent of Shadian’s population were Hui; the rest were mostly Hani, Yi, Miao,

³⁹ . The vast majority of “cosmopolitan encounters” for Hui, urban or rural, were imagined, typically through books and electronic media, and even those that were not imagined could be classified as what Hebdige (1990) terms “mundane cosmopolitanism” (also see Szerszynski and Urry 2002). Some elite urban Hui in Kunming occasionally vacationed in the West, though usually as part of tour groups. A handful studied at Western institutions abroad (where they were usually classified as “Chinese” by their non-Chinese friends) or, more often, at Western-style institutions in China where they encountered *waijiao* 外教 (lit. foreign teachers, most often English language teachers). However, few urban Hui developed close relationships through these encounters, and, particularly when compared to the long-term relationships between some Shadian Hui and foreign Muslims, these urban Hui cosmopolitan encounters were only occasionally profound experiences for the actors involved.

or other minority groups, and a fraction were Han majority *nongmingong* 农民工 (peasant or migrant workers), most of whom resided in nearby Jijie township. As Gladney (1996) reports, Shadian was a “flourishing Muslim community...as early as the Ming dynasty...[and] became a center for Islamic learning throughout Southeast Asia and Southwest China, producing the first Chinese translation of the Quran” (137). My interlocutors relied on interpretations of Shadian’s past glory to position it as a unique site in China, one that, in the words of a teacher at one of the local madrasahs, “preserved the tradition of Islamic modernity.”

Before I visited Shadian, Hui interlocutors in Kunming insisted that spending time in Shadian was “crucial” for my research, and yet, at the same time, that it was too “dangerous” for me to go. Some claimed it sheltered “religious zealots” and even “wahhabi terrorists.” Rumors circulated that a “fortress” or wall encircled the township, built by the villagers themselves after the notorious Shadian Incident, in which, after a series of “uprisings” during the Cultural Revolution, the PLA allegedly launched heavy cannons, artillery and even used MIG jets to fire rockets in attempt to quell “resistance,” killing over 1,000 Hui villagers and razing the village.⁴⁰

Hopping off the bus on the highway outside of Jijie, I caught a lift into Shadian with friendly newlyweds, and was astonished when we saw no walls nor met any resistance; rather, we glided into town via welcoming boulevards marked with signs in Chinese, Arabic, and English. From the bus, I had glimpsed the glinting domes of eleven mosques. Countless other buildings flaunted Arab-style architecture, including, I would later learn, the building that housed the local governmental administration. Palm trees dotted the landscape and gated mansions

⁴⁰_. For accounts of the Shadian Incident, see Ma Shaomei (1989); Wang Jianping (1996); Dru Gladney (1996:137-140); Raphael Israeli (2002:264-270); Ma Ping (2008).

evoking oil baron owners flanked the town.⁴¹ At the junction of the broad boulevards sat the Great Mosque, the largest mosque in China, funded mainly through private donations and constructed in a grand, Arabized style.

A Day in the Life of Mrs. Yang of Shadian

Mrs. Yang, 51, is a homemaker and native of Shadian. By the time the familiar sound of roosting hens filters through the pre-dawn calls to prayer, Mrs. Yang has already performed her morning ablutions. While her husband scurries down the street to the nearest mosque, she quietly slips into an alcove reserved for women's prayers in the home. In contrast to Kunming's dominant temporal mode of capitalist production, everyday lives in Shadian are structured by Islamic religious practices; prayer times, religious obligations, and opportunities such as Quran classes largely determine the timing of sleep, meals, and community events. After prayers, Mrs. Yang prepares a breakfast of spicy *mixian* 米线 (rice noodles) for herself and her husband before he leaves for work. She dons a navy *changpao* 长袍 (abaya) with black trousers underneath and covers her hair with a black, rhinestone-encrusted hijab. She walks down the street to one of Shadian's eleven mosques in order to attend a morning class on the meaning of the Quran.

After class, Mrs. Yang heads down the street to the market. In Shadian, practically all foodstuffs and restaurants are qingzhen; the few restaurants that are not are clearly marked

Hanzu Fandian 汉族饭店 (Han restaurant). Back at home, she begins preparing lunch and then flips through a range of television stations that she receives because of her satellite dish:

⁴¹ __. Shadian Hui-Muslims explained the region's thriving economy in various ways, ranging from Allah's blessing to governmental reparations for the Shadian Incident. Whether or not it is blessed by Allah, the local economy benefits significantly from its mining industry, which is focused mainly on metals, including tin, copper, lead, zinc, silver, gold and tungsten.

Lebanon TV, Syria TV, Jordan TV and of course the CCTV Arabic channel. Although she only speaks Chinese, Mrs. Yang enjoys watching television series and news programs from the rest of the Muslim world, and feels that it connects her more to other Muslims' lives and experiences. When her husband comes home shortly after the noon prayers, she quickly prepares a lunch of chaocai and sits down to share it with him.

After lunch, she e-mails her son, who is in Syria studying to become an Islamic scholar.⁴² In the afternoon, several of her friends stop by for tea and light snacks: dates, apricots and pastries imported from Turkey. Her friends are all Hui-Muslim women in their 40s and 50s who live in Shadian, but many of them were born in other parts of Yunnan or even parts of China as distant as Lanzhou and Jinan. They moved to Shadian for the “strong Islamic atmosphere” (*nonghou de yisilan fengqi* 浓厚的伊斯兰风气). As one of their daughters exclaims, “If you walk around Shadian, you feel like you’re not in China but instead in some advanced, modern city in the Middle East or maybe Pakistan or Malaysia. We even have palm trees!” The older women remark that Shadian is granted much more religious freedom than many other places in China, and that the “strong Islamic atmosphere” ensures, for example, that employers will provide Muslim workers with prayer halls and time off to pray during working hours.

The women chat about local affairs. Recently, a woman from Sichuan who studied for several years at one of Shadian's many madrasahs returned to live in Shadian with her four children. After leaving Shadian, she had become a Chinese-Arabic translator in Guangzhou and

⁴² . Addendum: When I originally wrote this sentence, I was thinking of a particular interlocutor whose son was in Syria. Since then I have spoken with her, and she told me he had moved to Malaysia to continue his studies.

eventually married an Iraqi man. They moved to Jordan where they lived for over a decade, but when he died unexpectedly, she moved her family to Shadian, where she could count on community support. One woman from Lanzhou comments, “You know, more and more *Zhongguo Musilin* (Chinese Muslims) are marrying foreign Muslims. I heard that Lao Li’s daughter met a Pakistani man on the internet and they plan to marry soon. And when Ma Laoshi returned from his studies abroad, he brought back a wife from Iran.” “Well, and why not? Sharing the Islamic faith is the most important criterion for a marriage partner; one’s country of origin or ethnic background should not matter. We are all Muslims.” “Yes, but how can these foreign Muslims communicate with their Chinese in-laws? And the customs of these other places are quite different. We Chinese Muslim women have a much higher status than women in other parts of the Muslim world. How can we be sure that these foreign Muslims will respect that?”

When the afternoon calls-to-prayer reverberate throughout the hamlet, Mrs. Yang accompanies her guests to pray at the nearest mosque.

Mrs. Yang’s bookcase is stocked with books on Islam, Arabic language, and Middle Eastern culture and history. Many of them are Chinese translations of foreign books and some were printed abroad. Mrs. Yang selects a text on Islamic faith and settles into her armchair to read. Whereas Kunming Hui read Hui histories and genealogies that are primarily oriented toward a localized past, Hui-Muslims in Shadian read about Islam and the rest of the Muslim world. By consuming international Islamic literature and media, Shadian Muslims imagine a religious past, present, and future that temporally and spatially incorporates the Umma as an entirety and marks them as members of that Umma. After reading awhile, Mrs. Yang begins to prepare dinner, taking time to pray again around sunset. Once her husband is home, they have

dinner together and decide to go watch the inter-mosque youth basketball tournament before evening prayers. Afterwards, Mrs. Yang and her husband watch a subtitled Turkish TV series followed by a CCTV Arabic news program before they head to bed.

Localizing Identity Formation in Shadian

In contrast to Muslims in Kunming, Muslims in Shadian emphasized their attachment to the Umma through their consumption of, for example, Turkish soap operas, Malaysian Islamic educations, and Jordanian *halal* foodstuffs; through these practices, they, too, imagined themselves as uniquely modern. Although Shadian may appear more isolated than Kunming, Muslims in Shadian have experienced on average far more actual cosmopolitan encounters than have their counterparts in Kunming: through study abroad, *hajj*, meetings with foreign Muslims who visit Shadian, and even through marriages with Muslims from abroad, in addition to imagined encounters through books, TV and other media.

In May 2011, I interviewed several women about the transformation of Shadian that followed the economic reforms. When I asked specifically about the origins and processes of the prevalent Arabization in Shadian, everyone insisted that such “authenticity” had originated in the correct and pious practice of Islam there. However, in separate interviews and conversations with the same interlocutors, different pictures emerged. In one such interview, with Mrs. Feng, a housewife in her late 40s, we discussed the changes that had occurred since the Shadian Incident.

In the words of Mrs. Feng:

We prayed, but we didn't really know what it meant. After the Shadian Incident, we clung on to our faith even more strongly. But still, we didn't know what the words of the Quran meant. Even our imam didn't really know. In 1981, Ma Jian's translation into Chinese was published and finally we knew what it meant. He was a Shadianren, but he left in the

thirties and never really came back. Still, we finally understood our own faith, and that really changed us all, especially because of [the Shadian Incident]. Almost everyone here lost someone in their family, and the pain is still deep, so we had to keep our faith close and pray to Allah. Having a Chinese language version of the Quran helped with that, and Shadian became increasingly Muslim... After *gaigekaifang* (the economic reforms and “opening up”), we had more exposure to Muslims in the rest of the world, and we began to practice the teachings of Islam more authentically. Shadian became more and more like the rest of the Muslim World... [For example] when I was a young woman, only hajjis wore the hijab. If you dared to wear it, everyone would make fun of you and say, “Oh, so you think you’re a hajji?” But as more and more people started going abroad to countries like Saudi Arabia, Syria, Egypt, Turkey, Pakistan, Malaysia, we learned what it was like over there, and it became increasingly acceptable to wear it here... By about 2000, nearly all the women in Shadian wore a hijab.

Unlike in Kunming, for most in Shadian, practices of authentic Islam constituted not an advance toward a modern, cosmopolitan, future stage of development but rather a *return* to authenticity and, at the same time, a return to a previously dominant Islamic modernity.⁴³ Most evidently, this process of returning to authenticity was embodied in the Arabization of Shadian’s architectural styles, foodstuffs, media consumption, and clothing. Additionally, Shadian Hui-Muslims often imagined Islamic modernity as the singular, global modernity that sparked other, lesser (secular) modernities (cf. Dirlik 2003), and, in doing so they positioned the Chinese state as hampering, not spurring, their modernity. Like their counterparts in Xi’an (Gillette 2000), Hui in Shadian resisted the CCP evolutionary scale of modernization while also producing their own model of modernization.

⁴³ . Compare this to Maris Boyd Gillette’s (2000) description of a similar process of Arabization in Xi’an, where she posits that such styles excluded the Han majority (110) and were “attractive because they embodied the prosperity, technological development, and modernization of the Middle East” (233). In Shadian, however, the “meanings of change and the politics of pastness” (Appadurai 1996:3) were quite different from those in Xi’an, and significantly influenced Shadian’s notion of a return to authenticity.

However, unlike those in Xi'an, Shadian Hui conceptualized the early PRC era (1949-1966) and especially the Cultural Revolution (1966-76) as inducing an objectionable, forced break with an authentic, localized Islamic past. Their opposition to CCP religious policies materialized in the Shadian Incident, which in addition to being a traumatic lived and memorialized experience for Shadian Hui-Muslims, also bestowed upon them a level of Islamic righteousness and authenticity that others in China, who did not resist the CCP, could not claim. Shadian Hui asserted that their own lived "backwardness" in past decades was due to China's various modernization projects, and that when they have been able to pursue authentic lives of Islamic faith, they have been more modern than non-Muslims. In the words of one of my interlocutors there, "Capitalist and socialist systems alike deny the deep significance of faith; there is more to life than working, eating rice, drinking tea, buying things. That is actually a feudal (*fengjian* 封建) way of living. In order to live a modern (*xiandai* 现代) life, one must have faith in Allah, and practice the teachings of Islam."

In addition, whereas Gillette (2000) argues that increased contact with the Middle East since the 1980s partially accounts for Arabization in Xi'an, Hui-Muslims in Shadian repeatedly insisted that such increased contact — through the *hajj*, through media consumption, and through cosmopolitan encounters with foreign Muslim guests — had very little impact there. Instead, Shadian Hui-Muslims contended that Shadian's Arabization originated in improved local access to Chinese language copies of the Quran, beginning in 1981. Through exposure to the translated version of the Quran, Shadian Muslims gained insight into the "true" meanings of Islam, and, accordingly, were able to practice Islam more authentically. In this narrative, Arabization arose naturally from authentic, orthodox Islamic practice, so that the Arabized architecture and

consumption practices of Hui-Muslims in Shadian linked them to other authentic Muslims not hierarchically but horizontally. Thus the Arabization of Shadian simultaneously subverted the CCP monopoly on modernity while creating a space for a de-centered Islamic authenticity in which Shadian Muslims were no longer imagined as peripheral to Islam. Whether or not the stylistic details of Islamic practices emerged organically from reading translated copies of the Quran, the Arabization of Shadian's public spaces and architectural styles, along with consumption practices and cosmopolitan encounters, connected Shadian's Muslims in practice and in imagination both to other Muslims in China and to Muslims throughout the world while also influencing local identity formation, which above all emphasized authentic Islamic religious practice.

To be sure, Hui-Muslims in Shadian have appropriated Chinese cultural traditions and practices; however, they do so in a way that at once syncretizes and juxtaposes Chinese cultural practices with locally defined notions of Islamic authenticity (Allès 2000). Linguistically, for instance, they incorporated transliterated Arabic and Persian terms into their Chinese dialect and gave their children both Arabic names and Islamo-centric Chinese ones. On Eid-ul-Fitr, they breakfasted upon *tangyuan* 汤圆, glutinous rice dumplings traditionally consumed during the Han Lantern Festival. For Hui-Muslims in Shadian, these diverse practices underscored not the appropriation of Chinese customs but rather the central importance of Islamic religious practice in all aspects of life. That is, Hui-Muslims in Shadian reinforced the significance of Islamic religious practices through the syncretization and juxtaposition of Chinese cultural traditions with Islamic ones.

From their perspective, authenticity in Islamic practice radiates out from an idealized

Saudi Arabian center, with officially Islamic nations considered more authentic than secularist China, though Muslims in Shadian argued that their local authenticity in China is just as valid as that of officially Islamic nations. After all, Muslims there have endeavored to make Shadian as authentic as possible: the sale and consumption of alcohol, for instance, is banned within the Shadian administrative region.⁴⁴ And, as some of my interlocutors there told me, Shadian is in some ways a more authentic expression of Islam: according to many people there, women in Shadian have a much higher status than women in other parts of the Muslim world, and this is in accord with what the Prophet intended for all Muslims. Relying on *hadith* that proclaim the importance of education for and the high status of women, on Islamic histories that document women's high status, and on CCP ideology and legislation that advocate equality of women, my Hui-Muslim interlocutors positioned themselves as unique practitioners of an enlightened Islamic authenticity.⁴⁵ Together these local discourses and practices combined to create a

⁴⁴ . Wang Jianping (personal communication) raised the question: Why were Shadian Muslims able to ban alcohol successfully, whereas Muslims in Henan and Xi'an failed to do so? Shadian Muslims repeatedly stressed that because of specific historical and economic circumstances, particularly after the Shadian Incident, they were able to exert more legal and governmental authority locally than were Muslims in other parts of China. See also Gillette (2000:167-184) on the failed alcohol ban in Xi'an's Muslim District.

⁴⁵ . These *hadith* and stories are too numerous to list here. In practice, Shadian Hui-Muslim women were indeed relatively well-educated, whether through state schools or Quranic ones, and many older local women continued to pursue Quranic education at one of Shadian's many madrasahs. A surprisingly high number of local women had pursued bachelor's or master's degrees, and many women pursued careers and other leadership positions outside the home, even after marriage and children. Local women interpreted Islamic prescriptions for modest dress and the wearing of *gaitou* 盖头/*toujin* 头巾 (hijab) as liberating: such styles of dress not only marked a woman's relationship with Allah, but also enabled her to focus on developing her intellect and other skills, safe in the knowledge that others would not judge her by her looks. Submitting to religious authority empowered some women (cf. Mahmood 2005). Mosques, too, provided "spaces of their own" for women: women's mosques and female imams, rare or absent in other parts of the world, are common in China (Jaschok and Shui 2000; 2012; Allès 2000; Tatlow

community of individuals who emphasized authentic Islamic practice, rather than ethnicity, as the central facet of their identities.

Conclusion

Although throughout this chapter, I have focused on the local practices among Hui-Muslims at two different sites in Yunnan Province, my intent was to deepen our understanding of the variety and diversity of “authenticity,” and the complex processes of identity formation: even within a single province, among a single official *minzu* that P.R.C. propaganda, media, and scholarship often construct as a unified, static group, localized practices and processes of identity formation are remarkably diverse. What constituted authentic Hui-Muslim identity depended to a great extent upon the residence of the interlocutor. This ambiguity in what constituted authenticity for Hui-Muslims in Yunnan destabilizes typical Han assumptions that all Hui possess a deep ethnic consciousness that unites them no matter what.⁴⁶ Even for those Hui who

2012).

⁴⁶ . Hanzu in Yunnan often deplored what they viewed as preferential treatment of the Hui by the government, at national, provincial, and local levels. This “preferential treatment” consisted of official preferential policies (*youhui zhengce* 优惠政策) as well as governmental actions allegedly based on a fear of Hui historical and genetic tendencies for “violence” and “rebellions.” According to many Han interlocutors, if any incident occurred between a Han and a Hui, the Hui people would rush to defend their “brethren,” so the government took careful steps to placate the Hui. Han explained that this was due to the deep ethnic consciousness of the Hui, even though some Han believed this unification had no basis in genetic truth. Many Han expressed a desire that, like the Hui, they, too, could unite together as an ethnic group against others in China, and lamented the fact that most Han lacked a primordial ethnic consciousness and seemed ambivalent about expressing ethnic pride. For more on Han views of Hui in Yunnan, see Blum (2001); Caffrey (2007); Zhang (2010:153-156). See Allès (2003) for relationships between Han and Hui villages in Henan. See Kevin Carrico’s (2013) dissertation for a fascinating ethnographic account of Han nationalism. For more on Han ethnic consciousness (and lack thereof) see the Mullaney et al. (2012) volume *Critical Han Studies*.

advocated a primordial ethnic Huiness, there is a sense not only of difference but also of hierarchical order in that, “Those Hui over there are different from us and they are less authentic or legitimate.”

This ambiguity, flexibility, and diversity in processes of identity formation extends to other places within China and beyond. This chapter seeks to open a conversation onto such concerns, and one of my aims here is to begin to destabilize both “Islam” and “China” as totalizing, monolithic forces that, whether through orthodox religious authority or through governmental disciplinary techniques, impose identities and practices on the (perceived) cultural automatons who live in those worlds. Rather, I sought here to illustrate how, as actors involved in their own self production, Hui-Muslims in Kunming and Shadian negotiated, appropriated and contested both monolithic notions of Islam, and the official state-propagated *minzu* classificatory system.

Finally, another of my aims for this chapter is to begin to investigate how the processes of transnationalism and the yearnings and imaginaries that accompany it shaped locally produced constructions of identity and authenticity. Even though Hui-Muslims in Yunnan often imagined “genetic” or “religious” authenticity as radiating from a Saudi Arabian center, in practice what constituted authenticity for these Hui-Muslims was constructed through locally lived experience and practice. In other words, although transnationalism was an important factor, ultimately these were locally produced versions of “authenticity,” dictated neither by some distant imam nor by some Beijing bureaucrat, but rather constructed in tandem with local processes of self and community (re)production, and shaped by local spatio-temporal practices.

Chapter Three

Out of Place: Rupture and the Restoration of the Urbanized Subject

Introduction

In chapter two, I use the urban-rural dichotomy, a prevalent means of categorizing people and places in contemporary China, as a framework for understanding place-based identity formation in Yunnan. This distinction and the hierarchy of value ascribed to urban and rural became especially pronounced during the Maoist era, when the PRC instituted a formal *hukou* 户口 (household registration) system that, along with agricultural collectivization and other policies, often precluded individuals and families from moving “up” to the cities (Chan and Zhang 1999; Cheng 1991; Cheng and Selden 1994). Beginning in the 1980s the PRC began to implement reforms to the *hukou* system, although it remains in place today, posing a variety of problems for China’s “floating population” (*liudong renkou* 流动人口).⁴⁷ In addition to every day problems that rural Chinese migrants face in cities, such as sending one’s children to school, the legacy of the *hukou* system, coupled with uneven economic development, has engendered an associated hierarchy of urban-rural (Liu Xin 2000). This hierarchy, in which the rural is often represented as backwards, undeveloped, unsophisticated, lingers in the consciousness of people today and informs the ways in which they interpret the world they inhabit (Perry and Selden 2010).

However, as mentioned in chapter two, this dichotomy, while in many ways a salient

⁴⁷ . In 2013, *China Daily* reported that China’s floating population had reached 236 million, or approximately one sixth of China’s overall population. For more on the problems faced by the “floating population” in China, see especially Solinger 1999, Zhang 2002 and Jacka 2005.

mode of imagining relationships in contemporary China, does not account for the increasingly ambiguous distinction between the “urban” and the “rural.”⁴⁸ According to the 2010 China National Census, the country's urban population surpassed that of its rural areas for the first time. Many of those recent urbanites are people who would not have been categorized as “urban” according to the definition I used in chapter two: those who identify as members of that urban community rather than a rural community. Although such a definition often conforms more closely to how locals define themselves, it only serves to reify this dichotomy and foreclose the complexities of “becoming urban.”⁴⁹ As Raymond Williams reveals in his classic *The Country and the City* (1973), despite the ancient, naturalized opposition between them, our notions of the rural and the urban are but reifications that mystify the actual historical and social relations that produced them. Across contemporary China the boundaries between “urban” and “rural” are far more fluid than my previous definition would suggest: sprawling metropolises expand into what was recently farmland; high-rise residences sprout up in otherwise rural locations; commuters work in the city and return home each evening to outlying suburbs; migrants venture into the city to work – sometimes for decades – return “home,” and often return to the city once again (e.g., see Rofel 1999; Zhang 2002, 2010; Siu 2005, 2007).⁵⁰ Greg Guldin (1996, 2001) adopts Terrence McGee’s term *desakota* to refer to the merging of agricultural and industrial, rural and urban in

⁴⁸ . As G. William Skinner (1995) demonstrated, this urban-rural dichotomy was not traditionally dominant in China. The distinction between rural and the urban fluctuated with historical changes, and urban centers were rather intersections within a regionalized, nested hierarchy.

⁴⁹ . In using this notion of “becoming urban,” I do not mean to suggest in any way that the process itself is inevitable, linear, or evolutionary, even though some of my interlocutors did imagine it as such.

⁵⁰ . When I left Shadian in early summer 2011, a real estate agency had begun to sell apartments in a yet-to-be-built luxury, “Muslim-style” high-rise.

post-reform China. It is precisely these liminal spaces and people that I aim to examine in this chapter. What makes a particular kind of space or person “urban” or “rural,” and how should we as scholars conceptualize this?

Tropes of fragmentation and rupture abound in recent urban anthropological research, which often details the dissolution of communities and the anomie experienced by marginalized urban subjects (e.g., Ferguson 1999; Tang and Parish 2000; Low 2000, 2011; Watson 2006; Siu 2007; Coleman 2009; Loiselle 2010; Licari 2011; Schielke 2012; Strhan 2013). Urban spaces have been envisioned as unique nexuses for “encounters” with “strangers” (Simonsen 2008); as dynamic processes (Low 1999) rather than essentialized categories or objects (Lynch 1994); as “networks of networks” (Hannerz 1980); as productive realms of hybridity (Diener and Hagen 2013); as anonymity and “facelessness” (Hertz 2001); and as the creative destruction of “tsunami[s]” (Siu forthcoming). Although all of these conceptualizations take for granted the ostensibly inherent messiness of urbanness, they also enable us to move beyond notions of the city as unequivocally defined in relation to the countryside.⁵¹ Local Chinese conceptualizations of the city in particular appear to align urbanity with modernity, as do some scholars (e.g., Robinson 2013). Furthermore, in much of the social-scientific research (along with popular media) that focuses on contemporary China, the profound socio-economic transformation of recent years is at once assumed without question, and used to explain the “fragmentation” of

⁵¹ . Raymond Williams (1973) describes the ancient opposition (at least in Britain, if not the West) between country and city thusly: “On the country has gathered the idea of a natural way of life: of peace, innocence, and simple virtue. On the city has gathered the idea of an achieved centre of learning, communication, light. Powerful hostile associations have also developed: on the city as a place of noise, worldliness and ambition; on the country as a place of backwardness, ignorance, limitation. A contrast between country and city, as fundamental ways of life, reaches back into classical times.”

cities and their inhabitants (Campanella 2008; Hsing 2010; Ren 2011; Roy and Ong 2011).

Granted, China has indeed experienced rapid socio-economic change; however, it is crucial that we untangle the complex experience of these changes on the ground. Moreover, these tropes of “transformation” and “fragmentation” not only tend to obscure the reality of people’s lives, but also neglect to account for continuity, unity, and wholeness, which are often interwoven with rupture.⁵²

In this chapter, I employ the lenses of destruction and dispersal, fragmentation and fracturing to reconsider subjectivities, and to show how such processes did not necessarily produce fragmented, dispersed subjectivities but rather, in different ways for different interlocutors, reconfigured notions of authentic Muslim selves. I argue that these processes of change also (re)created a collectivized Muslim identity, and reframed notions of “authenticity” and the “wholeness” of being Muslim. That is, the rupture experienced through physical dispersal, destruction, and fragmentation produced an impetus to collectivity. The subjective experiences of specific interlocutors differed, but all discursively reified an authentic claim to Muslim-ness. This chapter highlights the various and varying means through which urban/izing Hui express their identities, and, at the same time, investigates how they experience these processes as Muslims, and in turn (re)formulate and (re)negotiate their Muslim-ness while they use this Muslim-ness to negotiate these very processes. In doing so, it demonstrates the limitations of neoliberal theories of urbanization by attending simultaneously to the physical manipulation of lived space and the re-production of communities and selves. This chapter asks

⁵² . While much of what is occurring today in China might seem new, there is arguably a long history of Chinese urbanity and “modernity” (e.g., see Gernet 1962; Yeh 2006; Lewis 2009; Fei 2009).

how exactly do urban/izing Hui-Muslims express their agency? How do they reconfigure their identities and subjectivities – collective and individual – in the wake of these changes? Is “mobility” itself a means to evade the hands of the state? Finally, this chapter also sheds light on the meanings of “cityscape” – not just infrastructure, but relationships and experiences, too (cf. Appadurai 1990).

The Rural in the Urban: Secularism, “Progress,” and Religious Erosion

Stumbling through the alleyways of the former Muslim District in Kunming, I searched for the niche which housed one of the most popular halal *shaokao* 烧烤 (barbecue) joints in town, where I would be meeting with Imam Xu and his wife, Ding Aisha. Aisha had texted me directions to the place, which was notoriously difficult to find, but new construction projects had sprung up throughout the district, and it seemed that each turn was blocked by signs marked *chai* 拆 (demolish).

It was early February 2010, shortly before Spring Festival, and I had just recently returned to Kunming to begin my field work. Although I had only been away for a year and half, I found the city center, especially the Muslim District, much changed. As I wandered in between the dusty construction sites and shiny shopping malls, I wondered where the shops I had once used to guide me through the district had gone. That hijab shop where Xiao Yang had taken me to purchase my first hijab in 2008 – had it moved? And the bookshop near the mosque selling *Han kitab*, biographies of notable Hui, and other Sinophone Islamic texts? Still, remnants of the Muslim District remained: halal restaurants with Arabesque facades, halal meat shops, dressmakers, and the *Minzu Zhongxue* 民族中学 (Nationalities Middle School) with its Arabized architecture. Finally, not far from the old bird and flower market, the scent of charred lamb

chuanr 串 (kebab) wafted through the dust from the construction sites. I turned down an alley, and saw Imam Xu and Ding Aisha waiting for me at a squat table laden with kebabs. They smiled warmly, “Tang Na, you found it! Not bad!”

Imam Xu was the youngest imam at the smallest mosque within the city limits, Jinniu (Golden Ox). Although both were native Yunnanese, he and Aisha were relative newcomers to the city. He was originally from Weishan, and she from Zhaotong; they had met while studying at madrasahs in the conservative Muslim town of Najiaying, married, and moved to Kunming in 2005. Initially, both had found urban life to be difficult on many levels: they missed their families and close friends, and the pittance Imam Xu received as his salary barely supported them, so Aisha had to find a job. She had searched for work as a primary school teacher, but because public employees are prohibited from wearing the hijab to work, she had to restrict her search to private institutions. Nearly one year after their arrival in Kunming, she finally secured a position at a private primary school on the outskirts of Kunming. As she later told me, she was grateful to Allah for this job, and yet she was also frustrated. Yes, she acknowledged, the hour-long commute, which required her to switch buses, was exhausting, but her main source of frustration was that she could no longer pray five times a day, or attend Jumu'ah (主麻 *zhuma*) prayers on Friday. Nevertheless, although most of her co-workers were non-Muslims, unlike at a public school, some were openly religious; there were even some foreign Christians who taught there.⁵³

⁵³ . After meeting a few of these “foreign friends” one evening, I told Aisha that I suspected they were Christian missionaries. She seemed shocked at first, saying, “But proselytization [by foreigners] is illegal.” Later, however, she reflected that these teachers drove large SUVs, and lived in luxury housing with their many children. As she put it, “There is no way their teachers’ salaries could afford such lifestyles.”

I squeezed myself onto the narrow wooden bench across from them. “Eat, eat,” they politely insisted. Sizzling lamb fat dripped down my chin as I reached for another kebab. “It looks like we’ve got an entire sheep here,” I joked. Imam Xu smiled and said solemnly, “Yes, this is by far the tastiest kebab in Kunming, but it doesn’t compare to the *yangrou chuanr* 羊肉串 (lamb kebab) in my hometown.” “Or in Najiaiyang,” piped Aisha, her mouth partially full. As we ate, the discussion progressed from polite small talk to gossip about the retirees who attended Imam Xu’s Quranic classes each week (where I first met Xu), and eventually to local politics. Imam Xu casually glanced around and observed, “Shuncheng Jie, Jinniu Jie – this area used to be referred to as the Muslim District, but look now, what is left of it? Now it’s all shopping malls and high-rise apartment complexes. This *shaokao* stall is only still here because the Han officials love it, too.”

For many Hui-Muslim newcomers to Kunming, like Imam Xu and Aisha, adjusting to the city presented a variety of challenges, not least the lack of a religious and communal center for Muslims. Imam Xu told me once that despite his low salary at the Jinniu mosque, he did not know how they would have coped in the city if he was not an imam; they had experienced difficulty meeting other young Muslim couples even though he worked at the mosque. “Fewer and fewer young Hui preserve their faith these days. They come to the city to work or study, and soon abandon their faith and the values of their families. Perhaps if we had come here too early, we also would have been corrupted by the city. It’s fortunate that we [originally] left our hometowns for places with lots of other Muslims.”

Hui-Muslims from Kunming and the Yunnanese countryside alike subscribed to this folk theory that the city eroded one’s religious beliefs. As I mentioned in the first chapter, Hui-

Muslims in Kunming blamed this on a confluence of factors, including the turmoil of the Cultural Revolution, the impracticalities of living as religious minorities in a city dominated by capitalist modes of life, the difficulties in participating in the Muslim community after the demolition of the Muslim District, and so forth. Hui-Muslims in the countryside, especially in Muslim enclaves like Shadian, similarly believed that moving to the city would erode one's faith. For most Yunnanese Hui, this was naturalized such that Muslims themselves were not perceived as the active agents, the city was. In other words, the city actively eroded one's faith, subjecting the faithful to its persistent hammer, and ultimately achieving its goal of uniform secularism. Occasionally, this theory was taken to its logical end, in which the both the responsibility and the agency of the non-religious urbanized Hui was disregarded.

This folk theory of religious erosion due to urbanization and/or modernization is not unique to Yunnan or to China. In *The Book of Jerry Falwell: Fundamentalist Language and Politics*, for instance, Susan Harding (2001) describes how fundamentalists were “exiled” when “modern America” was re-defined as secular. Fears of “assimilation” plagued evangelist Christian leaders like Ronald Wells, “who predicted that fundamentalism could not ‘sustain a significant countercultural style’ as it exposed itself to ‘modernity’s most powerful agents: universities, professions, upper social classes, and urban lifestyles” (150). In both cases, many people who bought these folk theories of erosion or assimilation “believed” in the inevitability of modernity and secularism.⁵⁴ In fact, some scholars hold similar positions, at least with regards to

⁵⁴ . Speculatively, the assimilation that purportedly occurred in urban contexts is perhaps the reason why many pious Muslims in Kunming insisted that they were not *Kunmingren*, no matter how long they had lived there, but were instead people of their rural hometown – only urbanites lost their faith. Granted, this apparent regionalism could be yet another result of the *hukou*, or perhaps due to the same conservative worldview that reinforced their religiosity even in the “corrupt” city.

the West (e.g., Bruce 2002), even though urban areas were once (and still often are) centers of religious faith – with religion central to the urban center itself. Such local and scholarly theories of religious erosion problematically conflate modernization, urbanization, and secularization, reducing all three to an ever-progressing process. To this end, Talal Asad (2003) states, “If anything is agreed upon, it is that a straightforward narrative of progress from the religious to the secular is no longer acceptable” (1). However, it should be noted that while such processes are undoubtedly complex, these local theories of erosion have real effects on people’s lives, as we shall see.

Narrating Assimilation and Accommodation

My interlocutors in both Kunming and Shadian frequently regaled me with amusing and disturbing stories of the rural and/or provincial Hui person in the city, and the kinds of negotiations, accommodations, and adjustments that such a person would necessarily make. The narrative arcs and details of these stories were similar regardless of the residence of the interlocutor: the rural Hui person visits or moves to the city where he or she encounters difficulties living as a Hui-Muslim and/or is shocked by the immorality and corruption of city life. Typically this urban decay was highlighted through such graphic details as the filthiness of restaurant food in the city (and its links to corruption, both moral and governmental), or the scandalous clothing that urbanized women— even Hui women— wear. Such points could also be communicated in jokes or short exchanges. So, for instance, a Hui businessman, upon returning to Kunming from Shanghai, joked with his wife, “Darling, please tell me that you have prepared a feast of *qingzhen* delicacies tonight, full of meat and nourishment. I’ve spent the past week subsisting only on *Lanzhou lamian* 兰州拉面 (Lanzhou-style pulled noodles, a halal dish

available throughout China!)” Such jokes and stories stressed the accommodations Muslim minorities had to make in a majority non-Muslim world: in this joke, for instance, the provincial Hui businessman in Shanghai had to duck into noodle shops for every meal in order to keep halal, in spite of his wealth and connections.

The binaries my interlocutors deployed in such tales positioned them within imagined hierarchal relationships which opposed the naïve yet clean and moral provincial or rural person to the morally corrupt yet modern urban sophisticate, and the *qingzhen* (lit. pure and true) home to a strange, corrupt, dirty city. While the joking nature of many of these stories indicates that their tellers and listeners did not necessarily take them literally, they nevertheless highlight actual anxieties, yearnings, and aspirations of those who told them. Through such stories, cities were conceived of as sites where the erosion of minority identities was inevitable: all urbanized subjects had to accommodate the majority, at least to an extent. At the same time, however, urban Hui were quick to point out that, with its access to higher education, higher quality (*suzhi* 素质) people,⁵⁵ and other forms of cultural capital (Bourdieu 1984), urban life also enabled them to better preserve those aspects of Huiness that, in their opinions, matter most: lineage, heritage, and “traditions” of the Hui such as educational attainment. Therefore, urbanized Hui recognized

⁵⁵ _ . When asked what they meant by high quality (*suzhi hen gao* 素质很高) people, most urban Hui in Kunming, like most other Chinese in other Chinese metropolises, explained that they meant *you wenhua* 有文化 (cultured/educated) and *wenming* 文明 (civilized), as opposed to *luohou* 落后 (backwards), *pinkun* 贫困 (impoverished), or *tu* 土 (rustically uncouth). See Ann Anagnost (1997) for more on how these qualities and oppositions work in modern China. See Anagnost (2004), Kipnis (2006), and Jacka (2009) for more specifics about the discourses of *suzhi*.

the inevitability of the erosion of their faith, while also rationalizing their move to the city by the specifically Hui gains it granted them.

Yet despite the advantages that city life offered, city-dwellers and rural folks alike repeatedly remarked upon, pondered, and questioned the local hypothesis that urbanization led to erosion of ethno-religious identity. In a June 2011 interview with a longterm resident of Kunming and Shadian native, Li Wei justified the erosion of his own religious practice and faith thusly:

In 1999, I moved to Kunming [from Shadian] to study economic management at the Yunnan University of Finance and Economics. Especially back then, it was practically impossible to maintain one's *xinyang* (faith). The mosques were far from the university, and I couldn't just leave class to pray... After I graduated, I took a job in a company in which most of my colleagues were Han. There's nothing wrong with that, of course, but my Han colleagues often teased me about not eating pork, and when we'd go out to business dinners they would make jokes about ordering pork dishes and lying to me about it... Even though I didn't want to drink alcohol, the pressure was so great when conducting business deals that I finally gave in. There's simply no way to do business with Han clients and not drink.

While Li Wei lamented the erosion of his faith as a Muslim, he admitted that he would not trade in his urbanized life for a rural religious one: "Even if I have to make certain changes in my lifestyle, overall it is for the better. Sure, some things may be inconvenient, but the most important thing is that my son will receive a better education here in Kunming." Li Wei's testimony epitomizes that of many urbanized Hui, and also resonates with rural theories of ethno-religious erosion; however, not all Hui who moved from rural areas to urban areas experienced this: a handful of Hui moved to the city for religious study or to work at religious-oriented businesses such as halal markets, mosques, Islamic bookstores, hijab stores, the Muslim

Travel Agency or in other Hui-owned private enterprises (*getihu* 个体户). While perhaps the rural to urban shift was less jarring for those Hui who managed to secure such jobs, a rough period of adjustment to urban life did not necessarily lead to the erosion of identity for any particular Hui individual from a rural background.

By the time I met Xiao Bai, a fashion-conscious and devout young woman in her early twenties, she was one of the leaders of the Yunnan University Muslim Students' Association. A Shadian native from an affluent, religious family of mining executives, Xiao Bai told me that growing up, she resisted religious and family pressure to conform to Hui-Muslim ideals of womanhood, particularly ideals that would prioritize wifeliness and motherhood over education.⁵⁶ During her teenage years she attended a state-run public high school in Mengzi, and, to her family's dismay, associated religion with superstition (*mixin* 迷信). While gleefully recounting her "rebellious" youth, she explained that she refused to wear the hijab, despite the insistence of her grandfather, a respected Hui elder and local scholar, and despite the fact that nearly every woman in Shadian – and, indeed, even some elementary school girls – wore it. In defense of her youthful actions, Xiao Bai pointed to her intelligent, undereducated maternal aunt who, after being accepted to Yunnan Normal University in the 1980s, had, from Xiao Bai's perspective, neglected to assert her own yearnings for education and "self-cultivation" when she

⁵⁶ __. In interviews and conversations, young women in Shadian consistently reported that the most important role in a woman's life was that of a "virtuous wife, loving mother" (*xianqi liangmu* 贤妻良母). While familial pressure to fulfill that role was often high, many young women declared that they had other priorities, and women of every age insisted that education for women was essential. In practice, many women of the younger post-1980s generation attended post-secondary school and then married, after which they often continued to work, typically, though not always, in female-dominated careers such as teaching.

buckled under familial pressure to marry.⁵⁷ In contrast, when Xiao Bai gained entrance to Yunnan University, her family supported her, even though her parents, grandparents, and other elders (*zhangbei* 长辈) in her family worried that life in the provincial capital of Kunming would “erode” what faith Xiao Bai had.

Despite her initial excitement upon moving to Kunming, Xiao Bai soon became overwhelmed by a sense of urban anomie and displacement: she had no close friends or family in the provincial capital, and the rhythms and anonymity of city life conflicted with her expectations. Although she had lived in an urban area before, when attending high school in a small city outside of Shadian, in Kunming she felt disconnected, even alienated, from those around her. According to Xiao Bai, Kunming residents and classmates at Yunnan University cared only about making money and spending that money on items that would increase their prestige among their friends. Like many Shadian Muslims, she expressed that a life that consisted “only of working, making money, spending money, drinking tea, and eating rice” was meaningless; one needed faith (*xinyang* 信仰) in order to live a meaningful life. Shaken by her classmates’ conspicuous consumption and their willingness to participate fully in a capitalist system that she believed was unjust to the most pitiful (*kelian* 可怜) and needy (*pinkun* 贫困), she felt compelled to seek out other Muslims. She joined the Muslim Students’ Association, through which she befriended Xiao Ma, a second year student from Jinghong, the seat of Xishuangbanna Prefecture, an area known for its Dai, not Hui-Muslim, population.

⁵⁷ . For more on “self-cultivation” in a modernizing Chinese context, see Rofel (2007), Yan (2009), Kleinman et al. (2011) and, specifically in Chinese educational contexts, see Kipnis (2011).

Xiao Ma prayed five times each day, despite the inconveniences of doing so on campus: she woke before dawn to pray in her dorm room, even though this annoyed her non-Muslim roommates; she slipped out of class at prayer times to pray in a nearby makeshift prayer hall that the Muslim Students' Association had set up; she organized Muslim students to pray on campus every Friday after classes. By fashionably sporting brightly colored and bejeweled hijabs and modest but trendy clothing imported from Pakistan and Malaysia, she also made her faith central to her style as a cosmopolitan urban youth.

As the two young women's friendship deepened, so did Xiao Bai's interest in Islam and in all aspects of the Islamic world. Gradually Xiao Bai, too, prayed five times a day and elegantly paired her new hijabs with her clothing. After she graduated, Xiao Bai remained in Kunming to pursue her master's degree in education, after which she hoped to attend Quranic school abroad, ideally in Malaysia. She still experienced minor tension with her family, who urged her to return to Shadian soon to marry, but in strengthening her faith and her relationships with other Hui-Muslims, she had gained confidence, friendship, and a fulfilling life in the city, as well as her family's trust.

Li Wei's and Xiao Bai's stories exemplify how the relationships between rural and urban constructions of Huiness are dynamic, processual, and ongoing: both of these subjects moved from Shadian to Kunming for university, but due to their own individual backgrounds and specific experiences, the processes of urbanization acted differently in influencing their respective individual ethno-religious formations of identity. For individual actor-subjects, the rural and urban were not discrete units that produced typologies of identities but rather ever-

changing nodes on a processual spectrum that shaped identity formation and subjectivities in complex ways.

Urbanization and the Gendered Subject

Xiao Bai's story was hardly unique for young Hui-Muslim women from rural Yunnan; although it may seem counterintuitive, it was not uncommon for young women to become more religious in a city where practicing Islam created inconveniences, particularly when said women were far from home. However, other young women coped with similar feelings of urban alienation in different ways. One Saturday night in late April 2003, shortly after the SARS epidemic erupted, I joined some friends at a pub in Kunming's university district. Before long, a friendly group of young women waved us over, surprised to see foreigners out given the deadly epidemic. Soon we were throwing back drinks and chatting. All of these young women were students at Yunnan University, and, astonishingly, two of them were Hui-Muslims, though they drank as heartily as the rest of us.

These two women, Su Jing and Ma Lian, were studying for their Masters in Business Administration at Yunnan University (YunDa). Both were Hui-Muslim women from rural Yunnan; Su Jing hailed from a town near Zhaotong and Ma Lian from a town near Dali. Like Xiao Bai, they had been raised in relatively conservative families, and upon moving to Kunming, they both initially experienced considerable difficulties adjusting. Unlike Xiao Bai, however, they lucked into sharing a dorm with each other (along with four young Han women, too), which meant they soon had someone with whom they could share meals at the campus Qingzhen Dining Hall, in addition to class notes, clothing, and gossip. Unsurprisingly, they told me that their friendship was "fated" (*you yuanfen* 有缘分). In addition, their friendship enabled them to

resist their families' pressure to conform to more conventional standards of Hui-Muslim womanhood. By the time I started my dissertation fieldwork in December 2009, both women were in their thirties and had advanced significantly in their respective careers. Neither was married, although before I left the field in September 2011, both women had purchased their own shimmering luxury apartments in downtown Kunming.

In early summer 2010, I accompanied Su Jing, Ma Lian, and Su Jing's cousin, Su Liang, on a night out on the town. We had made plans to "wear something sexy," in the words of Su Jing, and to meet beforehand at an upscale pizza parlor downtown. By the time Ma Lian arrived, Su Jing, Su Liang, and I were already quaffing glasses of Chianti. All of us had dressed "sexy," but our jaws dropped when Ma Lian glided into the restaurant. Decked out in black sateen daisy dukes over fishnet stockings with a cropped silver sequined top, rhinestone earrings that grazed her shoulders, towering platform heels, and dramatic eyeliner, Ma Lian unmistakably outshone us. Su Jing quipped, "Wow, I said dress sexy, not dress like you're looking for a one night stand." Ma Lian immediately shot back, "You know that if we were in Shanghai, this would be nothing. People would look at me and think, 'Virgin.'"

This particular exchange reveals the tensions between two idealized notions of contemporary Chinese womanhood: that of the "modern," erotic, urban sophisticate and that of the "traditional," chaste, "virtuous wife, good mother" (*xianqi liangmu* 贤妻良母). At the same time, each woman's words emphasized her sophistication and modernity, contrasting provincial chastity to urban eroticism. When Su Jing first suggested that we dress "sexy" (*xinggan* 性感), she was positioning herself as a "modern," urbanized woman, as were all of us when we dressed "sexy." Ma Lian's act of consuming and creating a dramatically "sexy" outfit positioned her as

the most daring of us, and potentially the most “modern.” In the act of creating this new look – one that deviated from her daily wear of posh yet relatively conservative, feminine attire – Ma Lian was “re-fashioning” herself as urban and sexually “open.” When Su Jing chided Ma Lian for her daring outfit, she was in some ways “slut shaming” her, asserting her view that sophisticated modern women acted and dressed a certain way – a way that may be sexy but that did not involve baring one’s navel. However, knowing both the competitiveness and friendship between them, I would venture to guess that Su Jing was also chiding herself for not dressing “sexier.” When Ma Lian responded that her outfit was hardly risqué for Shanghai, she was at once signifying that both women were cosmopolitan enough to have traveled extensively – as businesswomen, both Ma Lian and Su Jing had often traveled to and were familiar with Shanghai – and implying that Su Jing’s attitudes were provincial, thereby re-asserting her own sophistication. Unspoken but implied, was the joint knowledge of these young women that such styles of dress were forbidden in their Muslim communities back home, where they were expected to wear loose-fitting, conservative clothes that conformed to Islamic codes of dress. As several young Hui-Muslim from rural Yunnan told me separately on different occasions, living in the city, away from one’s family, provided a respite from these religious restrictions and allowed the young women to participate in one of the most conspicuous ways of performing “modernity” in contemporary China: wearing fashionable clothing.

In the post-reform decades, “open” (*kaiifang* 开放), expressive sexuality and its concomitant styles of dress have become associated with feminine modernity and urbanity, through advertisements, media, and the Internet. As Harriet Evans states in her essay “Fashion and Feminine Construction,” “the emblematic use of the fashioned, feminine body has since the

1980s been used to demonstrate the rewards for participating in the market economy. The gender subjectivity of the ‘modern woman’ displayed in women’s magazines condones and encourages her consumption of feminine fashions” (2006: 180). During the “gender erasure” and masculinization of the Maoist period, male-female gender relations were depicted primarily through the father-daughter relationship, suppressing women’s sexuality and emphasizing their familial duty (Yang 1999). In contrast, the post-reform market economy, with its new consumer culture, has engendered a fundamental gender bifurcation in which gender difference is exaggerated, celebrated, and commodified, particularly through styles of dress and the “hypervisibility” of the female image (Yang 1999).

Even the women’s collective choice to meet for dinner and wine at the pizza parlor, rather than a local Chinese restaurant, signaled their cosmopolitanism. In contemporary China, foreignness and cosmopolitanism are often imagined as intricately linked to modernity and urbanity, in part due to consumption patterns that make it difficult to consume foreign goods outside of “modern” cities (e.g., see Gillette 2000b).⁵⁸ In *Desiring China*, Lisa Rofel (2007) argues that producing “cosmopolitanism with Chinese characteristics” entails both “transcending China to become a cosmopolitan self” and “domesticating cosmopolitanism within China,” a tension that “rests...in the bodies of young women” (129). For Rofel as for many other scholars of contemporary China (e.g., see Davis 2000, Watson 2006), consumerism is a major force for producing both aspects of cosmopolitanism. Many of my young female interlocutors in Kunming would agree with this interpretation: for them, eating pizza was consuming cosmopolitanism; being seen eating pizza marked them as modern, cosmopolitan youth. However, as Muslim

⁵⁸ . Although, as I show in the first chapter, “rural cosmopolitanism,” as in Shadian, does occur,

women, eating outside the bounds of the home or a halal restaurant marked them as *ḥarām* (哈拉姆), sinful.

In 2011, I accompanied Ma Lian on a visit to her hometown, outside of Dali. One evening after returning from Dali Old Town, her mother asked us what we ate for dinner. To Ma Lian's chagrin, I responded honestly that we had eaten at a Western restaurant. Ma Lian's mother glared at her daughter and said, "Western restaurants are not *qingzhen*."

"I only had a steak and fried potatoes, Mom, it's not as if I ate pork."

"The meat there is not halal. You shouldn't eat it."

Ma Lian rolled her eyes, and we retreated to her room. Like many urbanized Hui-Muslim youth, Ma Lian enjoyed eating out at Western restaurants – for her consuming cosmopolitanism and being Muslim were not at all contradictory. When we went together, she always avoided pork – an easy task since the only kind of pork many places served was bacon. Like other urbanized Hui-Muslim youth in Kunming, her "modern" preferences influenced her friends and relatives in her hometown, and her authority in such matters as fine pizza and hamburgers was only bolstered when she brought me, a *laowai*, home to visit. Later, when her younger cousins visited Kunming, they called me directly, insisting that they would treat me to a meal if I would show them the "most authentic" (*zui zhengzong* 最正宗) places to eat "Western food."⁵⁹

Many of my young women interlocutors in Kunming performed the roles of "good Muslim daughters" when they returned "home" to visit their parents, especially if their parents

⁵⁹ . Unlike most of my older interlocutors, those younger than their mid-40s were not only more curious about non-Chinese foods, but also placed value on seeking out foods that were viewed as "authentic." This interest was one of the most accessible ways for non-urban rural people to cultivate a sense of cosmopolitanism and its associated "modernity." (e.g., see Davis 2000; Watson 2006).

lived in relatively conservative, rural Muslim enclaves: they wore conservative clothes that conformed to standards within the Muslim community, often including a hijab; they brought gifts of halal foods for their families; they joined their families at prayer times; and they kept up appearances that their city lives, though hectic, were ones that accommodated their Muslimness. At times, such as when Ma Lian's mother discovered we had eaten at a Western, non-halal restaurant, their "modernity" would reveal itself to their families. In contrast, other women, such as Xiao Bai, cultivated a specifically Muslim form of cosmopolitanism in both the city and their hometowns, a form that embraced "global Islam" primarily by consuming products that marked them as Muslims. Both Ma Lian and Xiao Bai, however, resisted particular aspects of their families' conservatism – especially their push to see their daughters marry. When I left Kunming in 2011, Xiao Bai was making plans to take Quranic classes in Malaysia, which depended upon convincing her brother to join her, as neither her family nor her community would support her going abroad alone. At the same time, like most of my young female interlocutors, she was battling her mother's insistence that she return home and marry. These cases reveal the tensions between being perceived as a "good Muslim" and cultivating a "modern," cosmopolitan self, and, relatedly, between being an urban Muslim woman and a rural one.

Urbanization and the "Modern," Urbanized Self

Such tensions resonate with those experienced by other marginalized subjects within contemporary China, who, like my interlocutors, also negotiate a recursive fashioning of the self that differs in the context of one's natal (often rural) home and in urban centers. For example, sociologist and LGBT activist Li Yinhe estimates that there are around 20 million homosexual males in China, approximately 80 percent of whom have married heterosexual women (Li 2002).

Especially in past decades, many of these men have maintained an apparent heterosexual life in their rural homes, including a wife and children, while working and living in urban areas where they can lead what they view as a more “authentic” life as gay men.⁶⁰ Many of the urbanized Muslim women I knew in Kunming, along with gay men, lesbians, and even so-called “female leftovers” (*shengnü* 剩女), claimed that the market economy had liberated their “true” selves: that is, the success and financial independence they gained through the market economy ushered in their independence from patriarchal familial structures, and thus empowered “authentic” self-cultivation.

In this narrative, Maoist socialism suppressed individuals’ authentic selves; the dissolution of Maoist socialism and subsequent *gaige kaifang* 改革开放 (reform and opening up) quelled this suppression, enabling individuals to “discover” their inner, authentic, individualistic selves, which were perceived as dormant, waiting to be unearthed. That is to say, from this perspective, socio-cultural and historical conditions can alternately inhibit or unleash the self, but the content of the discoverable self remains relatively static, and any substantive changes are produced by the individual, through self-cultivation. Such narratives of self-discovery and self-creation, while currently popular among Chinese youth, neglect to account for the role of structural and cultural conditions in cultivating selves, as well as the necessary and fundamentally social aspect of all selves – despite youthful fantasies of absolute independence of the “self.”

⁶⁰ . Recently, it has become increasingly popular in China for gay men and lesbians to marry each other in order to maintain the appearance of heterosexuality for the sake of their families or due to social pressure, while also, as a Han gay man told me in Beijing, “staying true to [them]selves.” Websites such as chinagayles.com have sprouted up in order to facilitate this.

In recent years, many scholars of China have linked the rising ethic of self-cultivation to the post-reform economic transformations, and especially to consumerism, showing the ways in which new selves are produced by fulfilling “personal desires” through consumption (Davis 2000; Gillette 2000; Yan 2003; Hansen and Svarverud 2010). With this economic transformation comes a variety of social changes: urbanization and social mobility, in particular, have carved out spaces for individual expression, leading to the “disembedding” of the individual from previous identifications with family, class, or collective (Yan 2009). In *Private Life Under Socialism* (2003), Yan Yunxiang convincingly documents the development of what he terms the “uncivil individual,” tracing the transformation of “private life” in rural China back to the the land reforms of the 1940s and showing the gradual socio-historical changes that led to a decline of parental authority and filial piety along with the rise of autonomy, desire, egotism, and “consumption demand.” Yan demonstrates that the vast transformation in “private life” did not occur suddenly as a rupture between the Maoist and the post-reform eras; instead, subtle transformations over decades slowly changed both the social structure of rural China and the attitudes and actions of the people who lived there. In this way, Yan reveals the ways in which both communities and individual selves are produced and cultivated within particular historical and cultural contexts. The content of these selves – and that of the communities with which they participate – is no more or less “authentic” because of the particular conditions in which they are produced. Indeed, selves are continually (re)created in tandem with the particular, multiple historical and cultural contexts in which they are enmeshed.

Drawing on both Marxian and phenomenological analyses, this conceptualization of self-production and subjectivity is grounded in material processes and experience. It challenges

Foucauldian and other post-structuralist theories of the subject that, while validly critiquing a universal, unitary, and rational “Cartesian⁶¹” subject, over-emphasize the power of discourse in constituting subjectivities and further dissolve the “dissolved” subject of structuralism.⁶² In an oft-cited passage from “The Subject and Power,” Foucault (1983) posits a dual notion of the subject as both “subject to someone else by control and dependence” and “tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge” (331). In his insistence that we attend to the interaction between “techniques of domination” and “techniques of self,” he recognizes the gap between imposed cultural rules and actual individual practices. Selves are not only produced through discourse, but also implicated in their own processes of self-production. And yet, the notion of “agency” that Foucault and others claim on behalf of subjects is one that entirely lacks intentionality; this “agency” is produced only within the same discursive processes of power that subjectify subject-agents. As Joan Scott writes:

Subjects are constituted discursively, but there are conflicts among discursive systems, contradictions within any one of them, multiple meanings possible for the concepts they deploy. And subjects have agency. They are not unified, autonomous individuals exercising freewill, but rather subjects whose agency is created through situations and statuses conferred on them. (Scott 1992: 34).

Although post-structuralist critiques of the unitary, autonomous subject enable us to theorize subjectivity as shifting, transitory, and multiple, while also recognizing how subjects are produced through power-laden discursive processes that “subjectify” them, the post-structuralist

⁶¹ Descartes’ famous dictum “I think, therefore, I am” presumes a thinking, autonomous, unitary subject.

⁶² . Sherry Ortner provides a history of social theory on the nature of the subject, which culminated in extreme positions during the debates between Sartre, who advocated the “primacy of human ‘freedom,’” and Levi-Strauss, who insisted that “the aim of the human sciences was ‘not to constitute but to dissolve man’”(Ortner 2006: 108).

subject, in lacking intentionality, lacks true agency.⁶³ Additionally, while such theories are especially useful in understanding how constructs of subjectivity shift historically and cross-culturally, in over-emphasizing discursive production, they neglect the material conditions and lived experience that also constitute subjectivities.⁶⁴ To be sure, discourses, texts, and symbolic processes are crucial in the formation of subjectivities, but they alone do not entirely explain the complexities involved in subject formation.

In contrast to these overly discursive formulations of the subject, Marx emphasized how the relations of production conditioned economic realities and human social relations which subsequently shaped human experience and consciousness. In Marx's own words, from *Preface to a Critique of Political Economy*, "...it is not the consciousness of men which determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness...".⁶⁵ In other words, what current anthropologists would today term "subjectivity" – what Sherry Ortner (2006: 107) defines as "the ensemble of modes of perception, affect, thought, desire, fear and so forth that animate acting subjects [and] the cultural and social formations that shape, organize and provoke those modes of affect, thought" – are conditioned by social relations, which, for

⁶³ . See Sangren (2000), especially chapter six "'Power' Against Ideology: A Critique of Foucaultian Usage," for an extended analysis of how post-structuralist notions of the subject extinguish intentionality and agency. Arguing against such notions, Sangren instead emphasizes the "productive efficacy" and agency of individuals who are not merely products of the processes of social production, but also its "agent-producers."

⁶⁴ . In emphasizing the materiality and "embodiment" of subjectivity, Bourdieu (2000) critiques such symbolic, discursive constructions of subjectivities. To this end, he states, "While it never does harm to point out that gender, nation, or ethnicity or race are social constructs, it is naïve, even dangerous to suppose and suggest that one only has to 'deconstruct' these social artifacts in a purely performative celebration of 'resistance' in order to destroy them" (Bourdieu 2000: 108).

⁶⁵ . Here the phrase "social being" refers to the dialectical relationship between productive forces and the relations of production.

Marx, Gramsci, Williams and other Marxist theorists, can be understood only with reference to material processes. Gramsci's concept of hegemony, for instance, which incorporates both the actual social relations that produce inequality and the ideas by which that inequality is legitimized, involves the consent and participation of those it subjectifies. In contemporary China, the hegemony of urban modernity saturates society to the extent that few if any individuals question it. New urban residents, such as the interlocutors I have discussed in this chapter, both consent to and participate in this hegemony, furthering its authority.

Subjects and the social relations, ideas, experiences, practices, and so on that constitute them, along with the relations between and among these various dynamic processes, shift historically, in response to social, political and economic situations. These various processes of subjectivity formation are mutually and reciprocally constituting, yet not in fixed ways. What constitutes subjectivities themselves shifts in relation to material processes. Mayfair Yang (1994), for example, elucidates how subjectivities in China have shifted dramatically with response to major historical transformations. She contrasts the "individualist subjectivity" that arose during the period around the May Fourth Movement (1919),⁶⁶ with the "Mao-centered subjectivity"⁶⁷ of the Communist era as well as with "*guanxi* subjectivity" that, at least in contemporary China, negotiates and subverts state power.

The processes of urbanization, I suggest, are implicated in producing a particular form of subject, at least in contemporary China, where rural-to-urban migration, both temporary and permanent, has soared. For Gramsci (2001), "individuality" is in actuality, an "ensemble of

⁶⁶ During the May Fourth Movement, Western intellectual and cultural traditions flourished among China's elite educated classes, although Chinese nationalism and populism also surged.

⁶⁷ According to Yang, "Mao-centered subjectivity drew a distinct and unmediated line between each individual psyche and the state center," in part through the efforts of the mass media (265).

social relations... and of [man's] conditions of life" (359). It is through this "ensemble of relations and conditions" that subjectivities are created. Autonomous, individual subjectivities in the psychological sense of the term exist solely in particular socio-historical contexts, and I argue here that urban China is qualitatively different in socio-historical terms from rural areas, and thus this different "ensemble of relations and conditions" (re)produces a uniquely urbanized form of the "modern" Chinese subject. As urban populations skyrocket, such forms of subjectivity become increasingly prevalent. Specifically urban modes of transformation, capitalist production, consumption patterns, along with a variety of urbanized social relations all contribute to the (re)production of the urban subject. As new urbanites, individuals – largely cut off from the social networks and family ties that might rein in unsanctioned desires, and often exposed to new social conditions and relations that unleash them – feel free to cultivate a self of their own choosing. Li Wei, Xiao Bai, Su Jing, and Ma Lian all embraced this intensification of selfhood in their own ways, and all of them described their newly cultivated selves as the products of their own "personal desires," thus ignoring the ways in which all selves, even the most "atomized" are socially produced (e.g., Moore 2007).

At the same time, many of these newly urbanized individuals also experience a sense of anomie and isolation, leading to the atomization and individualization that many scholars argue is prevalent throughout contemporary urban China (Yan 2009; Zhang and Ong 2008; Hansen and Svarverud 2010). This tension between autonomy and anomie, between independence and atomization is at the heart of the urbanized subject, who must constantly negotiate these tensions in the processes of self-cultivation and social production. Moreover, those who have moved from one physically rooted site to another, along with those who regularly move between such sites,

must negotiate the different selves created in different sites even as both those selves and those sites are also in flux. One is not necessarily less “authentic” than another; nor does this necessarily entail a fragmentation or dispersal of the self. Rather, these newly urbanized subjects are made so by negotiating these very tensions.

Becoming Urban

The scent of garlic and ginger wafted through the door of Apartment 1402. I knocked, and heard footsteps. Su Jing answered the door, grinning. “Please, come in.” A factory-made ethnic minority style apron protected her elegant clothes. She showed off the blouse she was wearing, a navy one with an ikat pattern in burnt orange that she had purchased on our most recent trip to Zara. It flowed past her hips and over her black Michael Kors skinny jeans.

Inside, her new apartment was light, airy, modern. Su Jing had spent months renovating the apartment, and tonight was her small housewarming party. I handed her the wrapped gift I had brought: a set of wine glasses and a bottle of wine. In typical Kunming fashion, no one else had arrived yet, so Su Jing gave me a quick tour.

A few months after I had arrived in the field, Su Jing decided that she would finally purchase her own apartment. Her rental contract would end in the summer, and now that she had substantial savings, she wanted to own her own place. Owning her own apartment, she told me, would gain her family’s respect, and, more importantly, it would signal that she had no intentions of returning “home” to Zhaotong. From the time I met her in 2003, her primary goal was emancipation from her family’s poverty and piety. Her childhood growing up in a village in Zhaotong, one of the most impoverished prefectures in China, had been relatively comfortable compared to that of most of her primary school classmates, but still harsh. Her family had long

urged her to return home to marry and start a family, but she demurred, playing the role of the filial daughter: at 35, she still sent remittances home each month, as she had done for nearly a decade, and if she returned home, she would no longer be able to do so. She enjoyed her career and the comforts it bought her, but most of all, she enjoyed the “chance to try new things,” as she put it. Those opportunities, she insisted, were ones that would be completely closed off from her if she returned home, largely because of her family’s conservative religious practices.

Unbeknownst to most of her family, she had stopped wearing the hijab shortly after beginning university courses in Kunming. Returning home would mean donning again both the hijab and her role as a “good Muslim daughter”: filial, chaste, obedient, pious.⁶⁸ Even more objectionable to Su Jing, it would necessarily entail discarding the urbanized habitus and self she had cultivated during her eighteen years in the city.

By moving to the city, she had tacitly consented to becoming urbanized, but at what point did she become actively urban? The process of becoming urban was continually ongoing, as the meanings and practices of being urban shifted. Su Jing’s position was therefore not suspended indefinitely between rural Zhaotong religiosity and urban cosmopolitanism: these apparent nodes on a spectrum were themselves shifting, and, moreover, not contradictory. For instance, she could and did strategically employ religiosity in an urban setting, and performed the role of a pious religious daughter, when, for instance, she attended her paternal uncle’s father-in-law’s funeral in Kunming. Su Jing associated Islamic piety with her rural upbringing, however, she fluidly managed to negotiate everyday Islamic practices such as pork abstinence with *ḥarām* (and

⁶⁸ . The values of conservative Hui-Muslim families like Su Jing’s typically combined Chinese religious traditions, particularly Neo-Confucianism, with Islam. For more on this phenomenon and its historical and textual origins, see Chittick and Murata (2013); Murata (2012); Murata et al. (2000); Ben-Dor Benite (2005).

other) practices that she envisioned as urban and cosmopolitan, including wearing sleek business attire. At the same time, she explained to me that even her mannerisms were no longer appropriate in her hometown, particularly given that she was an unmarried woman. When she walked to work, for example, she held her body erect, striding with her chin up. According to her, this had developed as a result of being expected to wear high heels: as she learned to wear heels, she had to adjust her body so that she could walk in them. Eventually, this way of walking became habitualized, and she walked that way even when she wore flats. Whereas she once had to adapt consciously to urban expectations for how to act, she now had to remember similar expectations whenever she returned home. And yet, she did not refer to herself as a *Kunmingren*; even after purchasing an apartment in Kunming, she still considered Zhaotong “home.”

Despite this ambivalence and ambiguity, she herself did not feel ambivalent or ambiguous. From her own perspective, she was not a fragmented or even a liminal subject. When, for instance, we discussed if she felt like she floated between urban and rural spaces and identities, she said that instead she felt like her “self” encompassed both. Urban and rural were not opposed, and neither was religious “tradition” and “modernity.” As she explained, when she went to the mosque, she often wore “modern,” stylish, “Muslim” clothing imported from Turkey and purchased in Shanghai. Similarly, for Su Jing, as for others in such positions, practicing Islam and drinking alcohol, for instance, did not conflict, even though her rural community would certainly have criticized her drinking. Drinking was “just part of doing business” and “Muslims have traditionally been good at doing business.”

Her search for an apartment characterized her conviction that she was simultaneously rural and urban, traditional and modern. In Spring 2010, I accompanied her to see approximately

40 apartments, and spent countless hours discussing what her “ideal” apartment would be like. On one hand, she desired enough outdoor space to grow flowers, herbs, and even a few trees. When I suggested that would drive up the price substantially, she countered, “But I’m from the countryside (*nongcun* 农村), that’s simply necessary.” On the other hand, she insisted that her apartment be located in the city center – in part so that she could be close to work, but also because she wanted to be near the hustle and bustle. The remnants of the Muslim District are also downtown, and she mentioned that she would prefer to live where she could hear the call to prayer, even though she rarely prayed herself. However, she wanted to avoid the Muslim area near Dongsì Jie, where swarms of recent Muslim migrants from rural Yunnan have flocked. She claimed that the Dongsì Mosque catered to “Wahhabi fundamentalists” and that those recent migrants were “backwards fanatics.”

Like most of my friends in Kunming, she disparaged the work-unit apartments (*danweifang* 单位房) as filthy, old, and dilapidated, and expressed shock when I rented a work-unit apartment, insisting that a market-priced apartment (*shangpinfang* 商品房) would be more “appropriate” for me. In particular, she lauded the “infinite sense of freedom” (*wuxian de ziyougan* 无限的自由感) that privatization had produced. As she eagerly informed me, new privatized housing complexes used technology such as key cards and coded entrances that enabled residents to come and go as they pleased, day and night, often without the need for security guards. In contrast, my work-unit apartment relied on a husband and wife team of security guards who locked the gates every night around 11:30. According to Su Jing, security guards spread potentially damaging gossip about residents who did not conform to societal expectations, by, for instance, bringing home a same-sex partner, or regularly coming home in

the wee hours. Neighbors, too, kept residents in check, as did bus timetables that ended routes early in the evening. By living in a private apartment complex in the city center, Su Jing believed she could circumvent such surveillance and restraints, and that such “freedom” would enable her to become a more “modern” person. She aligned this sense of “modern” closely with her definition of “urban,” arguing that rural people, by virtue of knowing their neighbors, “naturally” lacked the kind of privacy and “freedom” afforded to urbanites. By linking modern urbanity to private freedom, Su Jing thus aspired to cultivate a self that was (at least occasionally) anonymous.

At the same time, she chose to live near the Muslim district, and sought an apartment that conformed to the “traditional” ideals of fengshui (风水). Like most new apartments in China, hers came as a blank slate – without dry wall, flooring, a bathtub or even a toilet. She carefully curated each item and element in her finished apartment, ultimately unveiling a space that creatively fused various aspects of the self which she chose to present. In this way she exhibited conscious agency in cultivating both her personal space and her self. Contemporary Chinese paintings in stark black and white complemented the scrolls of Sino-Arabic calligraphy on her living room walls. Her sleek, minimalist furniture counterbalanced her ostentatious set of fine porcelain plates, which shone with gold and green Arabic calligraphy. Her small balcony overflowed with bougainvillea, while tarragon, mint, and other assorted herbs had just sprouted in tiny peat pots. As she proudly pointed out during my tour of her new place, she had managed to “*zhongdi*” 种地 (cultivate the earth) even in the middle of the city, at once noting the widespread opposition between “rural” and “urban” while claiming to transcend it.

Destruction, Fragmentation, Revitalization

In this section, I investigate the tensions inherent in the urbanized subject by examining the changing cityscape of Kunming, particularly the (former) Muslim District. Metaphorically, the momentous changes to the physicality of the city itself reflect and (re)produce the ambivalence and ambiguity experienced by the city's subjects, whether new or longtime residents. As I mentioned in the first chapter, throughout Kunming – and indeed, in cities across China – local governments are promoting large-scale campaigns to “beautify” (*meihua* 美化) and “modernize” (*xiandaihua* 现代化) their districts. Such campaigns consist of two major projects: 1) changing the physical cityscape itself, and 2) changing the bodily habits of the city's inhabitants. The process of “beautifying” the cityscape involved both destruction and construction: old buildings were demolished and replaced with high rise apartments, shopping centers, and even new “old towns” (*guzhen* 古镇); boulevards were widened; “walking streets” (*buxing jie* 步行街) were (re)constructed in commercial areas; trees were planted. In 2010, a city ordinance even required residents to remove the “unsightly” security bars from any windows that faced the street. Especially in Wuhua District, the central district that includes many of Kunming's most celebrated tourist sites, ubiquitous banners and posters promoted so-called “civil” (*wenming* 文明) behavior: they urged citizens to form queues, to “be a good neighbor,” to discard rubbish in the provided bins, to clean up their pet's waste, and to spit only in garbage bins. To reduce noise pollution, honking car horns was prohibited within the city center.⁶⁹ Clearly, such vast and numerous changes transformed not only the city, but also its

⁶⁹ . Throughout my years in Kunming, I never saw any of these suggestions for civil behavior – even car horn honking – enforced by any legal authorities, though I often saw parents admonish their children for “uncivil” behavior.

residents – through their cultivation of a “beautified” habitus, and through their everyday “ways of operating” (De Certeau 1984) within their ever-changing physical space.

In his analysis of colonial planning in Morocco, Paul Rabinow focuses on the ordering of space as a way to understand “the historically variable links between spatial relations, aesthetics, social science, economics and politics,” demonstrating the ways in which French colonialists articulated a sense of superiority and modernity through architecture and urban planning (1982: 267; 1989). In this way, Rabinow demonstrates the ways in which the practices of urban planning shaped the subjectivities of the colonial urban planners; he neglects, however, to show how such significant changes affected the local population. Indeed, Foucault’s (1975) discussion of space as crucial to the maintenance of power of one group over another, along with the ways in which such spatial tactics and techniques of power lead to the creation and discipline of modern subjects, informs Rabinow’s analysis. Foucault (1975), Rabinow (1982, 1989), Berdoulay (1989) and others analyze the ways in which space “comes into being” and is contested through discourse, yet they disregard both the ways in which these newly (re)created subjects contest these spaces through practice, and how these subject (re)create themselves. Given the various ways that “users” in Kunming appropriate space through everyday practices – whether napping on the beds in a faux IKEA, practicing *taijiquan* 太极拳 (tai chi) in Green Lake Park, or pouring bleach on the roots of newly planted trees in order to open up room on the sidewalk – it is particularly crucial to account for the ways in which such practices shape individuals and communities (De Certeau 1984). To this end, my own analysis here has been considerably informed by Michel de Certeau (1984), Henri Lefebvre (1991, 2002, 2004), and Edward Soja (1989, 2000), and like them, I proceed with the premise that lived space and human

thoughts, actions, and practices are dialectically related: space is culturalized and culture is spatialized. The transformation of Kunming's cityscape thus changed much more than the physical space.

For Kunming's Hui-Muslim community, the city's beautification and modernization campaigns certainly affected their everyday lives; however, of the various "modernization" projects that have been implemented in the past decade, the demolition of the Muslim District has by far shaped them the most significantly.

I first visited the Muslim District with my Hui language partner, Ma Wenhui, in spring 2003.⁷⁰ At the time, it was still a vibrant community, with several active mosques, and so many street vendors that we filled up quickly on snacks: thick nang bread, lamb kebab, dried fruit, grilled eggplant, and cups of *suanmei tang* 酸梅汤, refreshing, sweet-and-sour plum juice. We wandered through the alleyways where women purchased hunks of beef from halal butchers, bargaining loudly over the price; little boys with skullcaps scampered between customers, suddenly rushing back to Quranic class; smells of grilled meat intermingled with the raw; and slabs of beef as thick as man's thigh hung in store windows. Later that spring, we visited the recently demolished site of the Nancheng Mosque, which at four hundred years old, was the oldest in the city. It was to be replaced with an Arabized white tiled structure with green domes, now the default mosque style throughout China. At the time, some local Hui-Muslims expressed excitement about constructing a "modern" style mosque in place of the old one. Furthermore,

⁷⁰ . The study abroad program in Kunming that I participated in in 2003 paired each of its American students with a Chinese student at what was then Yunnan Nationalities Institute who was majoring in English. "Language partners" were expected to meet regularly to practice spoken English and Mandarin. My language partner, Ma Wenhui, was a young Hui woman originally from Yuxi.

despite rumors that the Muslim District, like the other “old” parts of the city, would soon be demolished, Han and Hui alike insisted that was unlikely. As one Han man told me, “The government would never demolish the Muslim District – they know the Huizu would cause problems.”

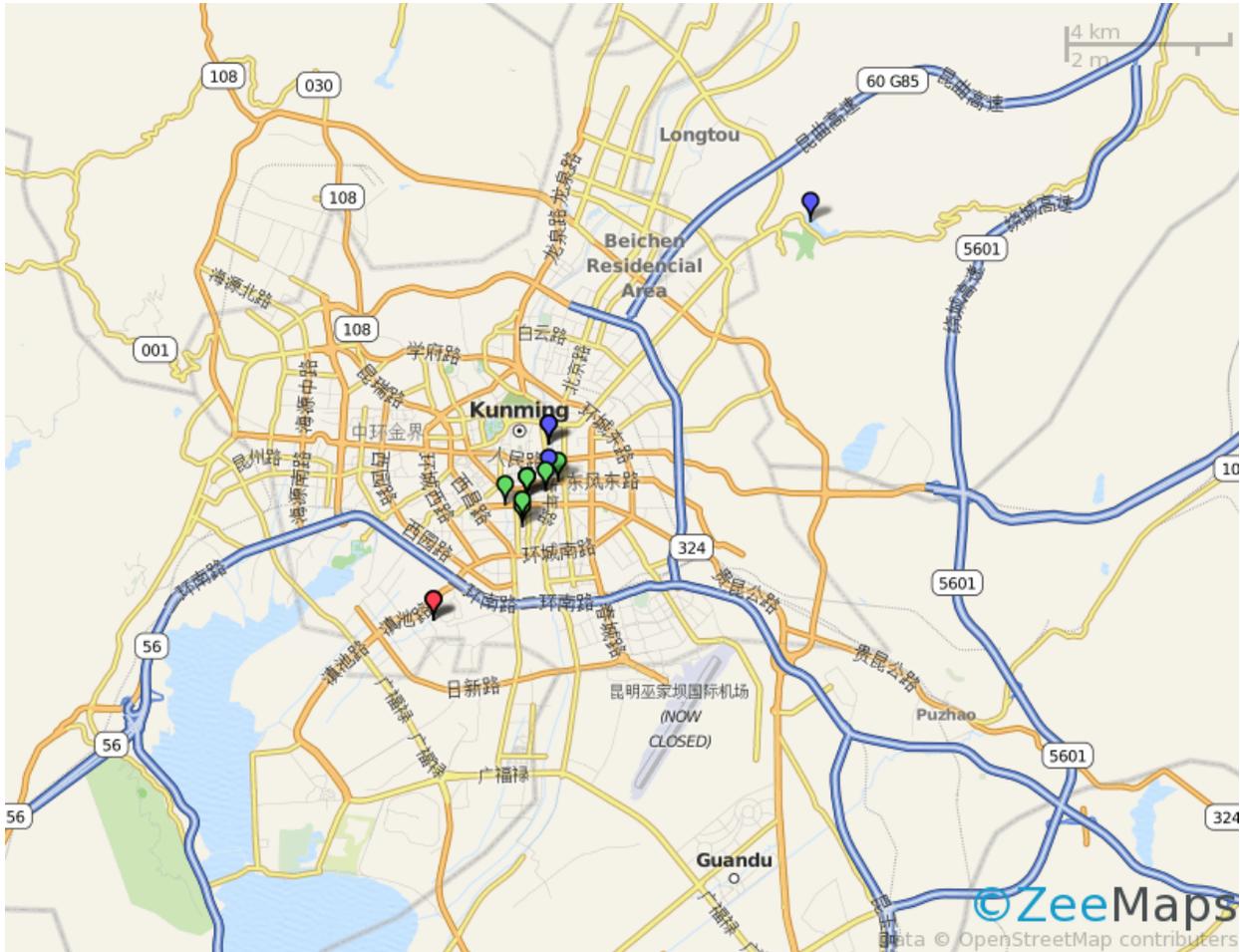
When I returned to the Muslim District in the summer of 2004, however, it had already changed considerably. Even though the Hui community protested and “caused problems,” the local Wuhua District government, along with the Sailun Real Estate Corporation, eventually demolished the district, displacing and dispersing its residents (Zhang 2010:153-156; Zhu 2005). Indeed, the reputation of Hui as troublemakers, illicit drug traffickers, and violent fanatics only enabled the government to justify the demolition of the district and the dispersal of the Muslim residents.

In March 2011, I interviewed one of Yunnan’s most esteemed imams at one of Kunming’s most cherished mosques. While our conversation lacked the casual banter of the *shaokao* meal I shared with Imam Xu and Ding Aisha, it, too, turned to the demolition of the Muslim District and its effects on the community there. As we sat in a conference room off the side of the main courtyard of the Chinese-style mosque – architecturally similar to a Buddhist temple, except for differences in the brightly painted beams, which, in place of Buddhist iconography, dragons, or phoenixes, shone with Arabic calligraphy, Islamic flower motifs and crescent moons – Imam Ma patiently and thoroughly answered my questions. When I asked how the demolition of the Muslim District had impacted the local community, the imam gave a long, thoughtful response [edited for brevity]:

[The demolition of the Muslim District] had a major impact, especially because before, most Muslims in Kunming could be near one of the mosques, so there was a strong community here. But now, most are scattered (*fensan* 分散), not all are in one central place, and it's difficult to get to the mosques and to interact with the rest of the community... Muslims in Kunming were scattered because the local government realized that the Muslim community here in Kunming – and in general – is too powerful, so they wanted to decentralize us. This was meant as a way to Sinicize/Hanify them (*ba tamen Hanhua le* 把他们汉化了)... Yes, that's certainly the reason. We know this because [in 2003] the Yunnan Muslim Association and Kunming Muslim Association proposed to the [city] government that they build a community to send Muslims who would be displaced by this policy, but the government refused. This affair was incredibly sad and difficult, particularly because families and the community were scattered, and [the community] gradually disappeared... Yunnan has 26 minority-nationalities but because of such occurrences, one can no longer see *minzu wenhua* (minority culture) in Kunming. One must journey far out of the city to see such things... It was good to reconstruct the old city, but the government did not protect the culture, religion or community of the people... They failed to protect the Islamic atmosphere (*baohu yisilan de fengqi* 保护伊斯兰的风气).

Indeed, during the nearly two years of my fieldwork in Kunming (December 2009 through September 2011), I noticed that the “Islamic atmosphere” dwindled while the commercial atmosphere intensified, as both Imams Xu and Ma suggested. As residents had been displaced and dispersed, both their sense of community and their religious faith had been fragmented. Like Mrs. Na in chapter two, many displaced Hui-Muslims ended up living on the outskirts of the city, far from the mosques, the halal butchers, and other Muslims. Even for those who had not been forcibly relocated, this lack of a Muslim communal center generated feelings of isolation and anomie. My recently retired landlady, Mrs. Ding, felt so isolated in her new luxury apartment that she opened a small tea shop down the street from her new dwelling, where

she and her friends could gather to play mahjong.⁷¹



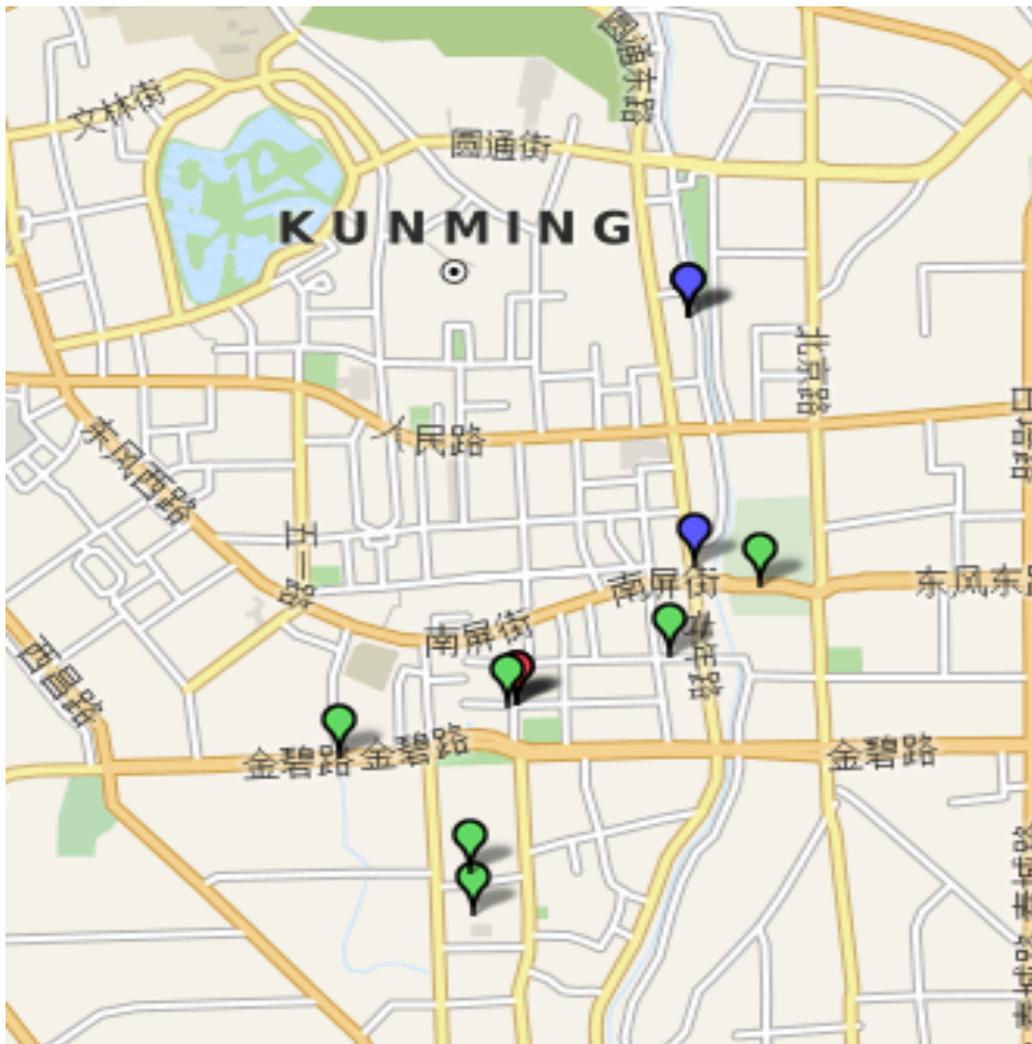
On one hand, some of my well-educated Hui-Muslim interlocutors interpreted the demolition of Kunming’s Muslim District as part of a continuous, if fraught, relationship between Kunming Hui and the city itself. This relationship had historically been one of rupture, fragmentation, dispersal, and even violence. As David Atwill (2003; 2005) writes, and a handful of Hui history buffs described, in May 1856, “Qing officials in Kunming... systematically

⁷¹ . The map on this page shows Kunming and its outskirts. The green markers represent the mosques, which are located in and around the Muslim District in the center of the city. The red marker to the city’s southwest represents the Yunnan Province Islamic Association. The blue marker to the farthest northeast represents the location of Mrs. Ding’s new apartment.

carried out a three-day massacre of the city's Hui (Muslim Yunnanese)... slaughter[ing] between four and seven thousand Yunnan Hui men, women, and children..." in an event that precipitated the Panthay Rebellion (Atwill 2003:1). During the early PRC and especially during the Cultural Revolution, Kunming Muslims, like others across the nation, experienced a variety of hardships, as mosques were closed, vandalized, and used for non-religious purposes; Muslim schools such as Mingde were shuttered; religious books were hidden, confiscated, or burned. Some Hui were forced to eat pork, and urban youth, Hui and Han alike, were "sent down" to the countryside to learn from the peasants. That the Hui community was now being uprooted and scattered was only another chapter in this history.

This interpretation of continuous rupture in the relationship between Kunming Hui-Muslims and the city reveals the deep-seated mistrust that many Hui intellectuals felt towards local (usually Han) officials, who, in turn, also relied on historical accounts to rationalize their relationship(s) with the Hui community. Popular Yunnanese Han interpretations of Hui history often focused on Hui participation in long-distance trade, including trade in illicit products such as opium, and in anti-state rebellions. Through interpretations of Hui history that characterized the Hui as an inherently violent *minzu*, local officials justified policies that minimized Muslim connections. In fact, officials used such interpretations to justify the demolition of Kunming's Muslim District and the subsequent dispersal of residents throughout the city. Claiming that it was "dangerous" to allow so many Hui to live together in one area, and that additionally, it was unsanitary, local officials managed to demolish not only the physical aspects of the district, but the physicality and closeness of the community itself. Whether the local government actually felt threatened by the powerful Hui community, as Imam Ma implied, the outcome was that the Hui

were “scattered” and “decentralized.” As Imam Xu implied in his comment about Han officials’ love for lamb kebab: city managers had the authority to preserve, nurture, or destroy neighborhoods and institutions. Understandably, in the wake of this upheaval, Hui-Muslim community members sought to re-make their relationships with the local government and the city that sheltered them.



Kunming City Center.⁷²

⁷² . The red marker represents the Kunming Islamic Association. The green markers are mosques, and the blue markers are residences. The southern blue marker represents Su Jing’s apartment, and the northern one represents mine.

Positioning the 2004 demolition of the Muslim District on a historical timeline of oppression at once elevated the recent event to one of anti-Hui violence and minimized the deep sense of rupture, fragmentation, and alienation that many Kunming Hui-Muslims felt viscerally. That is to say, framed as just another chapter in a history of anti-Hui violence, the relative pain of displacement appeared insignificant, though for the actors living through these events, that was hardly the case. In the words of Grandma Yang, an elderly Hui woman who had lived in the Muslim District for decades, “When I heard that we would be evicted, I almost vomited.” Similarly, other displaced residents told me that they experienced racing hearts, nausea, trembling, and dizziness upon learning the news. Insomnia haunted residents, even afterwards as they adjusted to their new lives outside of the district. As Hu Xiaolian, a 46 year old homemaker and displaced resident, described:

[after moving to an apartment complex on the western outskirts of Kunming] At night I would wake up suddenly and forget where I was. The furniture was all the same but the room was different, and I would wake up feeling alone in the universe, even with my husband asleep next to me. Often I couldn't go back to sleep easily, and the next day would drag on.

Whether they themselves were displaced or not, all of my Hui interlocutors in Kunming – and quite a few Han – bemoaned the demolition of the Muslim District. Until 2003, this cluster of mosques, along with the halal bakery, the Mingde school, and the thousands of Hui-Muslim residents, had created a space that provided a sense community and shared history, where Kunming Hui-Muslims could work, pray, live, and learn together. For most of the city's residents, the Muslim District had long been one of the best places to *guangjie* 逛街 (window-shop or stroll), with plenty of “small eats” (*xiaochi* 小吃) to snack on while hunting for bargains. As my Han friend's elderly grandmother put it, “With *Shuncheng Jie* gone, there's no longer

anywhere worth strolling. So many shops have been moved inside or even underground. And the city management no longer allows street vendors, either. Now my granddaughter helps me buy things on *Taobao* 淘宝.⁷³ In his discussion of “topographies of forgetting,” Paul Connerton (2009) shows how the decrease in the number of intersections within a city leads to a decrease in communal interaction, and an increase in “cultural amnesia.” With the demolition of the Muslim District, then, we see the fragmentation of community and communal spirit that stems not only from lacking a space of one’s own, but also from the destruction of a dense network of alleyways where walkers could serendipitously meet and forge connections. As shopping malls and wide pedestrian paths have replaced those local shops and alleys, such serendipitous meetings rarely occur, and former Muslim residents no longer visit often.

And yet, Islamic bookshops, hijab stores, and halal butchers still lingered amidst the high-end retailers. On nearby streets, hostesses on the steps of halal restaurants beckoned to potential customers, while hordes of customers jostled their way through the halal bakery. Perhaps more interestingly, given the context of destruction, there were even new architectural details, reminiscent of Middle Eastern, not Sino-Islamic, styles, that had surfaced on recently constructed buildings. Halal restaurant facades typically exhibited such details, but this extended to other buildings as well. Even the the Kunming *Mingde* (“Illustrious Virtue”) Nationalities Middle School (*minzu zhongxue*), established in 1929 as a private school for Hui-Muslims, has been renovated to showcase elements of Middle Eastern architectural styles, such as Arabesques, that became popular in China’s Muslim communities beginning around the year 2000.

Wealthy Hui-Muslim elites – especially those who had traveled to majority Muslim

⁷³ . Taobao is a website similar to a combination of Ebay and Amazon.

countries – interpreted such “revitalization” as more representative of “authentic” Islamic culture, and in fact simultaneously celebrated the “modernization” of Kunming while also lamenting the destruction of a beloved communal center. While most of my urbanized Hui interlocutors appreciated the Arabization of Kunming’s mosques and the Mingde school, they also yearned for Kunming – and for themselves– to become “modern like Shanghai,” as people frequently told me. “We need our own *Xintiandi*,” was a common refrain.⁷⁴ As shown in chapter two, these wealthy Hui-Muslim interlocutors cultivated a “modern” self largely by consuming “modern” – often “Western” – products that ranged from luxury brands like Marc Jacobs to H&M; from Château Lafite Rothschild to Papa John’s pizza. Although luxury brands conveyed prestige, the practice of cultivating “modern” selves through consumerism was not necessarily restricted to the wealthy, as middle-class Chinese could also afford to become modern by eating at relatively affordable places such as KFC, and flocking to H&M for sales. Interestingly, commercialized districts like Shuncheng Jie incorporated Chinese brands that performed a style of “Western modernity” convincing enough to bamboozle their customers.

“Modernization,” for many people in Kunming, was closely intertwined with infrastructure and consumerism. In the words of a Kunming Hui-Muslim government official, “Although the demolition of Shuncheng Jie dispersed us *Huizu* throughout the city, ultimately, it improved the city center. It’s cleaner now, and more modern. Wider roads and sidewalks mean better traffic flow, and commercial areas like Zhengyi Lu improve the local economy.” As my friend’s grandmother explained, the act of strolling downtown has changed considerably with the

⁷⁴ . *Xintiandi* 新天地 (lit. “New Heaven and Earth) is a well-known, up-scale, shopping, dining and entertainment complex in Shanghai.

demolition of the Muslim District. Malls and big box stores like Carrefour have replaced the small local shops, cars outnumber people, and wide pedestrian boulevards, coupled with barriers, prod walkers to occupy only the allotted space while preventing mass protests. However, young people have appropriated this space as their own. Even though they rarely could afford to purchase Gucci handbags or watch an IMAX film, on weekends they dressed up and paraded up and down the wide pedestrian street Zhengyi Lu. They wandered into shops to peer at what the nouveau riche were buying, and occasionally purchased a cup of TCBY yogurt or a pair of shoes from Vero Moda.

Similarly, Hui-Muslims in Kunming carved out their own new spaces in which they fostered a sense of community, and even religiosity, in the face of destruction and dispersal. Muslim university students, like Xiao Bai and Xiao Ma, organized student groups that prayed together, fasted together, ate together in the halal dining halls, and hosted social gatherings. Many students forged close friendships through such groups; some even married one another. When it was possible, displaced groups of Hui-Muslims tried to move to the same neighborhood as close friends and family. In several areas with sizable Muslim populations, halal restaurants and butchers have sprung up. Retirees and schoolchildren attend Quranic courses at the mosques. Throngs of Hui attend festivals and religious gatherings on Muslim holidays.

Wealthy Hui-Muslims, however, could more easily negate the effects of dispersal in ways that were not accessible to the majority of the Kunming Hui-Muslim community. Wealthy Kunming Hui often had access to at least one car, and so did not have to depend on public transportation, which meant that, for instance, meeting Hui friends who lived in different areas was comparatively convenient. Wealthy Hui were also more likely to be able to afford to live in

the central district, near the mosques. Some wealthy Hui deliberately took vacations together, occasionally traveling to more “authentically” Muslim destinations.⁷⁵ A few, such as Mrs. Ding, coped in ways that baffled me. As mentioned earlier, upon moving into her new apartment, my landlady felt isolated, so she rented out a small shop nearby which she converted into a teahouse. Whenever I asked her why she opened a teahouse, she simply said that she needed something to do, and that the teahouse enabled her to socialize frequently. That most of her “customers” were her friends did not seem to bother her; on the contrary, she seemed content that she got to spend most days gossiping with old friends. Additionally, in theory, wealthy Hui businesspeople were able to negotiate time off to participate in religious activities, though this rarely worked in practice, in part because by the time most Hui reached the upper echelons of their workplaces, they had abandoned the habit of prayer. Nevertheless, such non-religious Hui, like Li Wei and Mrs. Na, found ways to cultivate Huiness.

Conclusion

Many of these problems of dispersal resonate with those of most minority groups who live in majority areas, whether they are Chickasaw in Tulsa or Pintupi in Sydney. Other issues, such as the sense of anomie so many felt, resonate with experiences of newly urbanized people in places as distant as São Paulo, London, and Nairobi. Given that the Hui are the most widespread minority-nationality group in China – and arguably the most urbanized – with communities in Shanghai and in Kashgar, in Xiamen and in Shandong, they are hardly strangers to these experiences. Throughout China, they have creatively devised various ways of

⁷⁵ . Whereas Thailand has become an increasingly popular travel destination for wealthy Yunnanese in general, many of my Hui interlocutors considered Malaysia an ideal destination, due to its proximity to Yunnan, its “Muslimness,” its food, and its landscape.

maintaining and even strengthening their sense of community and individual “Huiness.” Online communities and magazines like *Zhongguo Musilin* 中国穆斯林 (China Muslim) have in fact united Hui across China, despite the fact that “Hui” as an ethnic category is relatively new.

In this chapter, I have shown how two different kinds of rupture produced in the city – that produced by longterm or permanent rural-to-urban migration, and that produced by displacement – influenced the subject formation of Hui-Muslims in Kunming. The spatial rupture that occurred after the demolition of Kunming’s Muslim District and subsequent dispersal of its residents throughout the city had the dual effect of scattering Kunming’s Hui-Muslims throughout the city, so that they could no longer easily immerse themselves in a Hui community and of compelling them to cling onto their Hui-Muslimness. Similarly, the spatial rupture that disrupted migrants to the city simultaneously spurred them to cultivate modern, urbanized (often secular) selves, and to remake their own rurality, often perceived as “traditional” and pious, within the urban space. In both cases, Hui-Muslims managed to negotiate these tensions, and creatively cultivate and re-produce themselves, both as communities and as individuals. Although Hui-Muslims in Shadian and other rural Muslim enclaves in Yunnan insisted that “authenticity” erodes in the city, Hui-Muslims in Kunming devised their own means for establishing locally produced authenticity. As I show in the next chapter, one of the most significant ways of maintaining a sense of community and “authenticity” was through the practice of storytelling, particularly of shared, contentious history that sought to demarcate Yunnanese Hui-Muslims as unambiguously distinct.

Chapter Four

“Crafting” History, Social Memory and Sovereignty: Yunnanese Hui Conflict Narratives

Introduction

At dawn on July 29, 1975, regiments of the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) surrounded the Hui Muslim enclave of Shadian in southern Yunnan Province. Responding to reported Hui “uprisings,” the PLA allegedly launched heavy cannons, artillery and even used MIG jets to fire rockets in attempt to quell “resistance” in the village. When the fighting subsided days later, the village of Shadian had been completely razed and more than 1,600 Hui villagers had been killed, including at least 300 children, sick and elderly who were fleeing the scene. Over 5,000 Hui had been wounded (Ma Shaomei 1989: 55).

Since the first time I casually mentioned an interest in Hui history while chatting with a Yunnanese friend, I have heard multiple versions of the events surrounding what came to be known as “The Shadian Incident.” Though at times related in hushed, conspiratorial tones, the basic narrative is well-known and regularly recounted throughout Yunnan Province, although the exact cause of the escalation of violence remains unclear and is often fiercely debated.⁷⁶ As we shall see, this narrative, along with the motives and strategies deployed in recounting it, varies depending on who is speaking, who is listening and the current political/historical circumstances (e.g., see Cruikshank 1998). Narratives of the Shadian Incident are politically manipulated in various ways in order to explain current situations, past historical conflicts, interethnic relations and mistrust of the Chinese state.

⁷⁶ . According to Dru Gladney (1996) the tale of the Shadian Incident is in fact well-known throughout China. He specifically describes its recounting by Hui in Northwest China (137-140).

Scholars of Southwest China, both Western and Chinese, have continuously debated the political implications of such Han-Hui ethno-religious conflicts in Yunnanese history (Bai Shouyi 1953; Israeli 1980, 2002; Ma Shaomei 1989; Wang 1996; Gladney 1996, 2004; Lipman 1997; Armijo 2001; Atwill 2005; Ma Ping 2008). This body of research focuses primarily on what actually happened during these conflicts. Who instigated the conflicts? Were they interethnic conflicts, inter-religious conflicts, or were they more complex than that? What roles did the Qing Imperium, the P.R.C., and their agents play? While these inquiries are certainly important, they nevertheless neglect to address how these historical narratives continue to create meaning and produce lived social realities in Yunnan. By examining the narratives of Han-Hui conflict that circulate throughout contemporary Yunnan, this chapter investigates not what actually happened but rather how what is said to have happened (re)produces particular relationships. How do local Yunnanese interpret and use these narratives; what do these narratives do?

Narratives of Yunnanese Han-Hui conflict tell us about more than just the oral history of Yunnan; they also illuminate various political and social relations, most saliently, the relationships between the Chinese state and its peoples. Narratives do not merely construct versions of history; they are always also involved in negotiating complex political processes and social relations. Drawing on works by historical anthropologists, such as Julie Cruikshank and Michel-Rolph Trouillot, along with anthropologically inclined historians, such as Natalie Zemon Davis and Amin Shahid, I examine multiple versions of narratives of ethnic conflict in Yunnan – oral re-countings that I heard during my fieldwork, as well as the “official” written version that the Chinese state propagates and the few “unofficial” written versions that circulate on the

internet – and, through contextualization, demonstrate how these narratives (re)produce social relations and create meaning in every day Yunnanese life by shaping the ways in which local people imagine and interact with the ethno-religious “other” and with the post-reform Chinese state. I argue that Yunnanese people use such narratives to articulate their understandings of ethno-religious and state/local relations and that, furthermore, such articulations are in fact implicated in creating the very relationships being discussed. By closely investigating the meanings created through the recounting of conflict narratives, this chapter sheds new light on the political implications of ethno-religious conflicts in Yunnanese history and memory, and, perhaps more importantly, demonstrates the ways in which interpretations of the past produce lived social realities in the present.

Rescuing Memories from (Official) History

In the Western positivist historical tradition, “facts” are “discovered” in written archival texts. Anthropologists, on the other hand, often confront conflicting narratives of the same “event,” or struggle to make sense of histories entangled with myths. But what distinguishes history from these other narrative forms? After all, myth, fiction and memory all make certain claims regarding truth. According to Paul Ricoeur (1984), the nature of these claims to truth differs because “inasmuch as historical intentionality aims at events that have actually occurred,” history claims to recapture an empirical reality (82). Michel–Rolph Trouillot (1995) similarly argues that, in its “need for a different kind of credibility,” history differs substantially from fiction (8). Because of these claims to “empirical truth,” the production of history implies a moral responsibility (Trouillot 1995).

Memory, too, often claims to represent empirical reality but a “field of doubt”⁷⁷ between the true and the plausible often emerges around it, as social actors recognize the limitations and constructions of individual and social memory. Although, as we will see, memory certainly figures into the production of history, what distinguishes historical narratives are their claims to power – and to truth – and the deployment of this power through the processes of historical production. Ci Jiwei (1990, cited in Jing Jun 1999) explains the entanglement of memory and history thusly: “Memory is the internalization of history. History is the institution of the social regulation of memory. Those who control the means of regulating collective memory direct the course of future history. Not surprisingly, one of the biggest psycho–political projects undertaken by the Communist Party has been the restructuring of Chinese memory through the rewriting of Chinese history” (4).

Memory, however, creates a space for alternative narratives that negotiate and contest official histories – and that transcend the imaginary binary often posed between memories and officially sanctioned histories. In his (1995) monograph *Event, Metaphor; Memory*, Shahid Amin demonstrates how local individuals’ memories intertwined with the official discourses that surrounded the historical narratives of an event that occurred in the town of Chauri Chaura in 1922 in which, after a clash with police, peasant protesters associated with Gandhi’s Non–Cooperation Movement burnt down a police station, killing 23 policemen in the process. The colonial government interpreted this

⁷⁷ . This term is used by Natalie Zemon Davis in *Fiction in the Archives* (1987) to refer to a gap between the true and the plausible.

event as a violent “riot,” a crime for which they tried 225 perpetrators. After independence, the events were re-claimed by nationalists as legitimate, heroic actions of the “freedom struggle.” Though Amin aims to rescue local memories from such hegemonic discourses, he ultimately illuminates how local memories both diverged from and were influenced by these hegemonic narratives. Paraphrasing Marx’s oft-cited quotation from *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, Amin writes, “The subalterns make their own memories, but they do not make them just as they please” (118).

Similarly, memories of the Shadian Incident interact with official discourse, at times directly opposing it, at times incorporating “reality effects” that, by providing concreteness and credibility, serve to legitimate alternative narratives.⁷⁸ Whereas the dates, numbers of victims, and especially the catalysts for the violence vary, the basic structure of the narrative almost always involves drawn-out, brutal violence enacted by the PLA against the villagers of Shadian and typically emphasizes the massacre of innocent victims, particularly children. Even the officially sanctioned narrative acknowledges that the government mishandled the “Incident,” and should not have dealt with it violently. Ultimately, the ways in which an individual or social group narrates this and other similar events both reflects and produces their political and social relationships.

⁷⁸ . In Roland Barthes’ (1968) usage, a “reality effect” is a device used to convey concreteness and credibility by constructing realism within a text. The term “reality effects” is used here to highlight the literary or “fictive” crafting of historical texts. For more on this, see Roland Barthes’ 1968 essay “The Reality Effect,” along with Barthes (1981), Davis (1987) and Ankersmit (1989).

In the section that follows, I contextualize several of the narratives of the Shadian Incident that I heard during my fieldwork in order to show how these narratives work and how individuals and groups connected such narratives to contemporary political circumstances.

Background: Contextualizing Narratives of the Shadian Incident

Liu Rui chuckled when he saw me sitting on a bench outside of Green Lake Park watching elderly couples, clad in the navy Mao jackets of their youth, dance to revolutionary ballads. “Tang Na, you don’t want to listen to that old crap. C’mon, let’s go eat.” A Han man from a mountain village five hours by bus from Yuxi, Liu Rui stood relatively tall at 5’10” but was as stocky as a water buffalo, with long hair that cascaded in tangles down his back, and funky, hipster glasses. He spent most days on highly trafficked streets, strumming rock songs on his guitar as passersby occasionally dropped a few *yuan* into his guitar case. His tanned skin testified to the long hours he spent under the Yunnan sun – he earned approximately 6,000 RMB per month as a street musician.

I got up from the bench and headed toward the restaurant, following Liu Rui up a small hill and through a labyrinth of alleys and shortcuts. Liu Rui hung out with an alternative crowd of local artists and musicians, many of whom had experienced run-ins with the *chengguan* 城管, the dreaded “urban management officers,” known throughout urban China for their sometimes brutal tactics.⁷⁹ Although he had dropped out of high school in the late 1980s, he had later immersed himself in Chinese history, political science, and ethnology — interests that only

⁷⁹ . *Chengguan* 城管 is an abbreviation of 城市管理行政执法局, often translated into English as City Urban Administrative and Law Enforcement Bureau.

further cultivated his mistrust of the Chinese state and its agents. When we met during my student days at Yunnan Normal University, in 2003, we bonded quickly over our mutual fascination with local history; he had been happy to discuss local events, rumors, folktales, and *yeshi* (野史 “wild” or unofficial history).

As we rounded a corner, a stranger called out “*tashi delek*,” a greeting in Tibetan, clearly speaking to Liu Rui.

“What was that about?”, I asked.

He shrugged. “Sometimes people assume I’m Tibetan, I guess. Or they’re commenting on my long hair.”

We finally arrived at the restaurant, a bustling hole-in-the wall with small tables lining the alley. Bai-style blue-and-white batiks covered the tables; the waitresses wore tight Dai-style skirts in tropical colors, with mismatched blouses. The menu, like the decor, was decidedly Pan-Yunnan: Yiliang Roast Duck (*Yiliang kaoya* 宜良烤鸭) was listed next to Dai-style “Ghost” Chicken (*guiji* 鬼鸡), Fresh Goat Cheese (*rubing* 乳饼), Copper-Pot Rice (*tongguo fan* 铜锅饭) and assorted wild vegetables (*yecai* 野菜). Wedged into a corner near the kitchen, we ordered several dishes along with a bamboo pitcher full of sweet rice wine (*mijiu* 米酒), and began to catch up on the events of the past year.

I had spent most of that summer (2006) studying Chinese language in Xi’an, and had stopped by Kunming for a brief visit with friends before I headed back to Ithaca. While in Xi’an, I had lived near the Muslim District and had befriended several Hui women I had met there. Ultimately, however, I wished to conduct fieldwork in Yunnan, but first I hoped to bounce my ideas for potential research projects off local friends such as Liu Rui. Over the din of glasses

clinking, plates dropping, kitchen staff shouting, and drunks belting out karaoke hits, we filled each other in on our lives. When I mentioned that I was planning to conduct my dissertation research on the Yunnanese Hui, he spat:

Are you nuts? Don't you know that the most profound conflict in Yunnan is between the Han and the Hui? That conflict is even deeper (*geng shenke* 更深刻) and more serious (*geng yanzhong* 更严重) than the one between the Han and the Tibetans... You'll certainly encounter all sorts of bureaucratic obstacles in researching the Hui... you may not even be able to obtain official permission.

I responded vaguely that I could probably negotiate something, especially since Lu Yuan had given me her support, and promised to help secure permissions.⁸⁰ Liu Rui looked at me intently and shook his head as if I were an impertinent child. After a few moments, he said, "Well, you should keep in mind that the conflict between the Han and the Hui is not only historical. It's ongoing. Don't you know about the 'battle' (*zhanyi* 战役) down in Shadian during the Cultural Revolution?" He then recounted a very Hui-sympathetic version of the Shadian Incident, in which the Hui were resistance fighters against the PLA, as well as against the political and religious oppression of the Cultural Revolution.

It was only a few years later, during my longterm dissertation fieldwork (December 2009 to August 2011), that the significance of conflict narratives like that of the Shadian Incident struck me. Upon initially meeting potential Hui interlocutors or being introduced as "a student interested in Yunnanese Hui history and culture," someone would invariably ask, "Do you know about the Shadian Incident?" before re-counting their version to me. Although the frequency of

⁸⁰ . Lu Yuan is the academic director of the School for International Training program in Kunming, and is involved in a variety of other projects throughout Yunnan Province, not least the Shaxi Cultural Center and Guesthouse. She is also my former teacher and longtime friend. She was indispensable in helping me secure research permissions in Yunnan.

these re-countings certainly made me feel as if these new acquaintances and potential interlocutors were trying to assess whether I was trustworthy, or whether I was genuinely interested in Hui history and culture, the narrative of the Shadian Incident is much more than a test for foreign anthropologists. Granted, I cannot know precisely how often or in which contexts such conflict narratives are recounted, however, the consistent re-countings in my presence suggest that these narratives are without a doubt significant for Yunnanese Hui. Over time, the importance of the particular context in which the narrative was recounted became especially clear: who was speaking, who else was present, where we were, recent events - these all considerably shaped the tale told, and, perhaps more importantly, its meaning in that social context.

With regards to Liu Rui's recounting of the Shadian Incident that summer evening during dinner, the specific context and his own subject position certainly influenced the way he told the tale. For one, we happened to be in a restaurant so loud that no one could overhear us; in other, less noisy, public settings, most people were cautious with their words and tone. Furthermore, as a Han member of Kunming's counterculture, Liu Rui's recounting was not so much pro-Hui as anti-government, despite the artistic license he took in his depiction of Shadian Hui as freedom fighters. His motive may have been to convince me that researching the Hui would present bureaucratic hassles, but the political implications of his recounting are that we cannot trust the Chinese government or its agents (whether with regards to human rights or to research permissions). In detailing scenes of children and elderly fleeing, Liu Rui indicated not only that these government agents (in this case, the PLA) can be brutal, but also that they prey on the vulnerable. In other words, Liu Rui's recounting was on one level about the Hui, Yunnanese

history, and local ethno-religious tensions, but on another level, it was about his own criticisms of and experiences with the Chinese government and its agents, namely, the *chengguan*.

Much later, Liu Rui himself made a similar analogy, condemning recent *chengguan* attacks on the most vulnerable citizens, in that case, an elderly woman selling potatoes on the roadside.⁸¹ “Why,” he asked, “do the *chengguan* avoid cracking down on the rich college kids who illegally sell goods out of their cars on Wenhua Xiang?” During that particular discussion, Liu Rui connected the brutal actions of the *chengguan* against vulnerable, impoverished folks to governmental oppression of minorities and the disabled, and to a host of conflicts between “the people” (*laobaixing* 老百姓) and the state. These transgressions included historical conflicts during dynastic times, oppression by warlords during the Republican era, and the entirety of the Cultural Revolution. To paraphrase Liu Rui’s own words, there is something in the nature of Chinese political systems, no matter the era, that has enabled and encouraged the powerful to exploit the most vulnerable.⁸² When Liu Rui had narrated the Shadian Incident, he was situating it within a lengthy history of similar conflicts between the powerful “oppressor” and the vulnerable “oppressed.”

Liu Rui, however, is not Hui. Hui recountings of the Shadian Incident, while similarly sympathetic to their fellow Hui, differed substantially from Liu Rui’s tale. Whereas Liu Rui

⁸¹ . Such attacks by the *chengguan* have been widely documented and criticized, both in China and abroad (e.g., see BBC 2008; Human Rights Watch 2014; Makinen 2013; Yang Yan 2010; Xiao Mijuan 2009; Hu Guangyao 2010).

⁸² . During this discussion I argued that other states and systems also exploit their most vulnerable, including “democratic” nations such as my own. He scoffed at this, insisting that there is something unique, however vague, in the systemic exploitation of vulnerable people by the politically powerful within Chinese regimes. It should be noted that for Liu Rui and many others, “Chinese” did not equate to “Han”; in the category of “Chinese regimes,” for instance, Liu Rui included the Mongol Yuan Dynasty and the Manchu Qing.

emphasized the government's wrongdoings, many Hui emphasized other aspects: Hui heroism or victimization, for example. In addition, for Hui, much more so than for sympathetic Han like Liu Rui, the Shadian Incident and other Hui-Han conflict narratives were usually framed as caused by either inter-ethnic tensions or inter-religious ones, or a combination of the two. In contrast, as we will discuss in a later section, official Chinese accounts framed such conflicts within the terms of sovereignty rights.

For now, let us turn our attention to narratives recounted by Kunming Hui. Rather than detail every re-counting I heard by Hui during my fieldwork in Kunming, I will focus primarily on three different accounts of the Shadian Incident: two different accounts told by one woman in two different private settings, and one account told by another in a public space. Although every re-counting I heard differed slightly, it is my aim that by detailing the contexts of these three narratives, the significance of specific context will emerge more clearly than had I listed every account I heard. Moreover, it should be noted that when other people were present, they often contributed to the telling: adding or contesting details, debating the catalysts involved, invoking comparative or contrastive historical examples. Recountings of conflict narratives performed as a kind of ritualized exchange between the tale-teller(s), the listener(s), those present but not participating, potential eavesdroppers, and place.

A Solo in a Private Space: Mrs. Ding's Narrative, Part 1

One warm, sunny February morning shortly after Chunjie (Spring Festival) 2010, I walked down Yuantong Street, past the gates of the temple where stooped beggars in tattered robes pleaded for a few *jiao* 角. By 8:30 a.m., though even the noodle shops were still closed, fortune tellers had already planted themselves at the base of shady trees, promising to choose auspicious

wedding dates, or decipher which dissatisfied ancestor was causing one's recent spate of bad luck. Nearby, vendors hawked jade Guanyin pendants, incense, prayer beads, and ornaments embroidered with prayers such as *xueye you cheng* 学业有成 (academic success). I quickly jaywalked across the street, cutting a diagonal to save time.

When I arrived at the cramped real estate office, even the staff had yet to get there. I squatted on the steps outside and watched as the noodle shops began to open. Shortly after 9 a.m., the real estate agent showed up and sheepishly opened the door. “Were you waiting long? Do have some tea.” I sat on the wooden sofa, crammed between the water cooler and stacks of files. My knees nearly touched the agent's desk, above which hung a laminated poster of a luxurious apartment overlooking the ocean, with the words “Modern Living” (*xiandai shenghuo* 现代生活) printed in flowing script over the bottom right corner. I sipped the boiling green tea while we made polite conversation and waited for Mrs. Ding, my new landlady. A mutual friend had introduced us, but I did not know the Dings well; I only knew that the old “work-unit” (*danwei* 单位) apartment they were renting out was charming and ideally located for my work – downtown, within short walking distance of the university district, several mosques, and the former Muslim District. As a bonus, the neighborhood retained some of its older architectural elements, including the characteristic red wood buildings, a few officially recognized landmarks, and creeping alleyways where food stalls, some still selling Vietnamese-style baguettes and iced coffee, lingered in spite of recent city ordinances. The nearby fresh market offered among the best selection in the city, particularly with regards to its fresh halal meat (some of it advertised as “grass-fed” *cao weiyang* 草喂养 and “organic” *youji* 有机), locally sourced mushrooms, and

vibrant variety of peppers.

At half past, in walked Mrs. Ding. Taller than average, with a curly permed bob, she smiled warmly, her crow's-feet crinkling. While the real estate agent prepared the paperwork, Mrs. Ding and I made polite small-talk. By that time, I knew the script: I am an American student, here in Kunming to “study minority culture.”⁸³ Yes, I love Chinese food, and yes, I can use chopsticks. No, I do not have a boyfriend. Yes, I have lived in China before. Finally, I managed to ask a few questions of my own. When I asked Mrs. Ding where she was from, she replied that she had lived in Kunming for most of her life, but that she grew up in Xuanwei, a city in Qujing Prefecture, in Eastern Yunnan.

“Oh,” I replied, “The ham made in Xuanwei is excellent.”

“I wouldn't know. I've never tasted it. We Hui don't eat pork.”

Before I could respond, the real estate agent handed us papers to sign, and we left, agreeing to meet at the apartment once I had withdrawn all the cash necessary to procure it: the first three months' rent, the last month's rent, and two months' deposit.

A few days later, anxiously clutching a pouch stuffed with wads of 100 RMB bills, I hailed a cab outside my friend Ma Lian's residential complex, and sped toward the city center. Mrs. Ding and I had agreed to meet at the apartment itself, so she could give me the keys and I could pay her the rent. I rapped on the wide, steel gate that protected the building from the hubbub of the nearby streets. A small man in blue working clothes peered out, eyeing me suspiciously.

“Hi, I'm Mrs. Ding's new tenant. I'm supposed to meet her here to get the keys.”

⁸³ . A close academic contact in Yunnan advised me to always use the term *xuexi* 学习 (study), and to never use the term *yanjiu* 研究 (research). According to her, *yanjiu* is a loaded term that draws unwanted attention, potentially censorship and even a reconsideration or revoking of research permissions. *Xuexi*, on the other hand, is relatively innocuous.

“She’s not here yet.”

The man continued to observe me, neither shutting the gate nor opening it so that I could enter. After a few moments of feeling self-conscious in his gaze, I said, “May I come in and wait for her in the courtyard?”

With a sigh of reluctance, the man opened the gate for me.

The building had only three *danyuan* 单元 (residential units), each with six levels, and two apartments per level, for a total of 36 units. The tiny courtyard felt intimate: bougainvillea camouflaged the grey concrete walls; a few residents watered potted camellias, begonias and leafy trees, nodding in my direction; red chilies in large, shallow baskets dried in the sun; an elderly man greeted me as he walked out, a covered bird cage on his shoulder. Most *Kunmingren* who could afford to were leaving such *danwei* residences in favor of luxurious, private complexes, often on the outskirts of town where the air was allegedly fresher. Many of my wealthier friends had packed up and moved to villas on Dianchi Lake; Mrs. Ding and her husband had just moved to a luxury compound that sprawled across a hilltop near the Golden Temple.

When Mrs. Ding arrived, she introduced me to her neighbors in the courtyard, and on our way up to the apartment, she stopped to knock on the doors of the neighbors downstairs and across the hall, introducing me as her new tenant. As we walked in, Mrs. Ding said, “If you need anything at all, the neighbors will help, and of course you can reach me on my cell. Guo Laoshi, across the hall, is especially helpful should anything arise. She has a little granddaughter, about fourteen years old, who is around quite often. You might hear her playing the piano, but mostly it’s very quiet here, with so many retirees.” Mrs. Ding methodically guided me around the house,

opening drawers to show me where to find a screwdriver or hammer, should I need one, showing me how to operate the finicky stove, who to call for water delivery service, how to pilot the space-age shower – with its radio and other contraptions, and where her husband had accidentally burned a hole in the couch when he fell asleep smoking a cigarette. “We had that recovered, but you can still feel it,” she said.

We exchanged rent for keys, and sat chatting on the couch, at first about décor, then soon about family and other topics. Eventually I divulged that my “study” of Yunnanese minority-nationality “history and culture” was actually research for my doctoral dissertation, and that the focus was Yunnanese *Huizu*.

Mrs. Ding grinned, “*Huizu!* Our meeting surely was fated (*yuanfen* 缘分)! I can tell you plenty about *Huizu lishi yu wenhua* 回族历史与文化 (Hui history and culture); I’m Hui.”

“Thank you, wow, um... that’d be really great.”

“Well, what do you want to know?”

“Uh, I don’t know... everything. I don’t know much.”

Mrs. Ding barely hesitated before she launched into the following account (condensed and edited for clarity):

Well, you know about the Shadian Incident, right? I was 21 when it happened, and even though all sorts of horrific things occurred during *Wenge* 文革 (the Cultural Revolution, 1966-1976), it really shocked all of Yunnan’s Hui community. Even before the Incident happened, we heard about what was happening to *Huizu* in Shadian, even as far as Qujing. The *Hanzu* cadres who were “sent down”⁸⁴ to Shadian were particularly cruel and ruthless about “smashing the four olds,” especially so-called “superstitious” practices like religion – even though religion was protected

⁸⁴ . This refers to the relatively privileged urban youth who, during the height of the Cultural Revolution, were sent “up to the mountains and down to the countryside” to learn from the peasants.

under the constitution. These *Hanzu*, they were purposely disrespecting Hui traditions. They dared to raise pigs in the mosques. They beat people for praying, and forced them to eat pork. I've heard that in one year alone, more than 200 struggle sessions against the local *Huizu* were held. Of course the Shadian *Huizu* protested this treatment, but it continued nevertheless, no matter how much they resisted. When other Hui villages began to re-open their mosques, the imams in Shadian requested to do the same, but were denied. They sent a delegation to Kunming to lobby for their rights, as guaranteed by the constitution and the CCP, but the situation only worsened. They were accused of opposing Party leadership, and a special militia was organized to monitor them. The Shadian Hui opposed this, and skirmishes (*xiaozhan* 小战) broke out between the two sides. Eventually, the Shadian Hui delegation took the train all the way to Beijing, hoping to resolve the problems. We all thought they had sorted things out, but shortly after the representatives returned to Shadian from Beijing, the conflicts (*chongtu* 冲突) broke out again. Finally, one morning before dawn, the PLA surrounded Shadian, and bombed it. Thousands of *Huizu* died, even little children, and the village was razed to the ground...⁸⁵

During this recounting of the Shadian Incident, Mrs. Ding and I were alone in my apartment, and at the time she did not yet know me well. Her matter-of-fact tone and pragmatic recitation of “facts,” such as the number of struggle sessions in one year, reflected not only aspects of her personality, but the relationship between us, too. She was relatively restrained in her re-counting in my apartment that day; she did not dramatize the violence or provide graphic depictions. With no one there to interrupt us, her narrative went unchallenged, and her conviction shone through both her words and her somber expression. Moreover, because we were in private, she deviated from the official script, detailing the high numbers of the dead, the suffering of the Hui of Shadian, and the appalling actions of the local Han cadres, the CCP and the PLA. For Mrs. Ding, the narrative of the Shadian Incident was not about sovereignty rights, as the government would later assert; it was about the right to practice religious traditions guaranteed

⁸⁵ . It should be noted that this narrative and others I heard all contain historical inaccuracies; however, as mentioned earlier, it is not my aim here to untangle historical “truth” from fiction.

(and, during the Cultural Revolution, rarely upheld) by the constitution and the Party itself. It was not about opposing Party leadership, but rather about the victimization of Hui people by Han representatives of the Party. As seen in her use of the terms *Huizu* and *Hanzu* (as opposed to *Muslim* (Muslim) and *Fei-Muslim* (Non-Muslim), as used in Shadian, and as opposed to governmental terms that lacked ethnic classification, e.g., “The villagers of Shadian” and “The CCP”), Mrs. Ding interpreted the cause of the “incident” as due to ethno-religious strife, though, as I would later learn, for Mrs. Ding and most of the urban Hui I met in Kunming, the “ethno-religious” category of *Huizu* was perceived primarily as an ethnic category that happened to indicate religious affiliation.⁸⁶

Upon reflection, what most stood out in Mrs. Ding’s re-counting was her candid description of the “facts” – particularly in noting that “thousands” had died – and her remarkably matter-of-fact tone. Unlike other re-countings I would later hear, she remained restrained, unemotional, and certain of the truth of her account. Although she herself did not experience the Shadian Incident, or any similar Hui-Han conflict, she nevertheless deployed “reality effects” in a manner that bolstered her authority, credibility, and the gravity of the matter.

A Public Recounting at the Bank of China: Mrs. Ma’s Tale

During the lunch break one sweltering April day, I shoved my way onto a city bus bound for Kunming’s main branch of the Bank of China. My notes from that day are vague about why I had to visit that branch, though I vividly recall the air-conditioning engulfing me the moment I walked through the glass doors. Sweat from the bus trickled down my skin, and the air-

⁸⁶ . This is perhaps most easily summed up in the phrase “Of course we’re Muslim; we’re *Huizu*.” For more on the complexities of how Kunming Hui identified, see chapter two in this dissertation. See Gladney (1996, 2004) for more on the Hui as an “ethno-religious” category.

conditioning, glacial in the heat, made me shiver. As usual for lunchtime, there was a long queue. I plopped down in a plastic chair, pulled a book out of my bag, and tried to read. Before long, a matronly woman in a frilly green and white polka-dot dress sidled up to me, and gingerly took a seat. Her son dawdled behind, rolling his eyes and looking pointedly at his mother.

“What are you reading? I can’t tell because it’s in English,” she asked.

“It’s a book for school,” I fibbed. It was Truman Capote’s *Music for Chameleons*, and I did not know how to begin to explain such a book to this woman I had just met.

“Do you go to school here in Kunming?”

And so we began the usual small talk, with my usual answers. Sometimes I wanted to lie, just to see what people’s responses would be if I were to tell them I was in Kunming not to study but because I was on the run from my own government, and that I could not provide any other details. I had met such *laowai* often in Yunnan, foreigners with strange, often unbelievable backstories, and wondered if they had just gotten fed up with always repeating the same origin story.

This time, however, when I told the woman, Mrs. Ma, that I had come to Yunnan in order to study minority-nationality history and culture, she exclaimed, “I am a minority-nationality!” Her son grimaced.

“Oh, really?” I asked. “Which minority-nationality are you?”

“I am Huizu, from Zhaotong,” she said.

“Wow, that’s interesting. Some of my friends are Huizu from Zhaotong, and in fact my studies focus on the Hui. Do you live in Kunming?”

“Yes, I’ve lived here for many years. I might know some of your friends; my husband and I keep in close touch with other Zhaotong Hui who live here.”

We continued to chat for a while, her son still looking at us uncomfortably. We exchanged phone numbers, and somehow we switched from using fairly standard *Putonghua* (Mandarin) to “*Mapu*” (Kunming-style putonghua)⁸⁷ to straight-up *Kunminghua* (Kunming dialect). At one point, Mrs. Ma looked around to see if anyone besides her son was eavesdropping on our conversation.

She whispered, using her chin to point at me, “You know about the ‘Incident,’ *geshi*?”⁸⁸

I nodded.

Her son, a well-dressed man in his mid-thirties, finally made a peep, “Ma.” He glared at her and gently shook his head.

Nevertheless, she continued, albeit quietly. “We *Huizu* don’t put up with being bullied by anyone, especially *Hanzu*.”

To her son’s undisguised dismay, I asked, “What do you mean ‘bullied’ (*bei qifu le* 被欺负了)? How did the *Hanzu* bully the Hui? I thought it was the government.” Her voice crescendoed.

Oh, and so do so many people. But that was not the case! The crafty *Hanzu*, they try to take advantage of the minority-nationalities, but the *Huizu*, we’re far too intelligent for that. We’ve always been willing to fight for our rights.

⁸⁷ . Susan Blum (2002: 158-60) notes that this term condescendingly implies that speakers cannot master Mandarin, the language of officialdom and education, and therefore ghettoizes “*Mapu*” as a degenerate dialect.

⁸⁸ . In the Yunnan dialect, “*ge*” 咯 [verb] (in this case, “to be”, *shi* 是) is equivalent to Putonghua’s [verb] 不 [verb]? or [verb] 吗?; that is, it changes a statement into a question.

At this point, other customers were staring at us, and her son frantically begged her to hush. She lowered her voice, but continued to speak. “Shadian, that was truly a tragedy.” She had finally named the “Incident.”

But we Huizu, we’ve had such tragedies before, like during the *Du Wenxiu Qiyi* 杜文秀起义 (the Panthay Rebellion, 1856-1873), and even now... That’s why the Shadian Hui built a fortress around their township. They know that the government would not stop it from happening again. The *Hanzu* are greedy and jealous of us Hui – it’s well-known that we are better businessmen, and without any kind of faith, they are willing to commit atrocious crimes in order to succeed. That’s why cheating [on the national college entrance exam, the *gaokao* 高考] is rampant, as is corruption, especially in the government. But the *Hanzu*, they always scapegoat us if they can. Remember [the series of bus bombings in Kunming] during the Olympics? Even though the Hui clearly had nothing to do with that, Hanzu still targeted us, always causing problems.

Her son nudged her, “Ma, you know that’s not always the case. We have plenty of Hanzu friends.” Later, I found out that the son was dating a Han woman, a music teacher at a public middle school.

“Yes, but they’re not the same. Can we really trust them, after all of our history?”

“Ma, please, this is not the place to discuss this.”

“I’m an old woman now, I can do as I wish.” She turned toward me, again thrusting her chin in my direction. “Historically, we Hui have defended our rights. Sometimes it gets us into trouble, such as with the “Incident,” but that’s how to protect those rights, and that’s why the Han are afraid to take advantage of us now.”

This went on for a bit longer, becoming increasingly tedious, as Mrs. Ma repeated herself and her son attempted to quiet her. Occasionally customers would overhear her, but she consistently whispered any potentially controversial tidbit, and no one seemed particularly

bothered. Finally, my number was called. I bid farewell to the Ma's, the son looking relieved at my departure.

Public re-countings such as Mrs. Ma's were considerably less matter-of-fact than those in private settings, such as Mrs. Ding's. In Kunming's public spaces, such conflicts were often related in hushed, conspiratorial tones or even alluded to, as in Mrs. Ma's case, "You know about the 'Incident,' right?" and "We Hui don't put up with being bullied by anyone." The use of the verb "*qifu*" (to bully or take advantage of) is clearly an understatement; the Hui in Shadian were not "bullied"; they were massacred. However, I read Mrs. Ma's use of this term as a strategic choice that allowed her to speak about a controversial event in a public space. Mrs. Ma was certainly aware of potential eavesdroppers: she whispered, especially when she mentioned something controversial, such as the word "Shadian"; her narrative was consistently vague - she only alluded to "the incident," for instance, and there was a distinct lack of concrete details or specific "facts" throughout her exposition; her use of the local dialect was possibly intentional, as a means to prevent recent migrants to Kunming, primarily Han, from eavesdropping.

Her son's presence, his annoyance with her, and his passive attempts to prevent her from speaking too loudly or frankly, mostly spurred her to speak even more, though she did quiet down a bit whenever he asked. His obvious disapproval influenced her tone, which was often strident, even through her whispering. Unlike Mrs. Ding, Mrs. Ma was relatively emotional: she expressed excitement when she heard my focus of study, and was indignant about Han slights (perceived and real) to the Hui. Furthermore, like many older people, she repeatedly invoked "history" as a means to testify to the "truth" of the events described. In Mrs. Ma's case, she never described the events in detail, but she still connected recent events to historical ones.

Like many Kunming Hui with whom I spoke, Mrs. Ma viewed the catalysts of conflicts such as the Shadian Incident and the Panthay Rebellion as due primarily to inter-ethnic tensions; she alluded to religion only in passing (“faith”) and primarily used it as a moral judgment against the (non-religious) Hanzu. She was among the most anti-Han person I spoke to during my time in Yunnan. Later, while privately having tea in her home, I asked her to clarify why she held the Han responsible for these “interethnic conflicts” and not the CCP. She explained that both Hui and Han can and do belong to the CCP, but they do not belong to one another; that is, each category – Han or Hui – excludes the other. They exist as entirely separate groups. I countered that some Han and Hui intermarried, and those children were both, but Mrs. Ma said that was not the case. “In China, you can only be one *minzu*. Such a child would have to choose.” Indeed, on government-issued ID cards, one can only list a single *minzu* affiliation. Additionally, Mrs. Ma connected “the Incident” not only to interethnic tensions but also to a variety of current issues that she attributed to problems with the Han: governmental corruption, cheating on exams, the bus bombings. For Mrs. Ma and many Hui like her, historical conflict narratives provided opportunities to discuss current issues and tensions without directly confronting those issues.

A Mother-Daughter Duet: Mrs. Ding’s Narrative, Part 2

Depending upon the situation, a single individual could greatly shape the interpretation and “reality effects” deployed within a given recounting of a conflict narrative. While, in general, a given speaker could not depart entirely from the overall narrative structure without facing overt criticism, she certainly shaped it in deeply personal ways. A single individual’s interpretation often shifted depending upon the politics, ethnicity, status, and who was present. When my landlady Mrs. Ding recounted the Shadian Incident narrative while in the presence of her

daughter, for instance, her account differed substantially from the one she told me in my living room.

Nearly a year after I had met the Dings, we celebrated Chunjie together in their home. By that time, we knew each other well; the Dings were among my closest interlocutors in Kunming. Their daughter, Ding Xiaoqing, who happened to be about my age, worked for a multinational corporation in Beijing, where she had also attended university. As the Dings often said, Xiaoqing, like me, worked “far away from family,” “with no one to take care of her.” I suspect that part of the reason the Dings “adopted” me is because of these similarities I shared with their daughter – our ages, unmarried status, levels of education, and distance from home. They kindly invited me over for a home-cooked meal at least once a week, and I spent many afternoons with Mrs. Ding, especially once she opened her small teashop, where her friends, mostly fellow Hui women retirees, would gather to play mahjong and discuss local affairs.

It was early February, 2011, and Spring Festival Eve. Tonight we would usher in the Year of the Rabbit, a year that a fortune teller had once told me would be among the worst of my life. So far, that prophecy was proving alarmingly accurate. I had just returned to Kunming from Texas, where I had spent the last two weeks dealing with the aftermath of my mother’s unexpected death. Although I had only told a few close friends why I had left Kunming, the news had spread quickly in my absence, and my cell phone incessantly buzzed with text messages bearing the now-dreaded phrase *jie'ai shunbian* 节哀顺变: “restrain one’s grief and accept the change.” Worried that I would be alone for the holiday, Mrs. Ding had invited me to spend Chunjie with her family before I had even left for Texas. Now that I had returned, she insisted that I stay with her family for at least a few days.

I packed a few essentials into an oversized handbag and trudged toward the bus stop that would take me to the Golden Temple. Kunming felt ghostly; all shops except a few scattered *xiaomaibu* 小卖部 (small concession stands or shops selling necessities such as cigarettes) were closed, and the only sign of other people were the garlicky stir-fry smells that filtered down to the street. Occasionally a group of children ran by, giggling and popping black cats onto the sidewalk. Some licked old-fashioned sugar candies, wispy zodiac swirls perched atop thin wooden sticks. Even the bus was unusually empty; with only two other people aboard, I easily managed to snag a seat.

The Golden Temple, too, was eerily silent, as was the Ding's *xiaoqu* 小区 (residential complex). Most Kunming residents had abandoned the city to celebrate Chunjie with extended relatives in their hometowns. As the Dings had told me, Chunjie is not their holiday; it is a Han holiday, so they do not bother returning to their hometowns. Besides, Kunming was their home now, and their daughter, who had time off from her work in Beijing, always visited during Chunjie. Most other Kunming Hui felt similarly, and over the next few days, I would eat and drink with many of them, not so much to celebrate the new year as to take advantage of time off from work to spend with friends. Pious Hui who lived in Kunming but were from other areas, especially younger people, sometimes attended short-term religious study courses in meccas like Shadian, Weishan, and Najaiying. Others returned to Kunming bearing gifts of halal pastries, *ganba niurou* 干巴牛肉 (beef jerky), and even fruit that they described as “*qingzhen*” because it came from predominantly Muslim regions.

When I arrived at the Ding's apartment, the door – festooned with red rabbit paper-cuttings (jianzhi 剪纸) and flanked by *chunlian* 春联 (traditional Chinese New Year couplets) – was ajar,

and slippers in my size were waiting next to the shoe rack, which had been moved outside.

Music from the radio mingled in cacophony with the TV, already blaring with the pre-show to the annual CCTV Spring Festival Gala. As usual, Mr. Ding stood slicing, stirring, seasoning in the kitchen. I greeted him, and Mrs. Ding placed the gift I had brought, a bottle of Champagne (not sparkling wine), in the most prominent position on top of their already prominent liquor cabinet. Despite my protests that I should help prepare the food, she seized my elbow and steered me toward the living room, where Xiaoqing peeled boiled peanuts and watched TV.

Xiaoqing and I chatted while we snacked, catching up with each other, and occasionally glancing at the TV. On the other end of the couch, *Waipo* 外婆 (maternal grandmother) squinted at her crochet, periodically joining in our conversation. Gradually, Xiaoqing began to shift into English, carefully watching her grandmother's reaction. When Grandma no longer seemed to be listening, Xiaoqing told me in English that she had a new boyfriend, a Han man she had met through work. The relationship was serious enough that she was fretting about how to tell her parents, who would almost certainly disapprove. "But he doesn't eat pork in front of me. Ever," she said. "Even at restaurants with lots of friends. They'll order pork, but he won't eat it. He only eats it if he's out with his friends without me. He's very considerate that way." For many urban Hui, especially those in Han-dominated areas like Beijing, pork abstinence had become the most salient boundary marker between them and the Han.⁸⁹ Whereas in the recent past, a Han person

⁸⁹ . Likewise, in the eyes of many Han, Hui abstinence from pork marks them as "other" perhaps more than any other cultural practice, including religion. The reasons for this are too complex and varied to elaborate here. Among them, pork avoidance was a defining factor of identity during the Communist era because although religious practice was highly discouraged and, at times, not tolerated or even punished, most Hui were able to continue this specific practice. According to Wang Jianping, Hui even received extra allocations of funds for meat during this period because mutton and beef were more expensive than pork. In addition, pork is the most commonly consumed meat in China; on its own, even the word "meat" *rou* 肉 implies pork.

who wanted to marry a Hui would be expected to convert, for many urbanized Hui youth in contemporary China, the promise to practice pork abstinence, at least within the home, sufficed.

Soon afterwards the five of us – Mr. and Mrs. Ding, Xiaoqing, Waipo, and me – sat down together to enjoy the feast of sixteen dishes that Mr. Ding had prepared, including lamb with crispy fried mint; red-braised beef; an assortment of cold cuts with a spicy dipping sauce; and one of my favorite dishes, “lazy” tofu, a specialty dish from Qujing that resembled the “Green Goddess Dip” of 1970s American cocktail parties. The Dings typically served a lot of meat dishes, at least when I visited, but the Chunjie dinner was almost entirely meat. They told me that was typical for them on New Year’s Eve; Mr. Ding had cooked “lazy” tofu solely because I liked it so much. “We usually go to the halal butcher just before Chunjie and stock up on meat. Unlike the Han, we don’t invite our extended family, so we don’t go overboard preparing. But it’s still a good excuse to spend time together and eat lots of tasty foods.” Just as those words left Mrs. Ding’s mouth, Mr. Ding leapt to his feet and brought over a bottle of Maotai along with several glasses, and the drinking began. Even Grandma imbibed.

We were all in jovial moods, laughing and joking with each other as we continued to eat and drink. Every so often Mr. Ding would stand up, shout “*ganbei!*,” and we would all down the sickly sweet firewater, Grandma chiming in with “*Suiyi, suiyi*. No worries, girls, you don’t need to drain the glass.” At some point, Mrs. Ding began to tease us about our lack of love lives. “You girls, so busy with work. You’re both nearly 30 and still no boyfriend!” Xiaoqing, emboldened by the *baijiu*, said, “Well, that’s no longer the case for me.” Mr. and Mrs. Ding both seemed unsurprised yet pleased.

Xiaoqing had had a boyfriend in college, whom she met through a Hui students association

that her parents convinced her to join. She only attended the meetings for a couple of months, but since the main reason why the Dings had wanted her to join the Hui students association was to meet a potential Hui spouse, they did not mind when she stopped going. For the Dings, Xiaoqing's continued residence in Beijing had become a sensitive issue within the family; they preferred that she return home to Kunming to work. After she broke up with her college boyfriend, they once again worried that she would marry a Han, and urged her to return home. It was unclear whether the Dings were more concerned that she would not marry a Hui or that she would marry a Han; those appeared to be the only options available, in their minds, to Xiaoqing. Either way, for the Dings and for many Kunming Hui, the state-designated categories of *Huizu* and *Hanzu* markedly structured their understandings of the world and their place in it. Whether through re-countings of the Shadian Incident, or through practices such as pork abstinence and (normative) endogamy, Hui in Kunming consistently prioritized this distinction, although this distinction was not universally upheld. Young urbanized Hui in particular, like Xiaoqing, no longer foreground such distinctions, choosing instead to highlight other ones: class, education, and urbanization, for example.

When Xiaoqing divulged that her new inamorato was indeed Han, Mrs. Ding became flushed with anger, and rose to her feet. Although usually mild-mannered, Mrs. Ding had a tendency to lose her temper when she was intoxicated. In the past, I had occasionally seen her down too much *baijiu* 白酒 (spirits distilled from sorghum) too quickly and soon become enraged: enraged at the government for its mistreatment of *shaoshu minzu*, enraged at Han who mischaracterized the Hui as violent drug traffickers, enraged at fellow Yunnanese Hui who had allegedly converted to more extreme forms of Islam, such as the Wahhabi and so on. Such

outbursts were not uncommon among Hui (or any drunk person) in Yunnan. As Mrs. Ding began to rebuke her daughter, calling her a traitor to the Hui, Mr. Ding interjected, trying to calm his wife down. “Darling, we should trust Xiaoqing. She’s a good girl, no doubt he’s a nice boy. We should trust in her decisions...” He went on for awhile, subtly trying to coax his wife back into her seat. Xiaoqing looked embarrassed and disappointed, whether in herself or in her mother, it was difficult to tell. Grandma remained quiet, and soon Mr. Ding prodded us to go to bed.

The next morning, all of us save Grandma were hungover, and we lazed around the house drinking tea, eating whatever we could stomach (no *mixian* for me, thanks), and watching highlights from the Spring Festival Gala, most of which we had missed the previous night. Shortly after a lunch of leftovers, Grandma headed to her room to nap, and Mr. Ding retreated to the kitchen. Mrs. Ding, Xiaoqing, and I lolled on the sofas, forcing ourselves to drink liquids while we half-heartedly watched the Gala. As the minority-nationality dancers exited the stage, Xiaoqing turned to me and mumbled, “Tang Na, I can’t believe you don’t mind sitting through this garbage. Every year it’s the same old thing.”

Mrs. Ding’s eyes turned fierce. “Xiaoqing! What did you say? ”

“Nothing, Ma. Just talking to Tang Na.”

“Are you ridiculing the *shaoshu minzu* singing and dancing?”

“No, Ma. It’s just boring (*wuliao* 无聊).”

“You are a *shaoshu minzu*, Xiaoqing. There is no excuse for your behavior.”

“Ma, we’re not really *shaoshu minzu*. We’re just *Huizu*; we don’t sing or dance or do anything colorful.”

Although Xiaoqing said this calmly, she must have known that this would incite her

mother's wrath. Mrs. Ding, like most of her friends and female family members, was practically obsessed with Hui history and genealogy.⁹⁰ In her teashop, she and her friends frequently discussed historical events and characters as if they were gossiping about people they knew personally. They were familiar not only with the venerated godfathers of Yunnanese Huiness – people such as Sai Dianchi, Zheng He, Du Wenxiu, and so on – but also with lesser-known local notables, particularly their own ancestors, but additionally an assortment of celebrated imams, scholars, and even well-known Yunnanese Hui women, whom they viewed as the preservers of Hui-ness.

As Mrs. Ding angrily enumerated the reasons why Xiaoqing should cherish her Hui-ness, she emphasized the sacrifices of their ancestors who preserved Hui traditions in the face of Han oppression. In the course of this conversation, Mrs Ding recounted the Shadian Incident, though this time, in the presence of her daughter, her narrative differed considerably from the one she told me alone in my apartment a year before. Below is an edited transcript of her tale:

The Han have long oppressed us Hui. In the 1850s, the Han massacred thousands of Huizu in Kunming, which is why Du Wenxiu and Ma Rulong rose up against them and formed their own government, away from the Han, in Dali. After the fall of Pingnan Guo [the Sultanate established by Du Wenxiu], the Han cruelly and viciously overtook Dali and massacred all the Hui that they could find, save a few young women who the commanders took as concubines. After that, Hui were not allowed within the city limits of Dali! For a hundred years!

We have resisted Han oppression for nearly two centuries now, and it still continues. When I was young, not much younger than you, the Han again attacked the Hui, brutally. These attacks became especially severe in Shadian, during the Cultural Revolution. As in many other places,

⁹⁰ . In a few private conversations, Xiaoqing had indicated that she found her mother's fascination with these subjects annoying, especially since Mrs. Ding retired and suddenly had the time to dedicate herself to such pursuits.

the Han cadres there forced the Hui to eat pork; they raised pigs in the mosques, and forced the Hui to care for those pigs - a filthy, disgusting job, and in their own mosques! Those Hui would go home to their families smelling of pigs.

Of course the Hui resisted. We are a courageous, tenacious people. In secret the Hui organized to fight back, but this only caused them problems. In one year alone, there were hundreds and hundreds of struggle sessions held against the Hui in Shadian. The Han there were unmerciful and unjust: though the constitution of the P.R.C. guaranteed our rights, these Han would not respect [those rights]. As the conflict between the groups escalated, the Han threw pork bones into Hui wells. And though the mosques were all locked or turned into pigsties, the Han got word that some Hui were worshipping in secret on Fridays, and so they threw a pig's head into the mosque during Friday prayers.

The Hui villagers even organized their own militias to fight against the Han. Although some were arrested and even killed, this did not deter them. But the abuses against Hui traditions did not cease. The Han even force-fed pork to a pregnant woman, who would gag and vomit up the meat each time. So they starved her, and only allowed her to eat pork, but each time she would vomit it up. They would beat her, and kick her, and hold her nose so that she would have to take in the pork, but each time she would vomit. Because of such treatment, she lost the baby.

The Hui of Shadian repeatedly fought this treatment, and even went to Kunming in order to gain the support of the provincial government. But when those officials heard that the Hui had organized their own militia, they claimed that the Shadian Hui were trying to organize their own state, just like Du Wenxiu! Of course, the [Shadian] Hui only wished that their constitutional rights be protected. A delegation of Hui took the train all the way to Beijing, and thought they solved the problems. But not long after, conflicts broke out again, and one morning before dawn, the P.L.A. attacked Shadian. They razed the town, and massacred women, children, and elderly people who were fleeing. Thousands and thousands of Hui died, so many of them children.

In her previous re-counting, Mrs. Ding had inscribed the Shadian Incident within the turmoil of the Cultural Revolution; that narrative chronicled inter-ethnic tension that quickly escalated to violence. In this account, however, Mrs. Ding re-situated the narrative temporally, placing the Shadian Incident within a lengthy historical frame in which it was only one of many instances of Han oppression of the Hui, spanning at least all the way back to the Panthay

Rebellion (1856-73). Whereas in her earlier account, she had blamed the state for not upholding the constitutional right to practice religion, in this account that was less of an issue; rather, what was at stake in this account was an ongoing inter-ethnic conflict between the Han majority and the Hui. In both of Mrs. Ding's accounts, as in most Chinese-language accounts of the Panthay Rebellion, the terms *Huizu* and *Hanzu* were anachronistically projected into the past, reifying such categories as natural.

Additionally, Mrs. Ding's emphasis on the distinctions between the Han oppressors and the Hui oppressed was even more apparent than in the one she recounted to me earlier; this is particularly noticeable in the ways in which she stressed the brutality of the Han, for instance, using words such as "massacre" instead of "kill," and through her repeated reference to the deaths of children. She further distinguished between the Han and the Hui by continually emphasizing various positive aspects of Hui-ness, describing how the Hui proudly asserted bravery in the face of Han violence, as in, for example: "In secret, the Hui villagers organized their own militias to fight against the Han. Although some were arrested and even killed, this did not deter them." As in most accounts told by Kunming Hui, she de-emphasized religion, foregrounding "Hui traditions" instead.

The "reality effects" she employed, such as numbers, were vaguer and more emphatic, both in tone and in cadence, such as in "thousands and thousands" and "hundreds and hundreds."

Since she considered her daughter to be a bit too "Hanified" (*bei Hanhua le* 被汉化了), she not only deployed "reality effects" in a slightly different way but her tone, too, changed dramatically, becoming passionate rather than matter-of-fact. Though the plot remained essentially the same, the overall interpretation and impression of the Shadian Incident narrative she told her daughter

(in my presence) differed substantially from the one she told me alone in my apartment. When describing the catalysts which sparked the Shadian Incident to her daughter, Mrs. Ding specified many Han transgressions, several more than she had when she recounted the narrative in my apartment, punctuating them with staccato for dramatic effect. Appealing to her daughter's shared practice of pork abstinence, Mrs. Ding elaborated the details of various forms of pork contamination that allegedly acted as catalysts, emphasizing the filth of pigs, and implicitly implicating those who would raise them willingly, namely, the Han. Furthermore, she skillfully evoked visceral responses in her audience, for example, by describing how one pregnant woman, continually force-fed pork, vomited up the meat, and ultimately miscarried. She likely intended that image, as well as the mid-19th century forced concubinage of the Hui women survivors of the Panthay Rebellion, to resonate with her daughter's own position as a young Hui woman. Certainly the graphic nature of these abuses against women not so different from herself prompted Xiaoqing to empathize with them. As her mother spoke, I watched Xiaoqing's facial expressions change from one of mild annoyance to one of disgust, particularly when her mother detailed the ways in which the Han exploited pork abstinence in order both to abuse and subdue the Hui.

Despite these differences, both of Mrs. Ding's re-countings, along with Mrs. Ma's, shared certain aspects that were not often shared with non-Hui or with Hui in more conservative places. Most obviously, Hui in Kunming tended to emphasize the ethnic dimensions of conflicts such as the Shadian Incident. While Kunming Hui often faulted the state, the state they described was tightly linked to the Han, who were the true perpetrators in the eyes of many Kunming Hui. Their de-emphasis of Islam further reinforced their identities as a "modernized" ethnic group – urban

Hui often relegated religious practice to a “backwards” past, instead highlighting the ways in which the Hui were more “modern,” cleaner, and more “advanced” than non-Hui, particularly the Han. Although specific context, especially place and audience, significantly affected the telling of a conflict narrative, Kunming Hui collectively used such stories to situate themselves as distinct from, and often superior, to the Han. Descriptions of Han brutality in conflict narratives were often used to demonstrate the innate “backwardness” of the Han. Moreover, whether through descriptions of historical events such as the Panthay Rebellion, or through explicit connections between Han-Hui conflicts and current events, such as governmental corruption scandals, Kunming Hui consistently – and sometimes subversively – used such tales both to criticize and resist the state.

Re-counting the Shadian Incident in Shadian: Survivor’s Tales

Crucially, re-countings of conflict narratives in urban Kunming “conflicted” with narratives told in Shadian itself. This was perhaps most evident in the different categories of people at the center of the narrative’s action. Whereas Kunming Hui narratives made central the conflict between the ethnic categories of *Huizu* and *Hanzu*, in Shadian narratives, religious categories took precedence: the primary opposition in Shadian narratives was between Muslims (*Musilin* 穆斯林) and non-Muslims (*Fei Musilin* 非穆斯林). In other words, Shadian narratives framed the “Incident” as a conflict between the pious Muslims and the godless Communists, and emphasized the immorality of the Han cadres, particularly in comparison to the religious righteousness of the local Shadian Muslims. Unlike Kunming Hui narratives, what was at stake in Shadian narratives was not ethnic identity but rather religious faith: the Shadian Hui righteously defended their faith in the face of its (and their) imminent annihilation, and

furthermore, unlike Kunming Hui in particular, this righteousness ultimately stemmed not from genetic predispositions for courage but rather from pure faith in Allah. Typically, a Shadian Hui account would show, as Mrs. Li of Shadian put it, that:

The CCP members drank and gambled regularly; they completely lacked any kind of faith (*xinyang* 信仰). They were dirty, corrupt, and immoral; they locked the mosques so that we could no longer pray there, and beat those who tried [to enter the locked mosques]... But we secretly prayed at home, and kept our faith in Allah, no matter what [the cadres] did.... although many Shadian Muslims were killed during the Incident, [ultimately] *Zhenzhu* 真主 (God/Allah) protected us because we never lost our faith [in Him].⁹¹

More saliently, Shadian re-countings of the Incident highlighted the ways in which actual violence becomes inscribed on landscapes, bodies, and emotional experience. Unsurprisingly, when recounting their narratives, Shadian people consistently deployed many more “reality effects” than did people in other parts of Yunnan, and these details tended to be profoundly more concrete. Shadian Incident survivors described exactly where they were the day the PLA attacked, what they were doing, whom they were with, even what they wore. They showed me the precise sights where bombs fell and pointed out the few houses that survived. Most survivors lost loved ones: childhood friends, parents, siblings, teachers, classmates – in many cases, the Incident entailed multiple losses, and sometimes survivors had watched their loved ones die. In one case, for example, a close female interlocutor in her late 40s haltingly told me how her younger brother had been killed almost instantaneously when a bomb struck while they were fleeing their hamlet. Nearby, she had watched in horror, helpless. Such memories tended to stir

⁹¹ . *Zhenzhu* 真主 is the Chinese term most commonly used for Allah, although Shadian Hui also used the transliteration *Anla* 安拉. These terms differ from other Chinese terms for “God” or gods, such as *Shangdi* 上帝, the term most commonly used for God in Protestantism, and *Tianzhu* 天主, the term most commonly used for God in Catholicism.

dormant emotions, and my interlocutors occasionally wept while re-counting the Incident. For this reason, I never broached the subject myself, and yet people frequently told me their tales.

One morning after *Fajr* (dawn) prayers, Mrs. Hu, who had been in elementary school during the Incident, insisted we hire a rickshaw to drive us to a specific noodle shop on the outskirts of the Shadian administrative district. She was unusually quiet on our way to breakfast that morning. At the small, open roadside stand where we stopped, an elderly woman showed us to our seats and took our orders while a white-haired man snored in the corner. Soon a middle-aged woman served us steaming bowls of *mixian*, topped with fresh mint and swimming with large chunks of beef. As she hobbled away from our table, I noticed first her limp, and then her prosthetic leg. Mrs. Hu and I slurped down our noodles and climbed back into the waiting rickshaw. On our way back into town, Mrs. Hu solemnly told me that the elderly couple who owned that noodle shop had lost several children during the Incident, and their sole surviving daughter had lost her leg. As she spoke, Mrs. Hu stifled her tears, though she shook visibly.

Later, she would recount her own tragic story while we sat in her own living room, sipping *longjing* tea 龙井茶 that her husband had brought back from a business trip to Hangzhou. At first she stoically described the death of her father a few months after her birth, but as she continued to narrate her life story, she could no longer suppress her tears. They dribbled down her nose and chin while she resolutely relayed her account. As she detailed the loss of a cherished childhood friend during the Incident, she began to sob audibly, her chest heaving as she tried to calm herself. Although Hui throughout Yunnan displayed emotion when recounting this and other conflict narratives, survivor narratives were at times so laden with emotion that the audience would either be on the verge of tears or reverently silent and contemplative. In this

case, the only listener besides me was Mrs. Hu's 18-year-old daughter, who pretended to busy herself making tea and bringing us plates of rugalach, almonds, and dates. By the end of Mrs. Hu's story, we were all weeping.

On one of the few mornings in Shadian when I did not meet someone for breakfast, I took a walk around the main commercial area during prayer time; even the shopkeepers had abandoned their counters to pray in the back of their shops. I lingered on the steps of the dairy stand, waiting to buy some yoghurt while I scanned the streets. A stooped old woman beckoned me to follow her, so I did. We slipped down a deserted alley, through an open gate and into a courtyard crammed with withered plants and half-rotted furniture. Inside her dark house, the stench of Chinese traditional medicines and mildewed upholstery overwhelmed me. Framed, yellowed photographs cluttered every flat surface. She mutely handed me a wrinkled pear and then immediately launched into halting Yunnanese dialect, punctuated by her soft sobs, in which she described the tragic death of her teenaged son during the Incident. Between her weeping, her heavy accent, and her disjointed narrative, I struggled to piece together her story. A few days after suffering critical injuries during the Incident, her son, a participant in the locally organized Hui militia, had died. She described both his recklessness and bravery in joining the youth militia, and lauded his efforts to protect Shadian. But, at the same time, her faith in Allah had been deeply shaken by her lifetime of loss – that, she explained, was why she no longer prayed regularly. During the early 1980s, her husband had died, and then her other son had perished in a mining accident, leaving her with “only” a daughter, who had married out to a Muslim village near Weishan, an entire day's journey away. Her daughter rarely visited, and so the old woman had no one to “support and take care of [her]” (*fengyang* 奉养). Her emotional testimony of the

incident illustrates not so much the strategies used to manipulate narratives as it does the (sometimes lingering) emotional effects of lived experience.⁹²

The Teleological Narrative of *Jingji Fazhan* 经济发展

Although the vast majority of my interlocutors in Shadian recounted emotional tales of their own experience during the Incident, a small minority of narrators, all men in their 60s or older, told a different tale – one of recovery, progress, and the gifts of faith, both material and spiritual, bestowed upon the faithful by Allah. At times these narratives came uncomfortably close to justifying the Incident by making it a causal factor responsible for Shadian’s subsequent prosperity. A few of the more religious accounts in this genre even seemed to characterize the Incident as a sacrifice for which the faithful were rewarded. In all of these narratives, “progress” (*jinbu* 进步), which happened mainly through “economic development” (*jingji fazhan* 经济发展), was envisioned as both the ends and the means to a much desired “modernity.”

Such teleological narratives of progress are hardly unique to Shadian; other anthropologists have documented this throughout post-reform China (e.g., Yang 1996; Wang 1997; Anagnost 1997; Schein 1999; Rofel 1999; Tang 2000; Davis 2000; Zhou 2006). Prasenjit Duara (1995) shows the ways in which such narratives of “progress” are part of the post-reform (re)-construction of the Chinese nation; through both the policies themselves and the official narratives of these policies, the promise of an ever-improving future attracts the *laobaixing*’s support of the Party and their shared identification with the nation. Stevan Harrell (2001) notes

⁹² . Stephan Feuchtwang (2011) co-opts Freud’s sense of melancholia as the “pathology of mourning” to mean, instead, “a source of emotional drive and energy for grievance, which is a social motive made out of but going beyond grief and grieving” (8). In these cases in which my interlocutors expressed a palpable sense of loss, this loss was no less real despite its pastness, and emotional expressions did not negate one’s actions as a social actor in one’s social world.

that anthropologists writing about the post-reform “transformation” of China focus on “two grand, dialectically interlocked sets of themes: themes of recovery from the social and intellectual devastation of High Socialism and themes of progress toward a vaguely defined but highly desired modernity” (140). Indeed, in Shadian, these narratives at once aligned their authors with the state and its policies, while also describing the local recovery after the devastation wrought by the Incident, its splendid progress, and its prosperous future.

Many of these older, male narrators were either local officials or local notables; all of them described to me at least once the importance of *aiguo aijiao* 爱国爱教 (lit. love the state, love religion),⁹³ explaining that the government (*zhengfu* 政府) had supported the Hui since the beginning of the reform era. When we discussed the Shadian Incident, these elders tended to consider hypotheticals: what if the Incident had never occurred? Would Shadian be so wealthy if the government had not helped “rehabilitate” (*pingfan* 平反) it? For these men, the answer was decidedly no: if the Shadian Incident had never occurred, “we would all still be peasants (*nongmin* 农民), poor and pitiful,” as one of my interlocutors succinctly put it.⁹⁴ Furthermore, the relative freedom of Shadian Hui to practice Islam was viewed as a direct result of post-reform P.R.C. guilt for the acknowledged misdeeds committed against Shadian during the Cultural Revolution. Some of my male interlocutors insisted that this was why the current provincial and national governments left Shadian Hui to their own devices – even allowing the local governmental headquarters to be built in an ostentatious “Arabized” style.

⁹³ . In chapter five, I detail the nuances of this phrase, and translate it as “patriotism first, then religious devotion.”

⁹⁴ . I would have to disagree with these men, particularly given the case of Najjiaying, a conservative Yunnanese Muslim town near Tonghai that has also prospered in the reform era despite the town’s ultimate decision not to resist during the Cultural Revolution.

In this way, the Shadian Incident was construed as the causal factor for both religious and monetary wealth. As one man carefully explained, the Incident had been part of Allah's plan, a test for his faithful followers. In resisting the anti-religious directives of the Cultural Revolution, even when such resistance directly caused bodily harm, the Shadian Hui proved their worth as true Muslims. As a reward for their unwavering faith, Allah had bestowed gifts on the Shadian Hui, primarily in the form of mines that soon improved the local standard of living. As people throughout Yunnan told me, Shadian had become quite wealthy (*fu* 富) in the post-reform years. From the perspectives of these Shadian men, both the government and Allah had injected money into the local economy, whether in the form of reparations or other gifts.

Moreover, whether it stemmed from Allah's gift of the mines or from governmental funds, financial wealth was intimately connected to spiritual wealth; one could easily (re)produce the other, as the faithful inspired Allah's (material) blessings, and the wealthy invested in the spiritual health of the community, further strengthening its financial wealth. For example, shortly after arriving in Shadian, a friend of one of my hosts told me over a humble breakfast of corn that my host had earned a fortune in the mining industry, and had donated over six million RMB (approximately one million dollars) to the construction of Shadian's Great Mosque. "And yet," the friend continued, "see how he lives, humble like a peasant, eating corn for breakfast and wearing five kuai *tuoxie* 拖鞋 (flip-flops)." Granted, this man also drove a BMW and lived in an opulent home; however, like other wealthy Muslims in China, both historically and today, he provided scholarships for local students to attend religious schools, and had paid the way for local elders to perform the pilgrimage to Mecca, in addition to other donations and the annual tithe, *zakāt*.

Why did these men's narratives differ so much from those recounted by their *tongxiang* 同乡 (fellow villagers)? Regarding this, I can only speculate. Perhaps these men used these particular narratives with me because I am an outsider; they did not know me well, especially since most of my interlocutors in Shadian were women. Given that most Shadianren became emotional when they recounted the Incident and its aftermath, it could be that these men did not feel comfortable in my presence. Perhaps this speaks to local notions of masculinity, in which local (male) leaders felt compelled to be optimistic about Shadian's future, even while other locals were mourning the past. Indeed, it could be argued that forgetting was one aspect of masculinity in Shadian. One of the most obvious acts of local masculinity occurred each Eid al-Fitr, when throngs of local men prayed together at the Martyrs' Monument (*suxide jinianbei* 舍牺德纪念碑), a government-sponsored memorial to the victims of the Shadian Incident that was erected in 1989 (see photos).⁹⁵ In their white clothing and caps, they crowded around the monument with just enough room for their prayer rugs; women were conspicuously absent.

Although at first glance it may appear that the men's actions served to memorialize the Incident, in many ways the monument and the men's annual ritual ultimately erases its/their own violent, traumatic past.⁹⁶ In *How Modernity Forgets* (2009), Paul Connerton categorizes

⁹⁵ . *Suxide* 舍牺德 is the Chinese language transliteration of the Quranic Arabic term شهيد, *šahīd* meaning "witness." This term also refers to a martyr, someone who has died in service to their faith.

⁹⁶ . Erik Mueggler (1998) critiques anthropologists' use of psychoanalytic terminology in ethnographic accounts of China, warning that we should at minimum remain self-conscious of this, while at the same time we should resist depicting "social memory with Chinese characteristics." The accounts of many of my interlocutors in Shadian dovetailed with the "Scar Literature" (*shanghen wenxue* 伤痕文学) that emerged in the late 1970s. Both Shadian accounts of the Cultural Revolution and Scar Literature detailed traumas experienced, and both also, to a great extent, "rehabilitated" the nation and the Party, placing the blame for the trauma squarely on the shoulders of the Gang of Four. (In his comparison of "transmission of loss" in China,

monuments as a type of “topography of forgetting” in that they “conceal the past as much as they cause us to remember it” (29); in other words, monuments crystallize a particular version of history – in this case, the government-sanctioned version – and, like Trouillot’s “silences,” always erase parts of the past. When Shadian men pray at the Martyrs’ Monument, they memorialize one version of that past, and forget others; as Connerton describes, they cease to “know” the event, and only “know about” it. In his monograph *Never Forget National Humiliation: Historical Memory in Chinese Politics and Foreign Relations* (2012), Wang Zheng shows how the CCP actively erases such pasts through history educations that manipulate narratives in order to legitimate the nation and the Party and justify their past actions. Similarly, government-sponsored and sanctioned monuments, such as the one in Shadian, record official narratives, neglecting and de-legitimizing those that differ. Many of the women with whom I spoke expressed regret that their own children, in this case all so-called post-80s and post-90s youth, did not wish to hear about their parents’ experiences during either the Cultural Revolution or the Incident. Whereas all of my female interlocutors who lived through the Incident emphasized the importance of remembering what happened, both their own children and local male leaders – in a few cases, their own spouses – sought to erase this turbulent, tragic past. As Ernest Renan stated in his classic essay, “What is a Nation?” (1994), “Forgetting, I would even go so far as to say historical error, is a crucial factor in the creation of a nation...” (11). In this way, the teleological narratives of progress articulated by Shadian male elders both served to create “the (modern) nation” and reinforced Chinese sovereignty. That is to say, these local

Taiwan, and Germany, Feuchtwang (2011) reports that in the P.R.C., where social memories of the Great Leap Forward and similar tragedies were repressed, individual memories conformed more to official ones).

narratives of progress simultaneously re-inscribed Shadian within the dominant Chinese grand narratives of progress, economic development, *minzu tuanjie* 民族团结 (ethnic unity), and within the borders of the Chinese nation.

And yet, these narratives can also be read as attempts to salvage the moral universe that was lost, destroyed and/or suppressed during the Maoist era: primarily religious belief and practice, but also particular forms of gift exchange, self-actualization, and so on. Arguably we could read a variety of post-reform narratives in this way, especially given the recent rise in religiosity throughout China (Israeli 1997; Kipnis 2001; Chau 2006; Ashiwa and Wank 2009; Wellens 2010; Goossaert and Palmer 2011; Yang 2011; Liang 2013; Zhang 2013). In regards to these specific narratives in Shadian, such salvaging is perhaps most evident in Allah's interventions on behalf of the Shadian Hui, but is also noticeable in details of the meanings of "economic development," "progress," and "modernity" in these narratives.

On one hand, these concepts, which in recent years have gained substantial currency throughout contemporary "modernizing" China, align the Shadian Muslims with the rest of the nation. Ann Anagnost (1993, 1997), for instance, describes the materialization of such narratives of "progress" in the form of a theme park in Shenzhen that ostensibly represents the Chinese nation in miniature. This theme park, called "Splendid China" (*jinxiu Zhonghua* 锦绣中华), eliminates the historical "rupture" of the Maoist period in order to present an ever-progressing, globally capitalist, "modern" sense of nation-ness. Drawing on Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities*, Anagnost argues that such representations of the nation demonstrate "the ambivalent temporality of the nation-state as being always caught 'between' its simultaneous desire for being both deeply historical and yet undeniably modern (1993: 589)." In this sense,

Shadian narratives of progress are one type of many such narratives in China, most of which either ignore or obscure the Maoist era while simultaneously celebrating the glorious reform era of economic development, wealth, prosperity, progress, and modernity. In addition, the tensions between the desires to narrate the historical nation, to remember and rectify historical injustices, and the desire to overcome these pasts in the name of a bright, prosperous future is reflected not only in national narratives of progress, but also in the different versions of local narratives of the Shadian Incident itself.

On the other hand, however, the modernity imagined – and practiced – in Shadian differed in important ways from the dominant Chinese narrative of progress. Most obviously, this modernity was imagined as uniquely “Islamic,” unlike the forms of modernity in other, non-Muslim, parts of China, and indeed, due to Shadian’s unique history, unlike modernity in Islamic parts as well. In this sense, local Shadian narratives of progress salvaged a moral universe that differed distinctly from that of national narratives; in particular, these Shadian narratives salvaged both an Islamic past and future. As mentioned in an earlier chapter, Shadian Hui envisioned themselves as returning to an earlier era of Islamic modernity. Their notions of modernity were, in this sense, fundamentally transnational, not only in the ways in which they situated the Chinese nation within a global scheme of modernity, but also in the sense that Islam originated outside of China’s borders; in their perspective it thus implied a relationship between China and non-Chinese peoples, nations, cultures, as well as a particular non-Chinese past (and potential non-Chinese futures). Moreover, national “progress” and “economic development” granted Shadian Muslims access to “Muslim” consumer goods and opportunities to travel for study, work or hajj, among other things, that were negotiated through international trade and

diplomacy channels. Perhaps the most eloquent symbol of this localized Islamic transnationalism is the palm tree. Upon returning to Shadian from the Middle East, a large contingent of local leaders sought to re-create an “authentic” Islamic center in their own home. In addition to the changes in architecture, foods, and other stylistic devices, palm trees were planted near the Great Mosque in order to enhance the “Islamic atmosphere.” The cost of importing palm trees from abroad, however, was far too high; these symbolically transnational aspirations were achieved within the nation, by purchasing palm trees from China’s Hainan Island.

Anti-Hui Sentiments and Ethno-nationalist Primordialism

As mentioned earlier, sympathetic Han also used narratives of the Shadian Incident, although they used them not to reify ethnic categories, as in the case of most Kunming Hui, or to articulate communal religiosity and righteousness, as in the case of many Shadian Hui, but rather to describe a Chinese state that preyed on the vulnerable, which could in some cases include themselves. In contrast, other Han swallowed the official narrative without question, while still others, such as Mr. Zhang, were emphatically anti-Hui.

Mr. Zhang, a mid-30s business executive who lived in Kunming, originally hailed from the Weishan Yi and Hui Autonomous County (*Weishan Yizu Huizu Zizhi Xian* 巍山彝族回族自治县) in Western Yunnan, not far from Dali. I met Mr. Zhang on the night of my twenty-ninth birthday, while celebrating with friends at a bar on Wenlin Jie near Kunming’s university district. He arrived shortly after we did and since he recognized someone in our group as a friend of a friend, he immediately sat down at our table and began to interrogate each of us about what we did. Inquisitive though quite brash, he made it abundantly clear that he disapproved of my conducting research with the Hui. Zhang described the Hui as a violent, hostile people prone to

trouble-making and rebellion. Invoking the Panthay Rebellion as evidence that the Hui are “naturally” and “historically” trouble-making rebels, Zhang further suggested that there is some sort of primordial essence that causes the Hui to exhibit such “traits.” Later, he adamantly stated, “They are naturally cruel and quick to resort to violence... it’s because of their Muslim genes...” (*Tamen ziran hen xionghen, ziran hen kuai jiuyong baoli le... shi yinwei tamen musulin de jiyin* 他们自然很凶狠自然很快就用暴力了... 是因为他们的穆斯林的基因).

He continued by insisting on the need to “suppress” (*zhenya* 镇压) the Hui and deny them political recourse. When I argued with him, he circuitously explained that although the Han and Hui ethnic categories appear to be very similar, as both unite a variety of ethnicities, linguistic groups, and cultural behaviors under one ethnic group, thereby failing to conform to the official Stalinist-derived criteria for establishing and demarcating ethnic groups, they are different in ways that have crucial political effects. According to Zhang, the key distinction between the Han and the Hui is that whereas the Han lack strong ties to the ethnic group, the Hui ethnic identity is both strong and politically powerful. He elaborated, “When one Hui gets into trouble, they all come to help” and provided examples illustrating the “unfair nature” of this: When a fight broke out between a Han man and a Hui man over a young Hui woman in nearby Yuxi, other Hui jumped to defend the Hui man. Most Han ignored the incident completely, with the exception of the (local) government, which stepped in on the side of the Hui because, according to Zhang, the government recognizes the power of the Hui, specifically the power of their numbers and the power of their ethnic identity; they will always stand together against the Han. “The government” (*zhengfu* 政府) always fears Hui rebellion/revolt and will go to great lengths to

placate the Hui, especially because the government does not want to “lose face” should things get out of hand.⁹⁷

Interestingly, even though we were in a very public place where he could be easily overheard, Mr. Zhang did not feel the need to talk quietly or conceal his anti-Hui sentiments; this differs substantially from the public re-countings of Kunming Hui such as those of Mrs. Ma. Speculatively, such nonchalance regarding the sensitivity of the topic at hand is most likely in part due to Zhang’s personality, but also due to his status as a male, majority Han person. When he disclosed concerns about the political powers of the Hui, by loudly expressing his anti-Hui sentiments, he indicated that he did not feel threatened.⁹⁸

Fortunately for the sanity of this ethnographer, most Han I encountered did not exhibit such strong anti-Hui bias. Eventually, however, I encountered enough anti-Hui Han that I managed to discern a possible pattern: almost all of the anti-Hui Han I met were native to regions with a high population of Hui, often so-called “conservative” ones who lived in close-knit Islamic enclaves,

⁹⁷ . During this discussion, it was difficult to untangle which “government” Mr. Zhang meant: the local Yuxi government, the provincial government, the central government. He conflated these, and when I tried to clarify what he meant, he argued that such favorable treatment toward the Hui exists at all levels.

⁹⁸ . Compare Mr. Zhang’s account to Jonathan Lipman’s (2004) description of interpretations of ethnic violence between Han and Muslims (mostly Hui) in Gansu during the Qing and Republican eras. Lipman states that there are “two stereotypical explanations that have been offered for violent conflict between Muslims and others throughout modern Chinese history”: 1) that Muslims are naturally violent, and 2) a post-1949 (mainly scholarly) view in which all peoples within China’s borders “naturally” lived in harmony, and Han-Muslim violence was caused by “oppressive, discriminatory, ethnocentric, Manchu Qing policy, which set ethnic group against ethnic group in order to stabilize the dynasty’s exploitative view.” Lipman convincingly discards such theories, showing many instances in which Han and Muslims have lived peacefully side-by-side.

such as Shadian, Najiaying, and Weishan.⁹⁹ These anti-Hui Han felt that the Hui rejected, excluded, or discriminated against them and so returned the perceived slight in the form of anti-Hui bias.

In brief, a variety of factors, including ethnicity, political perspective, context – even an individual’s personality and hometown – influenced how conflict narratives were recounted, interpreted, and deployed for political purposes. These narratives, in turn, reproduced the political relationships that they reflected. To simplify, the categories of collectivities that produced and reproduced these narratives with their resultant relationships can be roughly divided into the following ideal types: 1) Anti-Hui Han, who narrated local conflicts as rooted in (primordial) inter-ethnic tension, and emphasized the “violent nature” of the Hui; 2) Kunming Hui who similarly narrated local conflicts as originating in (primordial) inter-ethnic tensions, and emphasized the (natural) courage of the Hui in resisting the oppression of the Han; 3) Shadian Hui who narrated local conflicts as stemming from inter-religious tensions, and emphasized the righteousness of the Hui in contrast to their immoral Han antagonists; and 4) Sympathetic Anti-Government Han, who narrated local conflicts as caused by governmental oppression of a vulnerable minority.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ . These anti-Hui Han tended to associate “conservative” (*baoshou* 保守) Hui with being “backwards” (*luohou* 落后), presumably at least in part because of broader perceptions of religious faith within China. Although certain types of religion, namely Protestantism, Christianity, and certain branches of Neo-Confucianism, were often depicted as “modern” (*xiandai* 现代) by Han people, religion was generally tied to “backwards” practices such as “superstition” (*mixin* 迷信) and anti-scientific modes of thought. Such attitudes are linked to historical campaigns such as the May 4th Movement, which promoted “modernization” in the name of “science,” and resisted religion and superstition.

¹⁰⁰ . Here I follow Weber’s concept of “ideal types” as a methodological “utopia [that] cannot be found empirically anywhere in reality” (Weber 1949: 90).

Temporal Strategies in Narratives of the Shadian Incident

One major site for difference within narratives of this incident lies in how it is historicized – how it is articulated with reference (or not) to a particular time. With regards to the Shadian Incident, different temporalities strategically construct different political responsibilities and implications.

In emphasizing the unique circumstances of the Cultural Revolution, the official state narrative rationalizes the action taken by the PLA against Shadian through the trope of “the times” (Davis 1987: 33). In this narrative, Cultural Revolutionary attacks on “backwards” religious practices provoked serious Han–Hui conflicts that began in the late 1960s. These conflicts escalated so that by 1975, after major protests by Shadian Hui demanding that the state uphold the freedom of religion guaranteed in the Constitution of the P.R.C. erupted in violence, both sides flew to Beijing to negotiate a truce, which was quickly dissolved. When Shadian villagers refused to pay grain tax to the state, the CCP Central Committee issued *Zhongfa [1975] 15*, signed by Chairman Mao, which gave the order for the PLA to enter Shadian and bring the situation under control (Gladney 1996; Israeli 2002). “In Feb 1979, after the fall of the ‘Gang of Four’ [in 1976], the Yunnan Provincial Party Committee and the Party Committee of the Kunming Military Region jointly issued document no. 7 ... [which] stated, ‘The Shadian Incident ought not to have been dealt with as a counterrevolutionary rebellion. It was wrong to solve the incident by military means... and the many leaders and the people of the Hui nationality who were involved in the incident should be rehabilitated’” (Israeli 2002: 265). Since then, the state has paid reparations to the victims of the Shadian Incident and their families and rebuilt the

town. Today, Shadian flourishes as a wealthy center for Islamic revival in China (Hillman 2004; Caffrey 2007).

Although in this narrative, the state takes responsibility for its actions, it does so by justifying such actions as inevitable given “the times.” The insanity of the Cultural Revolution is the real agent of violence, not the state. In its insistence that this incident emerged out of the specific circumstances of “the times,” this narrative denies intentionality to the state and, at the same time, denies the possibility of such an incident occurring outside the frame of disturbed “times.” Furthermore, through such narratives, the state reconstructs time as linear, ever–progressive, thereby purposely eradicating the violence of the past. Why dwell on past memories of violent upheaval when Shadian has obviously progressed to a bright, wealthy future?

Alternative narratives of the Shadian incident are sometimes contextualized within a broad historical frame of events that dates back to at least the Panthay Rebellion (1856–1873). Hui–Han conflict narratives often explicitly invoke the historical events of the Panthay Rebellion, although as David Atwill (2005) argues, the Panthay Rebellion and the conflicts during the fifteen years leading up to it were actually far more complex than Hui–Han ethnic violence.¹⁰¹ Despite the complexity of historical realities, Yunnanese interpretations of the Panthay Rebellion tend to focus on Hui–Han conflict and, more significantly, tend to interpret contemporary Hui–Han conflicts in articulation with the 19th century rebellion. Dru Gladney (1996) and Ma Ping (2008) mention that before the tragic events of the Shadian Incident occurred, accusations circulated that Shadian Hui were, like Du Wenxiu, attempting to establish

¹⁰¹ . Among other examples, Atwill (2005) brings up the renegade Hui general Ma Rulong, who left the multi-ethnic Islamic Pingnan State established in Dali under Du Wenxiu, defecting to the Imperial Qing forces in 1862.

an independent Muslim state (Gladney 1996: 137–140; Ma Ping 2008: 284). Jacqueline Armijo (2001) argues the Panthay Rebellion and the subsequent massacres of the Hui, which resulted in the deaths of nearly 90 percent of the Muslim population, continue to reside in oral history and social memory. These social memories inform interpretations of other Hui–Han conflicts, especially the Shadian Incident, which is often framed almost identically to how the massacres of the Panthay Rebellion were framed: as 1) Hui righteously defending themselves in the face of oppressive policies and/or 2) Hui violently reacting to Chinese sovereignty. Narratives of the Shadian Incident, in turn, are invoked in order to “silence” the contemporary actions of “unruly” Hui. For instance, Hui in Balong, in northwest Yunnan, who protested logging in their hamlet for use by another hamlet in their administrative village district, were compared unfavorably to the Shadian “troublemakers” (Hillman 2004).

Although the Yunnanese government deploys the violence of the past in order to interpret contemporary Hui–ness, such temporal strategies of alternative narratives of the Shadian Incident potentially oppose linear state narratives that seek to relegate the incident to the past. Rather than forget the violence of the Shadian Incident, most Hui in Yunnan choose to remember it, recounting it often, in complex detail, and in reference to wider historical frameworks. Like the Lolopo in Mueggler’s (2001) *Age of Wild Ghosts*, through alternative narratives of the Shadian Incident, the Hui in Yunnan re–envision time not as linear but as “a spiral through which the effects of past violence returned repeatedly to engage and transform present social relations” (Mueggler 2001: 252). This temporal strategy enabled the Lolopo to resist state attempts to silence memories of past violence and provided them with a means to articulate their pain in the hopes of healing. Moreover, this strategy made use of cultural resources such as ritual

possession in order to place the burden of responsibility for past violence squarely on the state and its agents. The past spiraled into the future, influencing present and future social relations, while the present and future returned to the past, adding meaning to it.

Similarly, in Hui-Muslim narratives of the Shadian Incident, images of righteous Hui-Muslims defending their constitutional right to religious freedom influence present-day Hui articulations of identity, actions, and so on, while, simultaneously, these images produce re-interpretations of events such as the Panthay Rebellion. These narratives actively engage with multiple pasts and futures, altering their meanings, while also claiming a distinctly Hui-Muslim narrative that resists state attempts at silencing and places the burden of the violence on the state. Critically, these temporal strategies are often used to construct narratives that vindicate Hui-Muslim distrust of the Chinese state. By dislodging the narrative from the state-produced trope of the disturbed times of the Cultural Revolution and locating it in a wider historical context, Hui-Muslim storytellers demonstrate that whether Imperial or Communist, the Chinese state is potentially dangerous for Hui and certainly not trustworthy. Strategically deployed, such narratives justify why some Yunnanese Hui, particularly those in Shadian itself, claim to be “Muslims first.” Arguably, the insistence of conservative Hui-Muslims on the religious righteousness of the Shadian “martyrs” subversively resists the state’s attempts to categorize them as Hui, an ethnic group, rather than a religious one, Muslims.

And yet, while potentially liberating, such broad historical contextualizations are, at times, extended as tropes that paradoxically construct a sense of “timelessness” and “typicality” of Hui–Han conflict narratives. Drawing synchronic comparisons between various conflicts eliminates particularities and reduces the specific causes and effects involved in the actual events

to static formulas. Moreover, such temporalities produce a myth of primordial ethnic tensions between Hui and Han that “naturally” erupt due to Hui tendencies towards violence and/or Han oppression. This myth is strategically deployed by those who are inclined to highlight the “irreconcilable” cultural and/or religious differences between Hui and Han. Similarly, some of these narratives convey a sense of “inevitability”: because of these “irreconcilable” differences between the Han and the Hui, violence “naturally” erupts between them, and there is no way to stop it. In spring 2010, for instance, I met up with a young Hui woman from Yuxi who I knew from one of the local Muslim student organizations. She recounted to me a “battle” that had happened that week between two groups of Hui and Han men south of Yuxi. She was shocked only that these men had used rifles, which, as she said, are illegal in China; the violence itself (and the media’s lack of reporting on it) did not shock her. At once naturalizing men’s propensity for violence, and the inevitability of Hui-Han violence, she scoffed, “This happens all the time. When Han and Hui men meet together, they fight.”

However, despite the prevalence of such views, we must recognize that, as Wang Jianping (1996), David Atwill (2005), and other scholars of Yunnanese history have argued, Hui-Han “inter-ethnic” conflict is far from “natural” or “inevitable”; prior to the 19th century, there is no record of such violence in Yunnan, and Han and Hui lived together peacefully. Instead, perhaps we should ask why inter-ethnic conflict is now interpreted as “natural.”¹⁰²

Catalysts and Other Points of Contention

Occasionally, dinner and drinking in someone’s private home would lead to impassioned

¹⁰² . It might also be worthwhile to consider why so many scholarly treatments of Muslims in China focus on violence (e.g., Bai Shouyi 1953; Israeli 1980, 2002; Wang 1995, 1996, 2009; Gladney 1996, 2002, 2004, 2008; Dorian et al. 1997; Lipman 1997; Armijo 2001; Kim 2004; Atwill 2005; Ma Ping 2008).

debates about the politics of being a *shaoshu minzu* in China. Among the Hui in Yunnan, such debates almost always involved various Han-Hui conflicts, especially the two most prominent in Yunnanese Hui history and social memory, the Shadian Incident and the Panthay Rebellion. Whether Hui or Han, my interlocutors typically focused on what was the “actual” catalyst for the conflict and how to interpret the conflict in discussion. Their explanations revolved around six tropes of catalysts that spark Hui-Han conflict: 1) pork contamination, 2) governmental corruption, 3) Han excesses (gambling, alcohol, pork, etc.) infuriating the (moral) Hui, 4) Hui excesses (drug trafficking, violence, arrogance, wealth) infuriating the Han, 5) irreconcilable cultural and/or religious differences and 6) arguments over women. These tropes are sometimes interwoven such as in stories in which local government corruption contributes to Han or Hui excesses. Although when recounted these tales of conflict often deploy detailed “reality effects,” we continually encounter these six tropes throughout Hui-Han conflict narratives in Yunnan, whether describing 19th century conflicts or contemporary ones.

Catalysts for the Shadian Incident in particular are variously reported and often fiercely debated, though the primary explanations fit within typical Yunnanese narrative frameworks of Hui- Han conflict. In the course of my own encounters with narratives of the Shadian Incident, both Hui and Han, the explanations provided as catalysts for the violence varied depending upon who the narrators and audiences were as well as the current political, economic and historical situations. Such contextual differences invoke Julie Cruikshank’s (1998) discussion of how oral histories are never told the same way twice; the meanings of a specific narrative shift in response to narrator intent, the audience’s understandings, social locations and various other socio-historical factors. In addition, different catalysts are strategically deployed at different moments

depending upon the narrator's goals.

When narrated by Hui, the tropes of catalysts that allegedly sparked the Shadian Incident tend to be confined to 1) pork contamination, 2) governmental corruption, 3) Han excesses and 4) irreconcilable cultural and/or religious differences. Typically, the tale will involve a combination of these, for example:

During the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), the government installed Han cadres in Shadian. Now, these Han cadres were corrupt and immoral- they regularly drank and gambled late into the night. Worse, they were incredibly disrespectful of Hui cultural traditions. They even threw pork bones into the Hui well. When the Hui villagers protested this behavior, the situation only worsened- the Han cadres threw a pig's head into the mosque during Friday prayers. Each time the Hui protested such actions, the situation between the Hui villagers and the Han cadres only escalated.

In the narrative above, the corruption and excesses of Han governmental officials, combined with their disrespect for Hui cultural traditions, specifically those regarding pork, eventually erupted in violence. In contrast, other narratives strategically emphasized Hui intolerance of Han cultural practices and/or Hui tendencies towards violence. Anti-Hui Han, for example, sometimes described how illegal Hui drug trafficking had been the “real” catalyst that sparked the Hui to “rebel” against the CCP, allegedly in order to protect their profits from the cross-border opium trade.¹⁰³ A few former CCP officials suggested that Hui in Shadian had “experienced difficulties transitioning from feudalism to socialism” and that “cultural differences” (*wenhua chayi* 文化差异), namely, the practice of Islam, had exacerbated such a

¹⁰³ . Despite the proliferation of such rumors, they appear to be distorted at best. Some Shadian Hui conceded that it was possible that drug traffic had indeed passed through Shadian at some time in the distant past, but they insisted that that had ceased long before the Cultural Revolution, if indeed it ever existed, and that there were little “profits” of any kind to gain during that era.

transition. One Han official in Kunming explained that the Hui had a history of “colluding with foreign imperialists,” which he said made sense given that they were foreigners, and that it was this history that necessitated the P.L.A.’s violent response.¹⁰⁴

One of the other major points of contention was the number of those killed during the Incident. Official government figures state that “more than 900” Hui people were killed. Indeed, the government-funded Martyr’s Monument is inscribed with both a short account of the events, and the names of over 900 deceased victims. Hui people throughout Yunnan, however, dispute these numbers, most by arguing that substantially more were killed. According to Ma Ping’s (2008) written account, “Le génocide de musulmans dans le village de Shadian au Yunnan,” the number of those killed is a “closely guarded secret,” though estimates suggest at least 1,000 people died. Ma Ping continues, “As for the wounded, it’s difficult to make an accurate estimate. After the ‘pacification,’ the village of Shadian looked like a heap of ruins. Here and there, you could see pieces of arms and legs shredded. The air reeked with the nauseating stench of rotting corpses” (283). All of my interlocutors contended that over 1,000 people died, with most insisting that the number was in the thousands. One young man who worked at a mosque in Kunming claimed that “millions” had perished “just as in the Du Wenxiu Rebellion,” but given the small population of Shadian and its surrounds, that seems highly unlikely.

Other differences in narrative details, including how the incident itself is labeled, also

¹⁰⁴ . This official was not the only person I met who claimed that, for example, Du Wenxiu had dispatched his nephew to plead for help from the British to fight against the Qing during the Panthay Rebellion. As evidence for the Hui’s foreignness, he pointed out that the ethnonym *Hui* 回, with its etymological meaning of “to return,” originally referred to the Hui’s foreignness. However, it should be noted that prior to the *minzu shibie* of 1950s, the term included all Muslims in China, not only the ones now known as “Hui.”

differ depending upon the specific context of the narration. In my own encounters with the tale in Yunnan, people have variously labeled the incident as a “revolt” (*qiyi* 起义), a “battle” (*zhanyi* 战役), as “suppression” (*zhenya* 镇压) or as “oppression” (*yapo* 压迫).¹⁰⁵ Each choice in wording strategically emphasizes a particular political and historical perspective. The use of the term “revolt,” for instance, hearkens back to other historical incidents between the Hui and Han, including the Panthay Rebellion (1856-1873), usually rendered in Chinese as *Xinan Huimin Qiyi* 西南回民起义 (Revolt of the Southwestern Hui) or as *Du Wenxiu Qiyi* 杜文秀起义 (Revolt of Du Wenxiu). The term “battle,” on the other hand, implies a situation between equally armed militias rather than one which involved civilians. Whereas the term “suppression” is typically used to refer to the suppression of counterrevolutionaries (*zhenya fangeming* 镇压反革命), implying wrongdoing on the part of the villagers, the term “oppression” condemns the actions of the state. Trouillot (1995) and others (e.g., Duara 1995; Ricœur 2004) have demonstrated that the very act of naming an event “silences” other interpretations of that event. In historical production, power shapes both “what happened” and “what is said to have happened” and in the process, silences some voices while privileging others. History and silence, therefore, are created in tandem. Because the very act of choosing to unearth certain silences itself produces other silences, the choices we make regarding which silences we choose to unearth are always political, informed by our own positions. Thus, narratives do not only construct versions of

¹⁰⁵ . Although in his 2008 account of the Incident, Ma Ping, Hui scholar and head of the Institute for Hui and Islamic Studies at the Ningxia Academy of Social Sciences, uses the term “pacification,” which he offsets with quotations, neither my interlocutors nor the official written documents to which I had access used that term. Visually, at least in my mind, that term invokes the “leveling” or “flattening” inherent in the word *ping* 平. In this sense, it is quite similar to the word “suppression.”

history; they are always also involved in negotiating complex political positions and social relations.

State Power, Official History and Social Memory

The Chinese state and other actors — local participants, scholars, journalists, and so forth — all strategically craft and manipulate narratives of events like the Shadian Incident. However, official state sanctions endow such narratives with unique attributes, such as the authority they invoke through claims to “truth” and “power,” along with their ability to circulate more widely than unofficial narratives, through published accounts, media, and propaganda. As Jing Jun (1996) points out, “A special difficulty in studying social memory in contemporary China arises from the attempts of Maoist social engineers to dictate remembrance and forgetting” (18). Even in contemporary China, the state manages social memories and histories at the levels of the archives, mass media, education and even the personal (Jing 1996). Access to historical documents in the archives is restricted. State censorship of publications, manipulation of educational materials and the circulation of propaganda conspire to produce particular kinds of social memory and forgetting. At the personal level, intimidation — both real and imagined — as well as punishment of those who publicize “unwelcome treatments of the past” shape social memory, forgetting and history (Jing 1996: 18). As Trouillot (1995) reminds us, both processes of remembering and of forgetting are active means for shaping the relationships between the past and the present; “one ‘silences’ a fact or an individual as a silencer silences a gun” (48).

According to Armijo (2007), no complete account of the Shadian Incident has ever been published in China, though brief scholarly reports have been published outside of China (e.g.,

Gladney 1996; Wang Jianping 1996; Israeli 2002; Ma Ping 2008) and versions of the tale are well-known throughout Yunnan.¹⁰⁶ In 1989, Ma Shaomei, a Hui leader in Shadian, published an account of the incident, although, according to Israeli (2002), it is not complete as many critical facts were omitted due to censorship.¹⁰⁷ According to my interlocutors in Shadian, all families received a copy of this “official” account, printed in the *Shadian Shiliao* 沙甸史料 (Historical Materials of Shadian), a text that in 1989 was distributed across the administrative district, though few people could locate theirs. Because this account was published by a Hui leader involved in the incident, it claims a uniquely “authentic” voice in which the supposed gap between “the facts” and “the narrative of those facts” is hypothetically minimized, at least in the minds of some of its audience. Such censored reporting by an eyewitness serves to further “silence the past,” “fictively” crafting a narrative that conforms to the demands of the state while satisfying a need for “authenticity” created through “reality effects.” At the same time, because this is an officially endorsed narrative, it gains currency that unofficial narratives lack: state authority coupled with mass circulation. To what extent does such censorship enhance the sovereignty of the Chinese state? In allowing this tale to be published on the condition that it omit certain details, the state reinforces its own sovereignty while also affirming the authenticity of a particular narrative. Because the state does not entirely censor this narrative – because the

¹⁰⁶ . Gladney (1996) suggests that the tale of the Shadian Incident is in fact well-known throughout China. He specifically describes its recounting by Hui in Northwest China (137-140).

¹⁰⁷ . Ma Shaomei was secretary of the local Communist Youth League until he was arrested in 1974. Later he and other Hui leaders established a local Hui militia in which he served as political commissar. Ma escaped death during the Incident because he evacuated children and the elderly from the village, but he was later arrested, tortured and denounced as a “counterrevolutionary” (Dillon 1999: 165; Israeli 2002). It was only in 1987 that the Yunnan Provincial Party Committee finally exonerated him (Israeli 2002: 265).

“facts” of the narrative are negotiated rather than blindly enforced – this narrative gains more authority and authenticity, and state sovereignty is strengthened. Confirmation of specific details by other participants in the Shadian Incident as well as the state’s acknowledgment of wrongdoing collude in reinforcing this narrative.

Such state management of official histories is in fact one of many “civilizing mechanisms” in modern China that serve to produce particular kinds of subjects through constructing hegemonic “regimes of truth” (Foucault 1980: 133).¹⁰⁸ Natalie Zemon Davis (1987) underscores similar “civilizing processes” inherent in the production of pardon tales in 16th century France: “The habit of language insisted upon in the letters of remission and the roles in which supplicants were required to present themselves were among the civilizing mechanisms of the early modern French state, reminding people subjectively of the locus of power, even while never silencing competing modes in which they dramatized their actions or mishaps” (58). Through his exclusive right to pardon capital offenses, the French king simultaneously subjugated competing authorities and strengthened his own sovereignty.

In fact, Davis emphasizes that the “the strengthening of sovereignty involved the king’s will pushing beyond the law” (58). The “complicity between sovereign and subject” (gaps in remission tales [between the true and the plausible] and gaps between what the king actually pardoned and what was legally pardonable) produced a dual reputation of letters of remission: as both a needed mechanism for peace and a sham (58). This reputation of letters of remission generated a “field of doubt” in which “competing modes,” such as folk tales, gossip, pamphlets,

¹⁰⁸ . 3 “‘Truth’ is linked in a circular relation with systems of power which produce and sustain it, and to effects of power which it induces and which extend it. A ‘regime’ of truth” (Foucault 1980: 133).

and literature, could thrive (52-58). Thus the recognition – produced through the legal process itself – of the “fictive” involved in crafting pardon tales also enabled French subjects to create a space in which they could weave alternative narratives. Similarly, though the Chinese state has the exclusive right to endorse “official” histories, the complicity between the state and authors involved in censorship creates a “field of doubt” surrounding official narratives, thereby enabling “competing modes” and alternative narratives to flourish.

Written History and “Competing Modes”: Establishing Authority and Authenticity

“We don’t control our own history; our history is in the hands of others. Since few Hui of the older generation can write, it is inevitable that our history is written not by those who know it, but by those who don’t” (Armijo 2001: 295).¹⁰⁹

The quotation above attests to how written documents and “history” are intricately linked, at least in the realm of (most) Chinese imaginations. The authority of the written word in China far surpasses that of “competing modes” of history and social memory. I speculate that this is at least in part because written records of Chinese history date back to the Shang Dynasty (ca. 1550 BCE - ca. 1046 BCE). Even though scholars debate the continuity of this imagined “China,” the historical imagination conjured through the authority of the written word and enhanced through the social currency of texts like Sima Qian’s *Shiji* (*Historical Records*) – not to mention the continuous propaganda regarding 5,000 years of Chinese history that circulates in CCTV documentaries, radio shows, and even in online debates via Sina Weibo – certainly impacts Chinese notions of historicity. Subaltern anxiety about the lack of a “true” written history, then, is very real. Who decides what constitutes history and what is “merely” myth? As

¹⁰⁹ . This was stated by one of Armijo’s Hui informants in discussing social memories of the massacres of 1873 which followed the Panthay Rebellion.

Herzfeld (1991) asks, who owns history? These questions matter, especially to people like Armijo's Hui informant (quoted above) for whom illiteracy denotes disenfranchisement.

Although Scott (1990) concedes that "the capacity of dominant groups to prevail... in defining and constituting what counts as the public transcript and what as offstage is... no small part of their power" (14), he argues that the dominated contest their domination even in public transcripts in which we can discern "ideological resistance [that] is disguised, muted and veiled for safety's sake" (137). Scott implies that such "hidden transcripts" even lurk in official written discourse – folk tales, poetry, literature as well as written historical texts all potentially conceal alternative narratives (226). Our task is to unearth these hidden transcripts, allowing them to more "loudly" contest the dominant.

In "Reconstructing Yi history from Yi records," Wu Gu (2001) attempts to contest dominant (Han) understandings of Yi history by reclaiming both Yi history and the invention of writing for the Yi. Wu contends that both Yi history and the origin of Yi writing can be traced back ten thousand years (26-34). In his creation of an alternative, contested narrative of Yi history, we detect the centrality of writing in Chinese history-making. It seems that in order for Wu to claim authority and authenticity for his narrative, he must rely on written sources; in fact, history for Wu seems to be largely defined *as* written sources. This Yi re-claiming of the origins of writing reconstructs an ancient Yi identity that affirms contemporary Yi-ness while also situating the Yi "above" the Han Chinese in the evolutionary timeline. Ultimately, despite Wu's emphasis on written sources as necessary for re-constructing history, he relies on a variety of sources – written, oral and material – in order to reconstruct Yi history.

Shahid Amin (1996) implies that the influence of social memory primarily flows unidirectionally: official discourses infiltrate individual memories. Scott (1990), Wu (2001), and Davis (1987), however, all demonstrate in different ways that history and social memory are multiply constructed and contested at various levels. As Davis argues, “we have here not an impermeable ‘official culture’ imposing criteria on ‘popular culture’ but cultural exchange conducted under the king’s rules” (112). Such cultural exchange involves various “competing modes” – oral traditions, gossip, poetry, literature, material culture, gestures – which simultaneously influence and are influenced by more dominant modes of historical production.¹¹⁰

Although Chinese historiography emphasizes the importance of authentic written documents, the production of these documents and, consequently, of Chinese history itself, in actuality took place in just such an atmosphere of cultural exchange. Even the classic Chinese historiography, Sima Qian’s *Shiji*, both influenced and was influenced by literary and oral narrative forms. Gu Jiegang and other proponents of the “Doubting Antiquity School” (*Yigupai*) in the early 20th century in fact critiqued the inclusions in histories of myths such as *Sanhuang Wudi* (The Three Sovereigns and Five Emperors - mythological rulers of early China). Oral traditions, then certainly impacted the production of early Chinese historical texts. Additionally, contrary to popular images of elite historical production that was isolated from the lower classes, in actuality, the literati and the lower classes were also engaged in processes of cultural exchange (see Sima and Watson 1993).

Correspondingly, in his reconstruction of 16th century popular culture, Ginzburg (1992), relying primarily on transcriptions of two Inquisition trials, illustrates how such cultural

¹¹⁰ . On the relationship between gestures and social memory see Connerton (1989).

exchange occurred among various modes of historical production and among different classes. Ginzburg focuses on the story of one man, Domenico Scandella, known as Menocchio, a well-read, opinionated miller in a Friulian village. In response to Menocchio's unusual, "blasphemous" cosmology, Ginzburg attempts to ascertain the sources behind Menocchio's ideas. Eventually he concludes that Menocchio's cosmology emerged out of "a millenarian cosmological tradition that... combined myth with science" as well as through Menocchio's own interpretations of various texts he read (58). Interestingly, Ginzburg asserts that Menocchio did not merely absorb written texts; rather, "he projected onto the written page, elements taken from oral tradition" (112). In this case, oral traditions actively shaped interpretations of written texts.

Similarly Scott (1990) demonstrates how oral traditions influence and even subvert dominant narratives, arguing that it is the "elasticity of oral culture that allows it to carry fugitive meanings in comparative safety" (160-166). A potentially "seditious" oral narrative, for instance, can be performed in multiple ways, depending upon the context and upon the receptiveness of the particular audience (162). The power of oral narratives in fact lies in their "elasticity": so long as they can be contextually altered and appropriated, they retain the capacity to subversively transform dominant narratives, even written ones. Once oral narratives are written down, however, they become "fixed" and thereby more difficult (though by no means impossible) to alter and appropriate for the specific purposes of the present. Finally, although specific relationships between dominant and subordinate groups change historically, in the era of Ginzburg's case study, "there existed... a circular relationship composed of reciprocal influences, which traveled from low to high as well as from high to low" (1992: xii). Therefore, not only are

oral, material and written traditions potentially mutually interactive, but so are influences related to class, ethnic groups, etc.

With regard to narratives of the Shadian Incident, Ma Shaomei's (1989) official, state-sanctioned written history certainly shapes other contemporary narratives, whether the narrator herself has encountered the written form or not. The details of the written form, which add "reality effects," authority, and authenticity, have been appropriated and circulated in rumors and other oral re-countings of the tale. And yet, such appropriations are always strategic: these details are not indiscriminately harnessed, but rather thoughtfully adapted in ways that add significance to a specific telling. Moreover, in reading the official written account of the Incident, Hui and Han agents alike add their own interpretations, details and, like Menocchio, project their own understandings, derived from "competing modes," onto the written form. These re-readings shape re-tellings of the narrative which, depending upon the particular context, alternately subvert, negotiate, or contest dominant forms. Furthermore, cultural interactions between Hui and Han, villagers and urbanites, state officials and the *laobaixing* 老百姓 (common people) all inform these narratives, so that, for instance, Hui personal experiences with Han are, at times, woven into specific narratives. Narratives of the Shadian Incident, then, are implicated in complex processes of cultural exchange between different forms of history and social memory, as well as between other hierarchical differences: class, ethnicity, social status, and so on.

In analyzing the interactions and contrasts between specific written texts and oral narratives, Cruikshank (1998) reminds us that "accounts of the past... are not just abstract objects for study, texts for analysis; their telling is bound up in social-historical and power relations" (73). Thus, in recognizing how "the past" is actively produced through multiple layers

of cultural exchange and socio-historical conditions, we must not neglect to also account for unequal power relations. Duara (1995) advises us to attend to “the repressive teleologies of linear and simple, causal histories” while also avoiding constructionist pitfalls that deny history’s claims to truth and “factual” accounts (5). In positing “bifurcated” history as an attempt “to salvage historicity,” he demonstrates how through incorporating multiple, alternative histories, we can simultaneously construct more complex, meaningful versions of the past while also empowering “silenced” voices that contest national narratives. In doing so, we illuminate the ideological processes involved in “silencing” memory and history as well as the ways in which powerful narratives shape the present by making use of the “past.”

Cruikshank (1998) cites both Innis and Bakhtin as appreciating the “open-ended possibilities inherent in oral dialogue and the thoroughness with which totalitarian regimes worked to suppress it” (72). As Jing (1996) similarly describes, official Chinese state efforts to erase social memories of the literal and figurative violence enacted upon the Kong lineage and other citizens, while powerful, are “not always effective” and certainly never complete (171). Alternative narratives, then, provide opportunities for challenging hegemonies and yet, they are often strategically incorporated into those very hegemonies. Moreover, whether alternative narratives challenge hegemonic ones or become subsumed into them, we must account for how “*hierarchies of narrative*” privilege particular narrative forms (Cruikshank 1998: 74). Although oral narratives of the Shadian Incident are disregarded by the state, they continue to exert significant influence throughout Yunnan Province, particularly in the ways in which they still reflect and reproduce the relations between the Chinese state and its Hui-Muslim subject-actors. In this regard, I wish to emphasize that narrative itself is a part of the process of these conflicts: it

is productive and consequential for both social life and individual experience.

Conclusion

Recently, on the night of March 1, 2014, a band of knife-wielding individuals clothed in black indiscriminately attacked civilians at the Kunming Railway Station, killing 29 and injuring more than 140 others. Reports have circulated that such an attack is unprecedented in peaceful Yunnan, and that the attackers were Uyghur Separatists affiliated with the Eastern Turkestan Islamic Movement. However, such attacks are not unprecedented, and, unsurprisingly, local officials have not yet publicly confirmed their suspicions. During the 2008 Olympics, for instance, a series of bus bombings – initially linked to the Eastern Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) – shocked the usually tranquil city of Kunming, and reports that the perpetrators were “Muslims” soon heightened ethnic tensions between the Han majority and the Hui. Based on what friends and interlocutors in Kunming have told me, the March 1st attacks have had a similar effect. To further complicate these matters, the World Uyghur Congress has denied the existence of the ETIM, while Yunnanese Hui, anti-government Han, and foreign experts alike speculate that the Chinese government fabricated the organization in order to justify persecution of Uyghurs.

Although narratives of these recent attacks differ considerably from those of the Shadian Incident, particularly given the fact that Hui-Muslims are depicted as neither the perpetrators nor the victims of this violence, these new narratives are nevertheless interpreted with reference to local stories that have been circulating long before these events occurred. For my Hui interlocutors in Kunming, narratives of these recent attacks provide further evidence that Han

people misunderstand the Hui, thereby once again reifying those “ethnic boundaries,”¹¹¹ and that there are solid reasons to mistrust the government. Anxieties about one’s own neighbors, coupled with a lack of reliable information via state-sanctioned media and a flurry of dubious reports via sites like Sina Weibo, have spurred the creation of conspiracy theories. The proliferation of such varying conspiracy theories regarding the ETIM and other vaguely defined “Muslims” act similar to Hui-Han conflict narratives: both discourses reflect and re-produce the ethno-religious relations in question, while simultaneously inciting mistrust of the Chinese state and the state-sanctioned media. Given local histories, fraught state-minority relations, and justified suspicion of media, such conspiracy theories are a valid, if imaginative, form of local social critique. Finally, it is likely that if Uyghurs become imagined as the primary Muslim “Other” in Yunnan, as they are in Xinjiang, narratives of Han-Hui conflict will shift markedly in meaning, though precisely how these meanings will shift remains undetermined.

¹¹¹ . See Barth 1969.

Chapter Five

Kowtowing to Beijing, Embracing the Umma: Yunnanese Hajj Narratives of Trans/National Unity

Introduction

In May of 2010, perched in a plush armchair in my friend Su Jing's luxurious apartment in downtown Kunming, I listened to her uncle, Mr. Ma, a wealthy businessman, recount his 2007 hajj journey. As he chain-smoked and I sipped cups of *pu'er cha* 普洱茶 (Pu'er tea, grown in Yunnan), he described the onerous process of applying to go on the hajj:

It took over five years from the first time I applied until I was finally able to go on the hajj. On top of the four *wan* 万 (approximately 6,000 USD) I spent on the hajj tour itself, I probably spent another two or three wan on bribes... Once accepted, I read lots of books about going on the hajj — pilgrimage handbooks and stories of the hajj written by Huizu... Before we left on the hajj, the Yunnan Islamic Association required us to participate in a day of training so that we would be well-prepared, and not make a fool of ourselves abroad. We Huizu, we might know about Islam here, but in other countries, it's different. We learned how to pray properly, what to do at different points on the hajj, and how to live in a foreign country. It was lots of work to prepare for the hajj, lots of money, and lots of hassle, but it was one of the most important events of my life.

Like almost all of the Yunnanese hajjis with whom I spoke, Mr. Ma repeatedly emphasized the transnational unity he felt with Muslims worldwide while there. Gesturing with his Honghe cigarette in hand, he explained:

As a Muslim, when you go on the hajj, you realize the unity of all Muslims, all over the world. We came from China, other Muslims came from Pakistan, Malaysia, Syria, Lebanon, even Europe and America — all the countries of the world — but we are all the same, all Muslims. That unity and harmony, we all felt it, we all experienced it. You can't understand — you will just have to go yourself if you want to understand. We all wore white clothing, and even though some prayed differently than

others, that was okay. Everyone accepted it, everyone smiled. For example, here we raise our hands above our head two times when praying — it is forbidden to raise one's hands three times. But in Mecca, I saw many pilgrims raise their hands three times, and no one was bothered. Everyone would smile and forgive each other for small differences and even mistakes, like if one person bumped into another, they both would just smile. We could all greet each other *Assalamu alaikum* and hear *Wa alaikum assalam* in response. We came from different places, but we were all the same, brothers and sisters, united as one family.

Throughout my two years of fieldwork among Hui in Yunnan, I heard similar stories of the hajj experience: the conventional narrative described how local Hui overcame the substantial bureaucratic hurdles, financial burdens, and political obstacles to going on the hajj, and how once there, they experienced spiritual transcendence, along with unity and harmony with their Muslim “brothers and sisters” from around the world. When describing these bureaucratic hurdles and hassles, my hajji interlocutors repeatedly stressed the considerable sum of money they spent on application fees and bribes, along with the seemingly interminable process: at minimum, the application requires a one-year waiting period; some of my interlocutors waited many years. Many of my interlocutors explained that as elderly people, they felt this lengthy waiting period deeply, conscious that they could die at any moment without having fulfilled their lifelong goal of performing the hajj. When they were finally granted permission, they therefore felt a tremendous sense of relief, joy, and gratitude to both Allah and the State.

In addition, a significant portion of the hajjis I interviewed also expressed intense pride in being Chinese, and reported that after going on the hajj they were even more aware of their own “Chineseness” vis-à-vis non-Chinese Muslims. This went beyond externally imposed identification engendered by traveling abroad. Rather, this Chineseness tells us more about the ways in which the state creates a certain kind of hajji person. As Mr. Ma explained:

During my time in Saudi Arabia, I felt so proud to be Chinese; whenever I met someone whom I couldn't converse with, I flashed my special hajj ID card [issued by the China Islamic Association] with the Chinese flag on it. They would smile, give me a thumbs-up.

Later, responding to a question about what surprised him the most on the hajj, he exclaimed:

Everything in Saudi Arabia is made in China! All of their goods, they're all made in China, even the skullcaps and hijabs, and the water vessels for partial ablutions (Ch. *xiaojing* 小净; Ar. *wudu* الوضوء). They're all made in China! Going there, I realized that Chinese culture and products really are everywhere, throughout the world. More than anything, though, I realized that we Chinese are the most advanced and civilized, much more advanced than most people from Muslim countries. Many of our Muslim brothers and sisters from other countries are poor and backwards— even their ways of thinking are backwards. Some of them are so poor, they wear rags and sleep on the streets. They are filthy and pitiful... And even Saudi Arabia, an advanced country... was not as clean or as advanced as China. Perhaps during the Prophet's time... but when we were there, almost everyone in my tour group got sick from the heat or the food. Even the food there was not clean— it was *qingzhen* 清真 (halal), but it gave everyone diarrhea.

In such narratives, Yunnanese hajjis simultaneously positioned themselves as 1) a specific minority nationality within the Chinese nation-state, Huizu; as 2) transnational Muslim members of the Umma; and as 3) patriotic, proud Chinese citizens.¹¹² Yunnanese Hui-Muslims perceived themselves as dually modern: relying on an imagined past of Islamic advancement and modernity, they positioned themselves *within* China's modernization narrative, advancing ahead of the Han and other non-Muslim *minzu*, who lacked claims to a glorious Islamic past, and ahead of non-Chinese Muslims, who lacked claims to China's ascendancy in global capitalism.

¹¹² . Note that these positions of unity do not include “Chinese Muslims” as a multi-ethnic entity. Although imaginings of a nationally unified *Zhongguo Musilin* 中国穆斯林 do exist, especially in Muslim enclaves like Shadian, the hajj application process and experience works against a Pan-China Muslim unity, and instills ethnic tensions among different Muslim groups within China. See below for a more in-depth discussion of this process. Also see Mao Yufeng's (2011) article “A Muslim Vision for the Chinese Nation: Chinese Pilgrimage Missions to Mecca During World War II.”

Moreover, although they were compelled to submit to specific state requirements in order to participate in the hajj, Yunnanese Hui-Muslims, far from passively submitting to Chinese sovereignty, instead actively constructed their own Hui-Muslim forms of nationalisms, modernities, and identities.

Recent scholarship on ethnic and religious minorities in China focuses primarily on sovereign/subject relations and domestic forms of Chinese nationalism. Although this scholarship provides a crucial perspective on the ways in which domestic nationalisms are produced, it nevertheless neglects to account for the ways in which transnational processes and practices shift state/minority relationships and ethnic minority forms of trans/nationalism. Scholarship on Chinese forms of transnationalism (Duara 1997; Ong 1997; Ong 1999; Ong and Nonini 1997; Yang 1997) on the other hand, focuses on overseas Chinese communities, not on the processes of localized transnationalism that currently affect ethnic minorities within China's territorial borders. In this chapter, I seek to re-situate Chinese nationalism within a transnationalized space from the perspectives of those who live within China's borders, attending to the localized processes inherent in the ways in which these trans/nationalisms shape the lives of China's ethnic minorities. How does transnationalism shape state/minority relations within China, and specifically, how does the Chinese nation-state, through localized processes, engender sentimental affect within its transnationalist minority citizens? Without such an understanding, we not only fail to understand the complexities and intertwined nature of these trans/nationalisms, but also continue to silence peripheral peoples.

In this chapter, I focus on these issues by investigating the negotiation of sovereign/subject relationships through Yunnanese Hui-Muslim hajj experiences. Since China's economic

reforms in 1978, the numbers of Chinese Muslims who have participated in the hajj pilgrimage have soared, from nineteen in 1979 to over 13,000 in 2012. The Chinese government, however, closely monitors these hajj experiences. By examining the hajj experiences of Hui-Muslims in Yunnan Province, this chapter addresses how Hui-Muslim nationalisms are collaboratively constructed through the tensions between their dual peripherality and the varied techniques of Chinese sovereignty. Drawing on interviews with Yunnanese hajjis, I examine local meanings and narratives of the hajj experience and of the process of dealing with its localized bureaucratic apparatus. A brief study of the Chinese Muslim magazines, pilgrimage handbooks, hajj memoirs, and children's books will supplement this, particularly since these texts highlight how the P.R.C.'s official policy of *Aiguo Aijiao* 爱国爱教 ("patriotism first, then religious devotion") has come to mean that for Yunnanese Hui-Muslims, "nationalism" was not only a requirement for participation in the hajj but also one aspect of being a "good" Muslim.

A contingent of sociologists has suggested recently that transnational forces challenge the very concept of the nation-state (e.g., see Bloemraad, Korteweg, and Yurdakul 2008). In particular, Islam is often misrepresented as a monolithic transnational threat to national sovereignty. By showing how the Chinese state is co-opting transnational movements to solidify its own position, my research on Yunnanese hajjis destabilizes the notion that transnationalism threatens sovereignty. In this case, national sovereignty was strengthened not only through the P.R.C.'s allowance for and monitoring of the hajj, but also by strategic discursive and practical positioning of the state as "caretakers" of hajjis. I argue that for Yunnanese hajjis the hajj experience was dually transformative: through linguistic barriers and state-organized tour groups along with China's place in global capitalism, it enhanced one's consciousness as a Chinese

citizen; through spirituality, and encounters with non-Chinese Muslims, it heightened one's consciousness as a member of the transnational Umma. As we shall see, these positions were not mutually exclusive but rather mutually reinforcing. Moreover, although they were compelled to submit to specific state requirements in order to participate in the hajj, Yunnanese Hui-Muslims, far from passively submitting to Chinese sovereignty, instead actively constructed their own forms of trans/nationalisms, modernities, and identities, shaped by the hajj experience itself. And yet, this agency was carefully and creatively negotiated between and among various actor-subjects: the act of submission to the state became a means of empowering oneself locally, while, at the same time, the bureaucratic process required to perform the hajj engendered in accepted hajjis a sense of gratitude to the Chinese state and to Allah.

In contrast to the aforementioned scholarly arguments, the decentralization of the nation state has paradoxically strengthened state sovereignty by enabling local ties to be re-imagined as national ones. The localization of the bureaucratic process of the hajj application, training, and even the journey itself, which is taken with tour groups comprised of one's *tongxiang* 同乡 (fellow people from one's hometown) has profoundly altered who performs the hajj, and its meanings for those who perform it and for those who are denied permissions.¹¹³ In Yunnan, the localization of the hajj bureaucratic process democratized the opportunity to perform the hajj, galvanized local religious reforms, sparked critiques of local corruption, and, interestingly, engendered a sense of gratitude to the nation as a whole.

Below, I first provide the historical and political background necessary for understanding the processes involved, then I address how unraveling the formation of Hui-Muslim trans/

¹¹³ . Some wealthy Yunnanese Hui who were denied P.R.C. authorization to perform the hajj did so illegally through Thailand or Malaysia.

nationalisms through hajj experiences critically informs our understandings of sovereign/subject relations both within China and more generally. Once this background has been sufficiently established, I first analyze the ways in which the bureaucratic processes of applying to perform the hajj engender sentimental affect and then turn to unpacking narratives of the hajj elicited through interviews and conversations. My overarching aims are: 1) to decenter the dominant narratives of Chinese nationalism and articulate their multiple and intertwined natures; 2) to re-situate this nationalist discourse within both transnationalized spaces and localized ones; 3) to highlight the agency of minority nationalities in their interactions with the Chinese state and in creating their own nationalisms, modernities, and identities; and 4) to investigate the ways in which sovereignties engender sentimental affect among actor-subjects. Like the shifting subject positions this chapter seeks to articulate, these aims are intertwined throughout.

Drawing on Uradyn Bulag's (2010) notion of collaborative nationalism, I argue that the triadic relationships between and among three major actors — 1) Yunnanese Hui-Muslims as a minority nationality; 2) the Chinese state, and 3) the Islamic world as an imagined Self/Other — are collaboratively constructed, and that the articulation of one form of nationalism does not negate the other; rather, they are expressed and experienced in tandem, and, for the Hui, they are mutually constitutive and constituting.

In his work on Mongolian nationalism within China, Bulag writes of relationships of enmity and friendship — in his case studies, Inner Mongolian nationalisms were collaboratively constructed with regards to relationships with the Chinese nation-state and with Others, particularly “enemies” of China, such as Japan or Russia, who also competed for Mongolian “friendship.” These tensions between two more dominant national powers enabled Inner

Mongolian nationalists to negotiate their own positions more actively. Relations between and among the Hui, the Chinese state, and the broader Islamic world operate similarly, but in this case, China is trying to cultivate “friendship” with both its Muslim minority citizens and with the rest of the Islamic world. Historically and today, China has used the hajj as a diplomatic mission with the goal of fostering relationships with Islamic nations, ideally relationships that will result in stronger economic ties, especially to the Middle East. As the most “acculturated” and Sinicized of China’s ten Muslim minority nationalities, the state perceives the Hui as uniquely able to fulfill this *guanxi*-building role.

Historical and Political Background of Chinese Hajj Journeys

Since China’s economic reforms in 1978, the numbers of Chinese Muslims who have participated in the hajj pilgrimage have soared, from nineteen in 1979 to over 13,000 in 2012 (Gladney 2004:316-317).¹¹⁴ According to Wang Jianping (1992), more than 1000 Yunnanese Hui-Muslims applied to perform the hajj between 1985 and 1995, but only 200 were granted permission to do so, and that at their own expense (364).¹¹⁵ When substantial numbers of Yunnanese Hui-Muslims began to go on the hajj in the late 1990s, they would often circumvent the bureaucratic hajj application process in China and go through Thailand or Malaysia instead.¹¹⁶ Muslims in Northwest China would similarly go through Pakistan. By 2004, these numbers of un-regulated Chinese hajjis had become sizable enough that the central government, through the

¹¹⁴ . Hajj journeys from China have occurred since at least the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644), and historically, many famous hajjis have been Yunnanese Muslims. Zheng He, the well-known Ming Dynasty mariner and descendant of Sayyid Ajjal Shams al-Din Omar, is said to be a hajji, as are his grandfather and great-grandfather.

¹¹⁵ . In 1989, the Islamic Association of China arranged the first chartered flights to Mecca for the hajj; approximately 1,000 hajjis went that year (Wang 1992:364).

¹¹⁶ . Based on my fieldwork in Yunnan, some still do this. That, however, is another paper.

Islamic Association of China (*Zhongguo Yisilanjiao Xiehui* 中国伊斯兰教协会), the State Council of Ethnic Affairs (*Guojia Minzu Shiwu Weiyuanhui* 国家民族事务委员会) and the State Bureau of Religious Affairs (*Guojia Zongjiao Shiwuju* 国家宗教事务局), began to require that all hajjis participate in state-organized tour groups to Mecca.

State agents justified these regulations through the rhetoric of safety concerns: hajj journeys endangered the health and well-being of elderly, Sinophone hajjis, whose lack of Arabic language skills, international travel experience, and other cultural capital also placed them in danger of being ripped off, and accidentally squandering their retirement funds. Government-organized tours, agents claimed, ensured that hajjis would be well-cared for, and would guarantee a less expensive hajj journey. Hajj tours, organized by officials at the local branches of the Islamic Association of China, were staffed with experienced, Arabic-speaking hajji leaders, medical personnel, and other employees who would help guarantee the safety, comfort, and security of the hajjis so that if, for instance, the air-conditioning in their tents malfunctioned, there would be enough ice on hand to keep the hajjis cool, and medical staff to prevent and treat heatstroke. State agents also claimed that the Saudi Arabian government had requested that the Chinese government require hajjis to go as members of tour groups.¹¹⁷

In 2007, the number of officially organized hajjis from China surpassed 10,000 for the first time, and has been growing exponentially every year since. In 2012, over 13,800 hajjis from China flew to Mecca via 41 charter flights, operated by China Eastern Airlines and organized by

¹¹⁷ . Some of my interlocutors contested whether or not the Saudi Arabian government had actually required this, and I have been unable to verify it. According to the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Hajj visa regulations, visas for hajjis are issued only through licensed travel agencies, not to individuals.

the Islamic Association of China.¹¹⁸

This exponential growth in the numbers of Chinese hajjis is due in part to the ways in which “modernity” is imagined in China and in part to the experiences of modernity in the form of China’s modernization project. On the individual level, economic and policy changes since the reform era have significantly increased the per capita income and standard of living, while the relaxation of religious restrictions in many (but not all) areas has helped propel a widespread religious renaissance throughout China. Therefore increasingly greater numbers of potential hajjis possess not only the disposable income necessary to perform the hajj but also the desire to do so.

This desire is cultivated through “modernity” as imagined through a constellation of traits, including mobility, availability of mass consumer products, spatial interconnectedness, technology, new media, and other symbols. Fast food, Coca Cola, world music, and the internet were among modernity’s many emblems in China (e.g., see Watson 2006); for Hui-Muslims in Yunnan, the ostentatious architecture of Abraj al-Bait; brightly colored, rhinestone-encrusted hijabs; and consumption of Middle Eastern foodstuffs similarly evoked imaginings of “modernity,” and sparked an accompanying yearning for what it symbolizes: prosperity, status, and cosmopolitan cultural capital. In my interviews and conversations with returned Yunnanese hajjis, they explicitly linked such yearnings for modernity to their desire to perform the hajj. Performing the hajj granted them the opportunity to become cosmopolitan Chinese citizens who had visited the “center of the Muslim world,” where they interacted with other members of the

¹¹⁸ . These flights, full of tour groups organized by local branches of the Islamic Association of China, departed from five cities with significant populations of Muslims: Beijing, Urumqi, Lanzhou, Kunming, and Yinchuan.

transnational Umma, and gained insights into how others practice Islam. For Yunnanese Hui-Muslims, imaginings of modernity were thus linked to imaginings of transnationalism and the global community of Muslims, the Umma. In every day life, imaginings of “authentic” Islam viewed on television, read about in newspapers, magazines, and on websites, and discussed with Koranic recitation classmates and returned hajjis instilled the desire to perform the hajj, and to acquire the status accorded to returned hajjis (see Yang 1997).

One of the primary reasons my interlocutors told me they had performed the hajj or desired to do so was in order to cultivate community prestige. Historically, returning Hui hajjis exerted profound prestige and influence, especially in relatively isolated communities (Gladney 1996:54). Before the P.R.C. was established in 1949, and since at least the 1980s, Hui communities would collaborate financially to send local notables on the hajj. Raphael Israeli sums up Dru Gladney’s example of “a Hui who travelled to the Hajj in 1987, but was escorted and pampered, financially and otherwise, by his home Muslim community, on his way to and from Mecca. On his return, he lectured in Northwest China about his experiences and the need to reform local Islam” (cited in Israeli 1997; from Gladney, 1991:63).

Such “pampering,” prestige, and influence were relatively common, as was the notion in rural Muslim enclaves in Yunnan that local Islam needed to be reformed. Community members recognized and respected hajjis, and though debates ranged about the nature and purpose of religious reforms, the status of hajjis was not questioned. During my fieldwork in both Kunming and Shadian, I visited homes with plaques that read “*zunming chaojin*” 遵命朝覲 (dutifully performed the pilgrimage) or “*haji zhi jia*” 哈吉之家 (This is the home of a hajji) proudly displayed on the walls of living rooms or posted on the entryways. These plaques marked the

homes of hajjis, and while I sipped tea and chatted with families, inevitably a proud relative of a hajji would point out the plaque(s) displayed. Granted, most hajjis were local notables or elites who had high status before they embarked on the hajj; however, it seems that the hajj journey itself increased their status, prestige, and influence.

Often during my research, my contacts or interlocutors would introduce me to a hajji as someone who could answer my questions about Islam and Islamic practice in China. These men and women were mostly community elders who commanded great respect and wielded influence throughout the specific locality, and in some cases even beyond. Since at least the 1980s, returned hajjis have advocated and often implemented religious reforms based on what they learned during the hajj. Maris Boyd Gillette (2000) describes the ways in which Arabized religious reforms initiated by hajjis in Xi'an were perceived as a return to authenticity.¹¹⁹ Similarly, many Chinese and Hui scholars (e.g., Shi Yanchun 2008; Gao Fayuan 2009) assert that the hajj is the main catalyst for the Arabization we see in Yunnan, in places like Shadian, Najiaying, and Weishan because, compared to study abroad and business ventures in the Middle East, the hajj allows the highest numbers of Sino-Muslims to visit the Middle East, through which they can experience non-Chinese Islamic cultural traditions.

Moreover, while the Chinese state controls who goes on the hajj, and closely monitors the hajj experience, there are no official requirements for a high level of education, fluency in Arabic, or other cultural capital, making the hajj arguably the most egalitarian opportunity for Chinese Muslims to have contact with Muslims abroad (Gao Fayuan 2009:130). The “modern” means deemed necessary for performing the hajj — improved transportation, communication,

¹¹⁹ . For a more detailed explanation of this process of Arabization, see chapter two.

diplomatic relations between the Saudi Arabian government and the P.R.C., and the P.R.C.'s loosening of restrictions in who can go — have enabled greater numbers and socio-economically and religiously diverse groups of Chinese Muslims to perform the hajj, further linking hajj journeys to imaginings of “modernity.”

Most of my interlocutors explicitly denied that contact with the rest of the Muslim world had spurred the Arabization we see in places like Shadian,¹²⁰ and yet, in interviews about other topics, those same interlocutors often argued that post-reform exposure to non-Chinese Muslims had in fact influenced the ways in which they practiced Islam in Yunnan. During a May 2011 interview about the aftermath of the Shadian Incident, Mrs. Ma, a 44 year-old homemaker and Shadian local, explained:¹²¹

After the economic reforms (*gaigekaifang* 改革开放), we had more exposure to Muslims in the rest of the world, and we began to practice the teachings of Islam more authentically. Shadian became more and more like the rest of the Muslim World... For example, when I was a young woman, only hajjis wore the hijab. If you dared to wear it, everyone would make fun of you and say, “Oh, so you think you’re a hajji?” But as more and more people started going abroad to countries like Saudi Arabia, Syria, Egypt, Turkey, Pakistan, Malaysia, we learned what it was like over there, and it became increasingly acceptable to wear it here... By about 2000, nearly all the women in Shadian wore a hijab.

In addition to community-initiated reforms, relaxed religious restrictions have enabled domestic religious proselytization, conversion, and practice, prompting a religious renaissance in China, and not only of Islam: since the economic reforms, the numbers of those practicing Buddhism, Daoism, Neo-Confucianism, Catholicism, and Protestantism have skyrocketed throughout China. (Goossaert and Palmer 2011; Hillman 2004; Israeli 1997; Liang 2013; Madsen

¹²⁰ . For an analysis of this denial, see chapter two.

¹²¹ . In chapter four, I discuss the ways in which the narratives of the Shadian Incident continue to make meaning for Yunnanese Hui-Muslims today, and the context of this particular interview is described in more depth.

2010; Wellens 2010; Yang 2011). Kevin Caffrey (2007) and Ben Hillman (2004) have separately documented religious revival movements among Hui-Muslims in Northwest Yunnan. In the 1990s, these Hui did not consider themselves Muslims (and even ate pork) until a proselytization effort by the Shadian Hui “re-Islamicized” them. Such religious revivals have spurred the religious devotion and conviction that compels Muslims who can afford it to perform the hajj in order to fulfill a duty, as the hajj is one of the five pillars of Islam.¹²² Additionally, many devout Hui-Muslims desired to perform the hajj in order to reach a state of spiritual transcendence and unity with other Muslims, and with Allah.

“Hajj Diplomacy”

On the part of the Chinese state, the exponential growth in the numbers of Sino-Muslims allowed to perform the hajj is a strategy for fostering *guanxi* 关系 (connections) in the Middle East, which benefits China economically and politically (Gillette 2000; Armijo 2006). This contemporary strategy is comparable to the “hajj diplomacy” of the past: during much of the 20th century, the Chinese state in its various forms used the hajj as a diplomatic mission, dispatching carefully selected delegates to Saudi Arabia in order to engage in propaganda efforts for the government (Mao Yufeng 2011). In her analysis of WWII era hajj missions from the Republican Chinese government and from Japanese-occupied Manchukuo, Mao Yufeng (2011) explains that Sino-Muslims actively used these missions to advance a vision of the Chinese nation in which Muslims would play an important role in domestic and foreign affairs. This

¹²² . The other four pillars are *shahada* (*zhengxin* 证信) declaration of faith; *salat* (*libai* 礼拜) prayer; *zakāt* (*tianke* 天课) charitable donation; and *sawm* (*zhaijie* 斋戒) ritual fasting (obligatory during the month of Ramadan). In Kunming, performing these pillars did not necessarily mark one as more “authentically Muslim,” but typically did demonstrate devotion to the faith. See chapter two for more on Muslim “authenticity” in Yunnan.

vision was based on a particular understanding of global politics which allowed Sino-Muslim elites to reconcile the transnational characteristic of Islam with loyalty to the territorially bound “Chinese nation.” Similarly, in the 1980s, government-sponsored economic and “Muslim Friendship” delegations to the Middle East corresponded with the hajj. These delegations were comprised of pro-PRC religious leaders and imams fluent in Arabic (Gladney 1996).

However, whereas in the past, “hajj diplomats” were pro-government imams and leaders, today, the vast majority of Chinese hajjis are the increasingly middle-class *laobaixing* 老百姓 (common people). As the bureaucratic restrictions of the past have become increasingly relaxed, hajjis from China have become increasingly diverse: they include men and women of various ages, ethnic groups, religious sects, incomes, and educational levels. Nevertheless, as my interlocutors often mentioned, governmental restrictions at the national and local levels meant that for certain categories of Muslims, securing permissions to go on the hajj was considerably more difficult.

My interlocutors typically acknowledged that state preferences for wealthy, healthy, pro-China elders made sense from the perspectives of the national government and the localized Islamic Associations that organized the tour groups.¹²³ After all, they rationalized, Chinese hajjis were representatives of the Chinese nation (*Zhonghua minzu* 中华民族) and of the P.R.C. state (*Zhonghua renmin gongheguo* 中华人民共和国), so of course the state preferred to send such loyal citizens of high *suzhi* 素质 (literal translation: quality; see Kipnis 2006, 2007; Jacka 2009 for more on this concept). Besides, even Islamic notions of duty provide exceptions to

¹²³ . The Saudi Arabian Ministry of Health also issues recommendations, though none of my interlocutors seemed familiar with these, neither were they opposed to the recommendations during conversations in which I mentioned them.

impoverished, ill, or disabled Muslims for whom performing this pillar would create substantial hardships. Moreover, not only would the Chinese nation “lose face” (*diu lian* 丢脸) should disloyal or “low quality” (*suzhi hen di* 素质很低) Muslims perform the hajj, but the local agents responsible for selecting hajjis, and organizing and leading the hajj tour groups and training courses, would be held accountable if, for instance, a frail hajji died while performing the hajj.

Nevertheless, many of my interlocutors remained skeptical of governmental justifications for national, provincial, and local restrictions on hajjis. These interlocutors pointed out that although the government claims it restricts the hajj to certain types of Muslims for the safety and health of the hajjis themselves, in actuality, these governmental agents and the nation as an imagined whole have stakes in these restrictions that go beyond “losing face.” My skeptical interlocutors referred to certain information required to complete the hajj registration form for Chinese Muslims (*Zhongguo Musilin chuguo chaojin baoming biao* 中国穆斯林出国朝觐报名表; see figure X), particularly *minzu* 民族 (nationality) and *zhengzhi mianmao* 政治面貌 (political status). Although this registration form gives prominence to the health and financial conditions of prospective hajjis, and my interlocutors in Kunming frequently pointed out that practically any of the information requested could be used to deny an individual permission to perform the hajj (for instance, local agents might suggest that a lower-class job indicated a lower *suzhi* 素质, even though occupation was not technically a criterion for participation in the hajj), “nationality” and “political status” were perceived as particularly contentious.

Yunnanese Hui-Muslim Critiques of the Bureaucratic Process of Hajj Registration

Although most bureaucratic documents in China require that the applicant fills in his or

her “nationality,”¹²⁴ my interlocutors in both Kunming and Shadian insisted that the hajj application requested this information in order to restrict Uyghurs from performing the hajj.¹²⁵ Even though all of my Muslim interlocutors were Hui, they criticized this preference for Hui hajjis and its accompanying discrimination against Uyghurs: “Not all Uyghurs are subversives (*dianfu fenzi* 颠覆分子).” Shadian Hui-Muslims, who typically emphasized the unity of all Muslims, were particularly critical of this discrimination; yet, at the same time, Hui-Muslims in both Shadian and Kunming justified the governmental preference for Hui. Compared with other Muslim *minzu* in China, they rationalized, the Hui were more “modern,” cleaner, and of higher *suzhi*. As Mao Yufeng (2011) substantiates in her article on WWII era hajj journeys, the governmental preference for Hui hajjis served to prevent a pan-Islamic movement within China, and in contemporary China, this preference further unites the Hui as an official *minzu*. In other

¹²⁴ . Nationality is requested along with sex, year of birth, *hukou* 户口, and other standardized categories in a variety of bureaucratic documents, including the census, birth certificates, marriage certificates, *hukou* (household registration), school registration, and even police reports. When I had to file a police report in April 2011, the officer in charge of processing my case asked me what my “nationality” was, and I told him I am an American, a foreigner (*waiguo ren* 外国人), but he insisted that he needed to know whether I was *Hanzu* 汉族 or *shaoshu minzu* 少数民族. Needless to say, I found this conversation rather hilarious, since as a foreigner, I am neither. Ultimately, he listed me as a *shaoshu minzu* but neglected to fill in a specific *minzu*, despite my joke that if he were so intent on listing my status as a *shaoshu minzu*, he may as well fill in “*Baizu*” 白族 (lit. “white” nationality), the ethnonym in Mandarin that refers to one of Yunnan’s 26 *minzu*.

¹²⁵ . In fact Uyghurs do perform the hajj, and government-organized charter flights to Mecca even depart from Urumqi; however, all of my interlocutors insisted that the state carefully monitors these Uyghurs and restricts Uyghurs’ access to performing the hajj, as well as to practicing Islam “freely.” Hui in Shadian often pointed out that Xinjiang provincial religious restrictions were notoriously harsh. The Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO), the World Movement for Democracy (WMD), and several newspapers, including the *New York Times* and *Al Jazeera*, along with a host of Islamic newspapers, magazines, and websites, have all documented the alleged discriminatory treatment of Uyghurs in China who wish to perform the hajj.

words, although Muslims in China and beyond tended to perceive the hajj as uniting all Muslims, the competition for bureaucratic permissions and the preference for Hui hajjis divided the Hui and non-Hui Muslims within China.¹²⁶

Like “nationality,” one’s “political status” was a common item of information requested on bureaucratic documents in China. Although from my American perspective, “political status” appeared to be an open-ended, even vague question, my interlocutors informed me that typically an applicant completed this item with one of three statuses: *Zhonggong dangyuan* 中共党员 (Chinese Communist Party member), *Gongqing tuanyuan* 共青团员 (Communist Youth League member) or *qunzhong* 群众 (ordinary people, i.e., non-party member). Granted, an applicant could potentially write that s/he was a military serviceman or a member of the democratic party (*minzhu dangpai* 民主党派), though it seems that the three statuses mentioned above were the most commonly used. Why, then, did a commonly required item of information with standardized responses so provoke my interlocutors? Unlike the nationality item, for which Hui implied they deserved to perform the hajj more than their “backwards,” “low quality” non-Hui Muslim “brothers and sisters,” many Hui insisted that the political status item unfairly discriminated against deserving non-party members.

The Chinese Communist Party is officially atheist, and technically, party members are prohibited from expressing religious devotion (Ashiwa 2009). In practice, however, some Hui I knew were both Muslims and party members or even officials; for some, especially in Kunming, being Muslim was divorced from religious practice and even belief: one could simultaneously be

¹²⁶ . It should be noted that because the hajj application process is so localized, my interlocutors, unlike Hui in Xinjiang, were not in direct competition with Uyghurs for authorization to perform the hajj.

a Muslim and an atheist.¹²⁷ Even so, Hui who were non-party members intimated that such Muslim party members “steered according to the wind” (*kanfeng shiduo* 看风使舵), or, in contemporary American colloquial usage, they sold out. When applying to perform the hajj, these Hui party member “sell outs” were allegedly granted preferential treatment, even though they were less openly religious, and, at least in Kunming, most likely did not endeavor to perform the other pillars of Islam. Some of my Hui interlocutors — prospective hajjis, returned hajjis, and others — connected this governmental preference for party member hajjis to the “hajj diplomacy” of the past. Others noted that the process for applying to perform the hajj was localized to the extent that it was the cadres at local branches of the Islamic Association of China who had the authority to decide who performed the hajj in a given year. Either way, these Hui contended that Hui party members, whether through national governmental preference, localized preference, or locally cultivated *guanxi* (connections), gained undeserved admittance to hajj tours. Almost all of my Hui interlocutors conceded that the hajj application process in China, though often imagined as national, with national restrictions, was in practice localized to the point that those with the necessary *guanxi* could secure local permissions.

These points of contention that surrounded governmental preference, localized processes, and locally cultivated *guanxi*, are of utmost importance in understanding how minority subject-agents in Yunnan imagined and experienced relationships with the state at its various levels. At the national level, hajji numbers were negotiated through diplomatic relations with the Saudi Arabian government, and with other Islamic nations in mind; from the perspective of Chinese diplomats and state agents, allowing hajj journeys at once enables the state to cultivate goodwill

¹²⁷ . For more on this, see chapter two.

among its Chinese Muslim minorities and fosters *guanxi* with other Islamic nations, thereby strengthening China's economy. That is, in contemporary China, the hajj still acts as a diplomatic mission of sorts, both domestically and internationally.

And yet, some of my more skeptical interlocutors rebuked what they viewed as P.R.C.-imposed national quotas of hajjis that did not fulfill the more generous official Saudi Arabian quotas. The number of hajjis allowed per year is based upon an agreement between the Chinese and Saudi Arabian governments. Because Saudi Arabia uses .1 percent of a country's Muslim population as a guideline for its yearly hajj quotas, China, with a Muslim population of approximately 23 million, is not filling its allotted quotas completely, despite backlogged wait lists of people who want to perform the pilgrimage. In 2012, over 13,000 Chinese Muslims performed the hajj — the highest number in China's history, but far short of the alleged 23,000 allotment. Because the desire to perform the hajj far outpaces the numbers allowed per year, several of my interlocutors suggested that the national government purposely chooses not to fill the quotas. Whether that is the case or not, Chinese hajj journeys are carefully managed and negotiated by both the Chinese and Saudi Arabian governments: as mentioned earlier, in order to perform the hajj, a prospective hajji must apply at least one year in advance and meet a variety of requirements with regards to their financial situation, health, age, political views, and, in addition, they are required to go with a state-organized tour group.¹²⁸

Because of these nationally imposed restrictions and quotas, my interlocutors at times

¹²⁸ . My interlocutors reported that unlike restrictions in other countries, including other non-Muslim majority nations such as India, Chinese hajji regulations allowed female hajjis to perform the hajj without a *mahram Ar. محرم* (male kin with whom a sexual relationship would be incestuous; these kin are a woman's allowable escorts when she travels).

spoke and acted in ways that reified the “Chinese state,” as if “it” were a monolithic force that uniformly imposes its will upon its varied and various subjects (cf. Gupta 1997). However, in practice, local bureaucracies and their affiliated state agents performed their roles and implemented governmental procedures differently in different locations. That is, the process of applying for the hajj in different provinces or even through specific branches of the Islamic Association differed so that, for example, in Gansu Province, the process was transparently first come, first served: Gansu local branches of the Islamic Association supposedly publicly listed the names of those who applied for the hajj in order of receiving their application.

Prospective and former hajjis in Yunnan deplored the fact that China’s national hajj quota, though officially based on the domestic population of Muslims, was not extended to localities, resulting in backlogs of wait lists in regions with high Muslim populations, and easily granted access for Muslims with *hukou* in places like Shanghai, where the Muslim population remains relatively low. With a Muslim population of approximately 640,000, Yunnan dispatched about 1400 hajjis per year; approximately 120 of these Yunnanese hajjis hailed from the provincial capital, Kunming, where the population of Muslims is about 140,000. In comparison, Shadian, with a Muslim population of approximately 20,000, sent about 200 hajjis per year. Kunming Hui, unsurprisingly, viewed this discrepancy as unfair; for Shadian Hui, this validated their “authenticity” as faithful Muslims vis à vis other Yunnanese Muslims.

The Hajj Application Process in Yunnan

As a prospective hajji, one must apply at the local branch of the Islamic Association that is affiliated with one’s *hukou* 户口 (household registration), and, if accepted, would perform the hajj with a tour group comprised of other Muslims with the same *hukou*, and organized by that

local branch of the Islamic Association of China.¹²⁹ As a result, migrant workers who desire to perform the hajj must return to their place of *hukou*. In some cases, such as in which remittances sent home have enriched the local economy, this can work in favor of a migrant worker's hajj application; in other cases, the necessity to return to one's place of *hukou* in order to apply to perform the hajj can create difficulties not only due to the costs of travel, but because the localized processes and experiences of applying to perform the hajj typically necessitate that the applicant has cultivated strong local *guanxi* networks.

Because of the perceived influence of *guanxi*, some of my interlocutors critiqued the localization of the hajj application process, complaining that it was inherently susceptible to corruption, especially in Yunnan.¹³⁰ In addition, some distrusted this localized monitoring of prospective hajjis' national loyalties. This went beyond corruption – idea that the state kept detailed records on such people in case they “caused problems” later down the line – that way there would always be something to hang over their heads

China's *Aiguo Aijiao* Policy: Nationalisms Localized

As these noteworthy critiques highlight, the process of applying to perform the hajj was ultimately a localized one. To be sure, my interlocutors often spoke of “Chinese national” requirements, restrictions, and of their performance as citizens of a “nation,” and this “imagined

¹²⁹ . According to Gao Fayuan (2009), the first branch of the Yunnan Islamic Association was founded in Kunming on August 15, 1984; since then the government has established twenty-nine branches of the Yunnan Islamic Association at the provincial, county and city levels (125).

¹³⁰ . They often compared Yunnan's application process to more “transparent” processes in Gansu and Qinghai. It is unclear as to why Yunnan was viewed as more corrupt than Gansu and Qinghai. Yunnan's corruption is often explained as due to its distance from the central government (*zhongyang zhengfu* 中央政府). In addition, Yunnan is perceived as the “Wild West,” as more “lawless” and “fierce” than most other parts of China (with the exceptions of Tibetan and Uyghur areas); however, Gansu and Qinghai are perceived similarly.

community,” with its lived trappings, was crucial for how they understood their place within the world. However, in practice, who gained governmental authorization to perform the hajj was negotiated between specific state agents of local branches of the Islamic Association and Hui-Muslim applicants. In particular, two requirements allowed for substantial local negotiation: 1) that a hajji must “represent” (*daibiao* 代表) China well, and 2) that s/he must proclaim her loyalty to the Chinese nation above all else, in accordance with China’s *aiguo aijiao* 爱国爱教 policy that stipulates that loyalty to the state must come first. Because even an applicant with high *suzhi*, status, and cultural capital could not satisfactorily “represent” China without submitting to the state, I first discuss the notion of “loyalty” (*zhongxin* 忠心) toward or “love” (*ai* 爱) for the nation-state, then explore how this “love” was understood locally, practiced, and negotiated, and finally return to how the notion of satisfactory “representation” of China could be re-defined and negotiated on the local level.

Although the phrase *aiguo aijiao* translates literally into English as “love the country, love religion,” this national policy emphasizes that religious practitioners must prioritize their loyalty to the Chinese nation-state and the CCP above their religious loyalty (Ashiwa 2009:58; Feuchtwang 2010).¹³¹ Yoshiko Ashiwa translates this phrase as “patriotic religion,” but in order to underscore the prioritizing of national loyalty over religious loyalty, here I translate this as “patriotism first, then religious devotion.” Furthermore, the phrase *aiguo aijiao* connoted not

¹³¹ . The Chinese concept *ai* 爱 differs from the contemporary Anglo-American concept of love, particularly in that, due to its links to the Confucian notion of benevolence 仁, 爱 connotes responsibility, loyalty, and duty. In Chinese languages, then, 爱, 仁, and 忠 are entangled so that *aiguo* 爱国 (patriotism) not only means to love one’s country but also implies loyalty, responsibility, duty.

only national/religious unity and loyalty, but also love. That is, this political rhetoric was framed emotionally. Locally, this national policy wielded considerable emotional leverage.¹³² Because my translation fails to account for the implied nuances of this phrase, I use *aiguo aijiao* throughout this chapter.

According to Stephan Feuchtwang (2010), in 1982, the CCP established a policy in which the five officially recognized religions (Daoism, Buddhism, Catholicism, Protestantism, and Islam) would be protected so long as those religions *aiguo aijiao* (180). Soon afterwards, “patriotic religious” organizations formed to self-police. Since then, Chinese officials, scholars, and *laobaixing* have projected *aiguo aijiao* back anachronistically so that this 1982 policy is imagined as inherent to an immutable “China” and to the five officially sanctioned religions. Such rhetoric imagines a monolithic, static version of Islam in China that has “always” conformed to the 1982 *aiguo aijiao* policy, even during the Tang Dynasty (A.D. 618-907).

In different contexts, various actors — the State Bureau of Religious Affairs, CCP officials, state-sanctioned religious organizations, scholars, and individual lay people — rely on the rhetoric of *aiguo aijiao* to achieve different, yet intertwined, aims. The CCP invokes *aiguo aijiao* in order to counter “subversive elements” and “disruptive activities” that potentially threaten national unity. This rhetoric positions the five recognized religions as united with the national government to quell such threats, to promote “normal” religious activities, and to contribute to the “maintenance of political stability.” Provincial and local level bureaucracies, state-sanctioned religious organizations, and other state-affiliated associations appealed to this

¹³² . For a particularly powerful example of how national policies wielded emotional leverage locally, see the discussion of my Wa-Dai friend’s “love” for the motherland in the section on situational nationalism in chapter one of this dissertation.

official discourse of the national unity of religions, of harmony with and love for the nation, as a means of establishing local authority. Although individual non-party members I knew in Yunnan occasionally resisted the rhetoric of *aiguo aijiao*, for the most part, they used it to achieve their own aims of local “harmony.” By appealing to images of national(ist) unity, local Muslims in Yunnan managed to carve out a space wherein they could practice religion relatively freely.¹³³ Similarly, some Hui scholars of Islam in China (e.g., Ma Mingliang 2008; Ding Jun 2010) position Islam as a Chinese religion, one that has always promoted peace and harmony, and that has proudly defended an “ardently loved homeland” (Ma 2008: 11). In so doing, these scholars accommodate the nationalist *aiguo aijiao* rhetoric while simultaneously countering dominant stereotypes of the Hui as a naturally violent *minzu* that remains foreign to China in religion, ethnicity, and cultural practices. All of these different invocations of *aiguo aijiao* raise the following question: What does it mean this nationalist political rhetoric is framed emotionally, and how does that influence how it is localized?

In order to begin to unravel this question, we must situate the CCP *aiguo aijiao* discourse within the dominant nationalist CCP discourse of the unity of the “Chinese nation” (*Zhonghua minzu* 中华民族). To summarize briefly its history, the *Zhonghua minzu* discourse is rooted in Qing (Manchu) Imperial tribute relations with Tibet and Mongolia. Though the phrase first referred to the Han “race,” the Xinhai Revolutionary Movement of 1911 propagated the notion of the “five [Chinese] nationalities” (*wuzu gonghe* 五族共和) of the Han 漢, the Manchu 滿, the

¹³³ . This “religious freedom” had its limits, particularly when state officials viewed Yunnanese or other Muslims as subversives, or as “disrupting national unity.” In general, Hui-Muslims in contemporary Yunnan strived to maintain an image of unity with and support for the Chinese nation-state, but this image was at times disrupted/smudged, either by Hui resistance to the official rhetoric or by state officials who accused the Hui of being imperialists or subversives. For more on the limits of “religious freedom,” see chapter four.

Mongols 蒙, the Muslims 回, and the Tibetans 藏.¹³⁴ In 1912, shortly after the fall of the Qing and the founding of the Republic of China, newly elected President Yuan Shikai used the phrase *Zhonghua minzu* to convey the unity of the five races, and to claim Outer Mongolia for China. During the Republican and Nationalist Periods, the notion of *Zhonghua minzu* gained further credence, particularly with Sun Yat-sen's famous use of the phrase in November 1920 (Fei 1980; Gladney 1991: 81-87; Fiskesjö 2006; Lin 2008).¹³⁵ Early on, the notions of *wuzu gonghe* and *Zhonghua minzu* implied not only ethnic but also religious difference; that is, in early nationalist understandings, the religions of the four non-Han *minzu* “were naturalized as a function of their ethnic identity” (Goossaert and Palmer 2011: 60). At that time, Islam mapped directly onto the Hui ethnicity; that is, the term *Hui* 回 meant “Muslim,” and the Chinese word for Islam (contemp. Ch. *yisilanjiao* 伊斯兰教) was *Huijiao* 回教 (Lipman 1997:xxiii).

During the P.R.C. era the Stalinist nationalities model influenced the concept of *Zhonghua minzu*. In contemporary China, both the discourses of *Zhonghua minzu* and of *aiguo aijiao* rely on the imagery of a united Chinese nation, a pluralistic China that is simultaneously multiethnic, multicultural, multi-religious and yet comprised entirely of descendants of one common ancestor, the Yellow Emperor (Liu 1999:609). In the ways in which these discourses similarly position the benevolent, sovereign nation-state in relationship to its united, pluralistic,

¹³⁴ . The term used for Muslim was Hui 回, but at the time, Hui 回 included Muslims in general, not only those who now comprise the *Huizu* category.

¹³⁵ . Sun Yat-sen famously wrote: “Some people say that after the overthrow of the Qing, we will have no further need of nationalism. Those words are certainly wrong... At present we speak of unifying the 'five nationalities' (*wuzu gonghe*), yet surely our country has far more than five nationalities? My stand is that we should unite all the peoples of China into one Chinese nation (*Zhonghua minzu*). (Original text cited in Lin Chaomin (2008:106): “有人说，清室推翻以后，民族主义可以不要。这话实在错了。……现在说五族共和，我们国内何止五族呢？我的意思，应该把我们中国所有各民族融化成一个中华民族)。”

harmonious subjects, they are inextricably linked. That is to say, the *aiguo aijiao* rhetoric most likely emerged out of those very discursive practices of *Zhonghua minzu duoyuan yiti* 中华民族多元一体 (a united multicultural Chinese nation) that sought to unify the Chinese nation. The dominant nationalist CCP discourse of *Zhonghua minzu* unity is typically linked to imagery of the family (specifically siblings, *xiongdi jiemei* 兄弟姐妹) as nation. In this imagery, the Han “elder brothers” lead the *shaoshu minzu* “younger brothers,” but they are all one (hierarchically positioned) family. *Aiguo aijiao* extends such ethnic unity to religions through the rhetoric of “love.”

Kowtowing to the State, Engendering Gratitude

Indeed, this rhetoric resonates with how *aiguo aijiao* was perceived and practiced locally. Here I should point out that many if not most of my interlocutors in Shadian conflated “patriotism” (*aiguo* 爱国) with “nationalism” (*minzu zhuyi* 民族主义) – for most, the distinction was irrelevant. In addition, as far as I know, there is no hadith requiring Muslims to love their nation, but Yunnanese Hui-Muslims insisted there was: In fact children’s books in the rural Muslim enclave of Shadian taught that “*aiguo*” is an important characteristic for being a “good Muslim.” A lesson in one children’s book states, for instance, that “Loving the motherland is heeding Allah” (*Musilin aizuguo shi ting Zhenzhu de hua* 穆斯林爱祖国是听真主的话).

The state requirement for patriotism meant that many who were accepted to go on the hajj, such as pro-government imams and cadres, were already patriots, but many who perhaps were just paying lip-service to the government became patriotic because of their hajj experiences. As my interlocutors frequently claimed, going on the hajj journey instills patriotic

and nationalist sentiments within hajjis: Submission to the state at once empowers Hui-Muslim hajjis as creative agents active in their own self-production and it engenders sentiment (*ganqing* 感情) toward the state.

In his interpretation of kowtowing, Andrew Kipnis argues that kowtowing is a “*guanxi*-producing practice” that “is an act of social creativity rather than self-destruction” and “that its performance empowers the one who performs it rather than displaying his or her abject servitude, and that it is more often performed by socially confident individuals than the weak” (Kipnis 1997:75). On one hand, prospective hajjis must “koutou” to the state: recognizing that the government does not want certain types of citizens to go abroad – so-called people of “low quality” and suspiciously non-loyal subjects, such as Uyghurs – Yunnanese Hui-Muslims submitted themselves to governmental requirements and professed their loyalty to the Chinese nation-state. Overcoming these bureaucratic and political obstacles is, as one young Hui-Muslim woman told me, “like climbing a mountain” – it is a long, arduous process, and those who subject themselves to it are at times anxious about whether or not they will succeed, but once they do, they feel empowered, strong.

At the same time, they feel grateful and proud to have been selected – and this gratitude engenders affective sentiments toward the Chinese nation more broadly. We see this in the gratefulness of Sino-Muslim subjects for the “opportunity” to go on the hajj, for example:

Mr. Ding, a 76-year-old pilgrim, told me that going on the hajj was the most important religious task in his life:

Thanks to the government’s assistance, I had the opportunity to fulfill this duty. My faith is deeper now, and I will do more good deeds in the future. I appreciate what our government does for us. Before, I sometimes felt distrustful [of the government] but the pilgrimage went very well, mostly

because of the [Chinese] government's organization. We even had doctors on our tour.

In 2010, my interlocutors told me that the hajj cost about 40,000 RMB per person (6,000 USD) plus bribes – this is a substantial amount of money for most people. And unlike many other governments, the Chinese government does not subsidize the cost, except for state-designated hajj leaders (pro-government imams and cadres plus medical staff). And yet despite the bureaucratic hurdles and financial burdens involved, almost everyone I spoke with expressed deep gratitude to the Chinese government that they were able to go on the hajj, and attributed it to China's global ascendancy and economic power, which has helped them save up for the hajj and afford it.

Preparation for Hajj:

My hajji interlocutors also typically highlighted the preparation they underwent in order to perform the hajj. Local branches of the Islamic Association often required hajjis to attend training courses, and the vast majority of hajjis with whom I spoke also engaged in extended pre-hajj self-cultivation, especially through reading pilgrimage handbooks, hajj memoirs written by other Sino-Muslims or Huizu, articles in magazines such as *Zhongguo Musilin*, and forums on Sino-Islamic websites. In these narratives of hajj preparation, my interlocutors often conveyed a sense of inferior religious competence, knowledge, or preparation, especially in comparison to their Muslim brethren in more “authentically Islamic” nations in Central Asia and the Middle East. This sense of a lack of religious competence was expressed particularly often among urban Hui elite in Kunming, and rarely among Hui-Muslims in conservative religious enclaves like Shadian and Najaiying. Many urban Hui in Kunming professed that they had no choice but to prepare extensively for the hajj because specific historical circumstances in China such as the

Cultural Revolution combined with the daily demands of Hanified urban life had prevented them from attaining this religious knowledge in their youth.¹³⁶ However, despite their sense of religious incompetence, in actuality most Muslims throughout the world who perform the hajj must prepare extensively for it; the kind of knowledge necessary for performing the hajj extends beyond that of daily prayer and practice so that, for instance, pilgrimage handbooks exist in even the most “authentically Islamic” nations, and in languages such as Arabic, Farsi, and Turkish.

Narratives of Unity

Some Muslims felt anxious about a perceived lack of religious competence that stemmed in part from the local governmental requirement to participate in Islamic Association training courses. At the same time, however, locally organized hajj preparation and training courses engendered a localized sense of unity among participants. Because the Saudi Arabian and Chinese governments required Chinese Muslims to perform the hajj as members of locally organized tour groups, the hajj experience itself further instilled a sense of unity among Sino-Muslims of a given locality. Thus some of my interlocutors articulated their experiences of hajj unity as intertwined; that is, the transnationalized unity of the Islamic *Umma*, the nationalized unity of the Chinese nation-state, and the localized unity of the hajji’s place of *hukou* did not preclude or negate one another but existed simultaneously, at times even mutually reinforcing one another.

Tropes of Unity in Hajj Narratives

In most of the hajj narratives recounted to me, the tropes of white clothing, ubiquitous smiles despite language barriers or other issues, and the ability of all Muslims to greet one

¹³⁶ . See chapter two for an extended analysis of this.

another in Arabic symbolized the unity of all Muslims. Additionally, my interlocutors in Kunming employed the trope of the unity of “brothers and sisters” (*xiongdi jiemei* 兄弟姐妹) when conveying both the unity of all Muslims and the unity of the Chinese nation (*Zhonghua minzu* 中华民族). Mr. Ma’s description of the warm reception Chinese Muslims received when encountering non-Chinese Muslims subtly suggests both the unity of the *Umma* and the self/other boundaries that exist within and without that transcendent religious unity. That is to say, encounters with non-Chinese Muslims simultaneously heightened one’s consciousness both as a member of the *Umma* and as a Chinese citizen. Whereas shared religious practices such as the wearing of white clothing on the hajj united all hajjis, linguistic barriers between non-Chinese and non-Chinese Muslims, coupled with state-organized tour groups and bureaucratic symbols of Chinese sovereignty in the form of the hajj ID card and the Chinese flag enhanced Chinese Muslim pilgrims’ consciousness of their national citizenship.

However, this national pride extended beyond lived encounters with non-Chinese Muslims and China’s sovereignty over its citizens: for many Yunnanese hajjis, China’s economic ascent within the global capitalist system sparked national pride as well as a sense of economic superiority relative to non-Chinese Muslims. By May 2010, when I interviewed Mr. Ma, I was relatively accustomed to hearing such Sino-centric accounts of the hajj and other Islamic traditions; most of my Kunming Hui-Muslim interlocutors expressed deep pride in their Chineseness and particularly in China’s recent ascendancy in global capitalism. The phrase “everything is made in China” (*suoyou de dongxi dou shi zhongguo zhizao de* 所有的东西都是中国制造的) became a common refrain. My interlocutors frequently conflated the presence of

products manufactured in China with Chinese cultural presence or even dominance. In the transcription mentioned above, and written at the beginning of this chapter, Mr. Ma foregrounds the presence of Chinese manufactured Islamic products in Saudi Arabia, the nation that Yunnanese Muslims perceive as the center of religious authenticity, thereby suggesting not only China's dominance in global capitalism but in Islamic products, and, given the ways in which most of my interlocutors linked consumerist products with cultural dominance, perhaps Islam, too. At the same time, Mr. Ma explicitly contrasts China's advanced civilization with the "backwardness" of other Muslims, who are united as "brothers and sisters" but perceived as lagging behind economically, culturally, and even in "thought." Mr. Ma's use of the tropes of dirt and illness subtly suggests that these "other" Muslims are not only less advanced, but also less devout, given the strong association of cleanliness with religious purity in Islam. For Mr. Ma and many of my interlocutors in Kunming, the filth, discomfort, and illness experienced on the hajj signified China's progress even in relation to the "Land of the Two Holy Mosques." Such Sino-centric descriptions of the hajj were remarkably common among hajjis from Kunming, but even some Shadian hajjis made similar remarks.

Nearly one year after I interviewed Mr. Ma in his niece's living room, I met a chatty hajji from Shadian while waiting with my friend Zainab at the Kunming East Bus Station for a bus to Gejiu that would drop us off near Shadian. He stood on the sidewalk next to the Gejiu-bound bus, smoking and watching us struggle to shove our luggage into the compartment beneath the bus. When we stood up, he asked us where we were headed, and we began chatting about Islam, Shadian, and its Great Mosque. What follows is a translated transcription of our conversation, edited for brevity and relevance to hajj narratives:

Hajji Wang: Have you been to Saudi Arabia?

LT: No, perhaps one day.

HW: *Insha'Allah*. I went in 2003, on the hajj (*chaojin* 朝覲).

LT: Oh, wow. What did you think of the hajj?

HW: *Alhamdulillah*, it was the most profound experience of my life. I hope to go again one day, and take my wife with me. It was wonderful to see Muslim brothers from all over the world. We couldn't really speak to each other but we are all brothers through Allah. And we could acknowledge our brotherhood, saying *Assalamu alaikum* and *Wa alaikum assalam*.

...

LT: What about the hajj gave you the deepest impression?

HW: Everything there is made in China (*Zhongguo zhizao de*)! It was amazing to see that all the products in Saudi Arabia are Chinese. We Chinese are so industrious, and the products we make are exported all over the world. There were many other Chinese Muslims (*Zhongguo Musilin*) in Saudi Arabia, too, also on the hajj. We could speak Mandarin (*putonghua* 普通话) together and be proud of China's progress.

....

LT: What was your impression of Saudi Arabia?

HW: There were so many crowds of people on the hajj, it was often quite uncomfortable. Saudi Arabia is a wealthy, advanced country, but there were many poor (*pinkun*) people on the streets; they'd even sleep there at night... We Muslims have a long history (*lishi youjiu* 历史悠久) of being the most [technologically] advanced people in the world: did you know that Muslims

invented showers (*linyū* 淋浴)!? That happened in Saudi Arabia. Without that, we'd all still be taking baths (*penyu* 盆浴), which is neither as clean nor as convenient... Saudi Arabia also has many high rise buildings and skyscrapers, and the mosques are even more beautiful than the Great Mosque in Shadian.

During my conversation with Hajji Wang, he employed tropes that resonated with those in my interviews with Mr. Ma and other Kunming hajjis. The ability to greet non-Chinese Muslims in Arabic symbolized unity with the Umma; language barriers and the ability to communicate with other Chinese Muslims in Mandarin symbolized the unity of Chinese Muslims and/or Huizu. The presence of Chinese manufactured products in Saudi Arabia suggested China's economic progress on the world stage, and the industriousness of the Chinese people. Regardless of their personal background or residence, the majority of my hajji interlocutors used those tropes when narrating their hajj experiences.

Hajji Wang's use of the trope of Muslim brotherhood resonates with Mr. Ma's trope of Muslim "brothers and sisters," but it also suggests a gendered and spatialized difference: in Kunming, and indeed in many other parts of the Islamic world, the more inclusive phrase "brothers and sisters" prevailed. In Shadian, men typically referred to Muslim "brothers"; only women consistently used the phrase "brothers and sisters." At first glance, this might suggest a gendered hierarchy of difference in Shadian, which is likely partially the case, despite the insistence there on the part of my interlocutors that in Islam women are "precious pearls" to be treasured.¹³⁷ Shadian men's repeated use of "Muslim brothers" (*Muslim xiongdi* 穆斯林兄弟) to

¹³⁷ . See chapter two for a brief explanation of Shadian Hui-Muslim claims about women's status, and for a brief discussion of women's roles in constructing fictionalized genealogies in Kunming.

invoke unity might also indicate a resistance on their part to the phrase “brothers and sisters” (*xiongdì jiěmèi*), a phrase so often used in CCP propaganda of Chinese national unity.

The Islamic “Tradition of Modernity”

Additionally, most hajjis explicitly connected Saudi Arabia to Islam as a whole: in this way, they presented a bounded, reified version of Islam in which Saudi Arabia was not only the most authentically Islamic nation, but also symbolized Islamic religiosity and practice, and so could be extended to incorporate other non-Saudi Arabian places, forms of practice, and so on. Hajji narrators often used the flashy architecture of contemporary Saudi Arabia, its skyscrapers, and high-rise apartment buildings to symbolize “Islamic modernity,” wealth, and “advancement.” Recent hajjis particularly relished describing the Abraj al-Bait, which soars above the sacred Kaaba. At the same time, hajji narrators typically articulated a strongly felt national pride in being Chinese, which was entangled with symbols of China’s own “modernity” and “progress,” especially with regards to global capitalism and comparative local standards of living. In this way, my interlocutors strategically positioned themselves in relation to so-called “Islamic modernity” and “Chinese modernity,” thereby avoiding the “filth,” “backwardness”, and religious impurities of China, both contemporary and historical, and of an imagined Islamic world that radiated out from Saudi Arabia. Such hajj narratives show that Yunnanese Hui-Muslims perceived themselves as dually modern: relying on an imagined past of Islamic advancement and modernity, they positioned themselves *within* China’s modernization narrative, advancing ahead of the Han and other non-Muslim *minzu*, who lacked claims to a glorious Islamic past, and ahead of non-Chinese Muslims, who lacked claims to China’s ascendancy in global capitalism.

It should be noted that for many Muslims, Chinese and otherwise, “Islamic modernity” and “science” emerged directly from readings of the Quran. Some Muslims perceived the Quran itself as not only a sacred text but also a scientific one. This trope, especially as related to imaginings of “modernity,” “science” and religious purity symbolized by physical cleanliness, surfaced often in hajj narrative recountings, but in order to explain its significance for Yunnanese Hui-Muslims, it is preferable to refer to the words of an expert, Teacher Zhang, an instructor at a Quranic school at a mosque in Kunming.

Teacher Zhang explained to me that Allah encompasses and knows all of the science of the world; science and religion are one because Allah created the world, and science, like religion, seeks to explain Allah’s creation and creativity. The omniscient Allah bestowed scientific knowledge upon faithful Muslims through the words of the Koran. As Teacher Zhang explained:

Despite the fact that the Holy Koran is an ancient text that was transmitted to the Prophet, peace be upon him, long before these scientific theories were proven, the truth of scientific knowledge emanates from the Koran. This is why so many scientists convert to Islam. They recognize that its scientific truths prove its religious truth.

In such explanations of “Islamic scientific modernity,” this imagined modernity was itself traditional; that is, “tradition” and “modernity” were not problematically opposed as binary structures, nor were they hierarchically situated with reference to one another. My interlocutors valued both “modernity” and “tradition,” situating themselves as “traditionally modern” as opposed to “non-traditional” and “backwards” people who lacked cultural traditions and modern civilization. Who these particular disparaged others were depended upon the context in which my interlocutors were speaking or acting: in some cases, they were non-Muslim Han Chinese,

who, according to my interlocutors, lacked the religious traditions of Islam and had failed to achieve a modernity equivalent to that of the “original” modernity of an imagined Arabia. In other cases, these disparaged “others” were non-Chinese Muslims, who my interlocutors positioned as comparatively less “modern” and “scientific” within the terms of China’s evolutionary scale of advancement, and as less “traditional” in religious terms, particularly if these non-Chinese Muslims were perceived as “dirty,” and therefore religiously impure, or as unfaithful to the “true” teachings of the Prophet, however that might be construed. Many of my interlocutors, for example, insisted that Islam in China is more “authentic” than forms of Islam in other parts of the world because women in China are accorded the respect and status that the Prophet intended for all Muslims.

This Islamic “tradition of modernity” resonates with much contemporary scholarship on the relationships between “tradition and modernity.” In Enlightenment-influenced thought, modernity is characterized as Reason freed from tradition and nature. Thus, modernity and tradition are falsely, inappropriately opposed. Appadurai (1996) notes that modernity is often construed as a break between tradition and modernity, a perspective he claims “distort[s] the meanings of change and the politics of pastness” (3). Das (2000) questions the assumption that in the transition from tradition to modernity, temporality passes through a simple transformation from cyclical to linear. Instead, since there is no singular, universal conception of time within the modern experience, she posits multiple ways to relate to the past within modernity. These notions of tradition as elaborated by Appadurai and Das, however, conflate it with both the past and with the (hierarchically devalued) non-modern. Such notions of tradition neglect to address the ways

in which traditions work in the modern present, not merely as residual categories, but as valued practices of modernity in its own right.

While many scholars critique the narrative of modernity as progress, others go further to problematize how this narrative of modernity has been temporalized so that tradition is relegated to the past (Chakrabarty 2002). Modernity is not equivalent to contemporary (Friedman and Friedman 2008). Rather than dichotomize tradition and modernity, some scholars have suggested that in order to engage with “modernity” as a concept, instead we to develop a concept of the non-modern with which to contrast the modern. It would be crucial to distinguish clearly between the traditional and the non-modern (Mitchell 2000, Chakrabarty 2002), although given modernity’s hierarchical connotations, a concept of the non-modern would most likely be subjected to a devalorization. Is it possible to develop a concept of modernity that circumvents issues of hierarchization? In the edited volume *Questions of Modernity* (Mitchell 2000), contributors Chakrabarty and Chatterjee emphasize traditional elements that co-exist alongside the modern but are more than merely residual categories. Instead, these traditional elements are (re)appropriated and invested with new meanings, continually re-defining what it means to be modern.

Chatterjee (1993b) articulates this tension between modernity and tradition by analyzing the effects of nationalism in the colonial world. Chatterjee rejects the argument that the colonies merely adopted Western forms of nationalism because the most powerful forms of nationalism in Asia and Africa “are posited not on an identity but rather a *difference* with the ‘modular’ forms of the national society propagated by the modern West” (5). He explains that this misunderstanding as to the nature of nationalism in the colonies arose because we have taken the claims of

nationalism as a political movement too seriously. According to Chatterjee, anti-colonial nationalism “creates its own domains of sovereignty within colonial society well before it begins its political battle with the imperial power” (6). It does this by dividing the social world into two domains: 1) the material: the “outside”, of economy, science, technology and 2) the spiritual: the “inside”; of essential elements of cultural identity. Chatterjee suggests that the greater the success in the material domain, the greater the need to preserve the spiritual. In short, nationalism attempts to declare sovereignty over the spiritual domain, protecting it from colonial influence; however, as nationalism launches the project to craft a “modern” national culture not tied to the West, the spiritual domain changes. It is here that the nation comes into being as an imagined community – sovereign though still under colonial power. Chatterjee thus demonstrates both how global forms are localized and how traditions remain salient, even as their meanings shift with reference to various “modern” transformations.

Self/Other Positioning in Hajj Narratives

In recountings of hajj narratives, Yunnanese hajjis simultaneously positioned themselves as 1) community members of a specific place, typically affiliated with their local branch of the Islamic Association of China; as 2) a specific minority nationality within the Chinese nation-state, Huizu; as 3) patriotic, proud Chinese citizens, and as 4) transnational Muslim members of the umma. Yunnanese hajjis claimed these positions simultaneously, but in specific circumstances tended to emphasize particular positions. At times this shifting toward a particular position occurred unconsciously, but at other times it was a conscious strategy. For instance, in direct interactions with state agents who worked at their local branches of the Islamic Association of China, most of my Hui interlocutors emphasized their loyalty to the Chinese

nation-state. In Quranic recitation classes for retirees at the Jinniu Mosque in Kunming, however, most of my interlocutors shifted between local affiliations with that mosque and its community, ethnic Hui identity, and the unity of all Muslims through the Arabic language. The ways in which the Quranic recitation students at Jinniu Mosque articulated their positions depended upon who was present, and the topic being discussed. During conversations with the imam or the course instructor, students tended to emphasize the usefulness of Quranic recitation and pan-Islamic unity.¹³⁸ In contrast, at the beginning of class, before the instructor arrived, students would often gossip about local community affairs, and position themselves in relation to other community members or kin.

Such community ties strengthened their concepts of unity not only of that particular local position, but was extended metaphorically to Hui, Muslims, and Chinese in other spheres. The grammars of self/other distinctions were thus at once overlapping and defined, occasionally encompassing, and not mutually exclusive. A local Hui community might on one hand use kinship ties, local history, or occupations to distinguish itself from a nearby community and on the other hand claim a local unity, as collective groups of Hui-Muslims in Shadian and Najjiaying often did. That same collective group in Shadian might go on to speak of unity with other Huizu in Yunnan, in China, with other non-Hui Muslims in China, and with the rest of the Islamic world.

¹³⁸ . Most of these retirees, like many other Yunnanese Hui, conflated the unity of the Umma with pan-Arab nationalism. Many sincerely believed that all Muslims in other parts of the world, including the United States, the U.K., Turkey, and Pakistan spoke conversational Arabic; some believed these other Muslims all spoke Arabic natively. Many of these Hui bemoaned the fact that they could “only” recite the Quran (*nianjing* 念经). Muslims throughout Yunnan insisted that my beautiful Pakistani friend, Zainab Khalid, spoke Arabic at home with her family. They were shocked when she told them that she speaks no conversational Arabic and instead speaks Urdu with her family.

In Shadian, Hui-Muslims rarely claimed unity with non-Muslim Chinese, and yet because in practice non-Chinese Muslims perceived them as Chinese, in hajj encounters with such non-Chinese Muslims Shadian Hui-Muslims often referred to themselves as Chinese. Additionally, despite the reluctance of Shadian Hui-Muslims to articulate a sense of unity with the Chinese state, the combination of Chinese national policies such as *Aiguo Aijiao*, governmental reparations for the Shadian Incident, lived experiences of local material economic progress, and idealized imaginings of national progress in the global economic sphere conspired so that at times Shadian Hui-Muslims strategically positioned themselves as Chinese citizens both within the politically and territorially bounded People's Republic of China and vis-à-vis non-Chinese. In this case, the specific local history of Shadian engendered a locally bounded position that united that community: since memories of the Shadian Incident of 1975 are still raw, Shadian self/other distinctions in relationship to the imagined Chinese nation-state, to other Yunnanese Hui-Muslims, and to the Umma are often negotiated with explicit references to that tragic event.¹³⁹ No matter their residence, Yunnanese Hui-Muslims used hajj narratives and experiences to negotiate their positions within various overlapping yet distinct spheres.

Conclusion

Ultimately, the hajj as a bureaucratic process and as an experience (re)produces both Chinese citizens and the transnational Umma. Through the bureaucratic process of the hajj application, the Chinese state creates the “other” in a manageable form. By applying to perform the pilgrimage, the hajj applicant creates themselves as a certain kind of citizen, while at the

¹³⁹ . See chapter four for a description of the Shadian Incident. Chapter two compares and contrasts Hui-Muslim “authentic” identity in the city of Kunming and in the rural religious enclave of Shadian, and briefly mentions the Incident.

same time, re-creating his or her relationship with the state. Through the experience of the hajj pilgrimage itself, the hajji was dually transformed: through linguistic barriers and state-organized tour groups plus China's place in global capitalism, it enhanced one's consciousness as a Chinese citizen; through spirituality, and encounters with non-Chinese Muslims, it heightened one's consciousness as a member of the *Umma*. This experience thus created a patriotic Chinese citizen, while it simultaneously positioned those citizens as members of the transnational *Umma*. In so doing, the hajj experience creates persons who are simultaneously nationalists and transnational. Finally, unravelling the formations of Hui-Muslim trans/nationalisms through the hajj and the variable positionings of hajjis as actors sheds light on our understandings of sovereign/subject relations more generally.

China Muslim Hajj Pilgrimage Registration Form

Province (Autonomous Region、 Direct-Controlled Municipality) City (Place, Zhou, 盟)

County (Precinct, Administrative District, 旗)

Applicant Must Complete the Following Section:						2” Standard Photogra ph
Name						
Sex		Nationality		Political Status		
Birth Year/ Month				Occupation		
Location of Household Registration						
Work Unit						
Home Address						
Identification Card Number						
Contact Telephone Number				Zip Code		
State of Health						
Financial Situation/ Condition						

Signature of Applicant		Date of Application	Y/M/D
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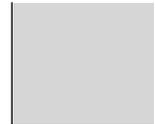
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省（自治区、直辖市）

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以下内容由报名者填写					2寸 标准 照片	
姓名						
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健康状况						



经济 状况			
报名者签名		交表日期	年 月 日

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Chapter Six

Conclusion

In the introduction to this dissertation, I posed a relatively simple question: following decades of turmoil and isolation, how do Hui-Muslims in Yunnan Province legitimize their own versions of Islam? This question is threaded throughout this dissertation, and indeed at some level each chapter revolves around the production of Hui selves, albeit in different ways and through different means: religious practice, readings of genealogy, bodily comportment, dress, gestures, storytelling, the performance of the hajj pilgrimage.

In chapter one, I discuss how pious Muslims in Shadian exhibited what I term “situational nationalism” in response to the Tōhoku earthquake and tsunami that struck Japan in April 2011. Although these pious Muslims typically sent aid to victims of natural disasters, in this case their anti-Japanese sentiments overruled their charity, and in fact they celebrated Japan’s catastrophe. Moreover, they justified this celebration not only by using Japan’s past sins against China but also in a specifically Muslim way – by relying on Quranic verses that detailed Allah’s punishment of sinners.

In chapter two, I compare and contrast the different ways that Yunnanese Hui-Muslims legitimized their authenticity in two field sites, the urban provincial capital of Kunming and the rural Muslim enclave of Shadian. Hui-Muslims in both communities legitimized their own versions of Islamic authenticity, but they did so in very different ways. In Kunming, the need to assimilate to dominant temporal modes, among other practical considerations, precluded religious practice. In addition, scientific notions of genetics as symbols of “modernity”

influenced the rise of genealogical and ethnic means of identification as Muslim. In contrast, in Shadian Islamic authenticity emerged from the Quran itself; religiosity rather than ethnicity was the primary means of identification as Muslim.

In chapter three, I show how the urban—rural dichotomy is not nearly as distinct as I pretend it is in chapter two by analyzing the processes of becoming urban. In each case, my interlocutors resolved tensions in themselves that reflected broader communal anxieties surrounding Islamic authenticity, urbanization, and modernization. Despite the ruptures in their lives – whether they were migrating to the city or being displaced from their homes – my interlocutors ultimately managed to reconfigure authentic selves within their new contexts, and in the process, (re)create both individual and collectivized senses of the wholeness of being “authentic” Muslims.

In chapter four, I analyze the ways in which one narrative of conflict is recounted in Yunnan, and how it (re)produces the very relationships it describes while also forging communal bonds. Although the narrative of the “Shadian Incident” differs depending upon who is telling it, who is listening, and other contextual details, it consistently reveals the complexities of relationships between different groups in contemporary Yunnan. Moreover, storytelling and the recounting of oral histories remain significant for the legitimization of Hui-Muslim authenticity.

In chapter five, I investigate trans/nationalism and the relationships between sovereign and subject by focusing on the process of performing the pilgrimage to Mecca. Recognizing that the P.R.C. restricts certain types of citizens from traveling abroad, Yunnanese prospective hajjis submitted themselves to bureaucratic requirements and professed their loyalty to the Chinese nation-state; this process at once empowered hajjis as creative agents active in their own self-

production and engendered sentiment (*ganqing* 感情) toward the Chinese nation, toward China's ascendancy in global capitalism, and toward Allah. Ultimately, this process legitimized a version of Islam that conformed to the requirements of the Chinese nation-state while also carving out space for agency and authentic religious practice.

Collectively, these chapters all intersect with particular themes and questions; however, the primary question that motivates each chapter differs substantially from that of the other chapters. In this regard, there is no thesis to this dissertation, at least not in any traditional sense. However, the various arenas of academic inquiry in each chapter are relevant to the gestalt of the situation of Hui-Muslims in contemporary Yunnan. That is to say, the different spheres of inquiry that drive each individual chapter are related to the different experiential spheres that make up the Yunnanese Hui-Muslim universe. I am not suggesting that this dissertation in any way captures the “totality” of Yunnanese Huiness, but rather that these various threads of inquiry are woven together in a way that amounts to more than the sum of its parts.

Moreover, each chapter does attempt to destabilize and transcend specific sets of dichotomies. These tensions are woven into this dissertation as a whole, but each part focuses on ultimately transcending one set. Chapter two negotiates the tensions between urban and rural; chapter three between rupture (or part) and restoration (whole); chapter four between history and memory; and chapter five between nationalism and transnationalism. In this sense, perhaps the thesis of this dissertation is synthesis: such distinctions as nature—culture, urban—rural, tradition—modernity are not opposed but rather synthetic.

In some ways, then, this dissertation returns to early concerns in anthropology regarding parts and wholes. Writing in the earlier half of the 20th century, anthropologists Radcliffe-

Brown, Malinowski, Benedict, Bateson and others all concerned themselves with the relationships between parts and wholes in anthropological analysis (albeit in different ways), viewing the whole as more than the sum of its parts. In recent years, anthropology (among other fields) has instead prioritized rupture, fragmentation, discord, and deconstruction; whether discussing the formation of subjectivities or nation-states, modernity or the past, recent anthropological work has tended to rely on such tropes of disunity, largely neglecting a major part of these processes: restoration. This dissertation attempts to rectify such neglect, restoring restoration to the processes of modernization, urbanization, identification, and so on. Granted, even this attempt at synthesis can only be partial; however it is my aim here that in recognizing the totality of these processes, this ethnography more completely portrays the positions of my interlocutors, who, despite the ruptures they had experienced, felt whole, and experienced their worlds as such. Finally, this approach seeks to return to anthropology some of what has been neglected since the turn toward deconstructionism.

One of my points throughout this dissertation is that contradiction does not indicate fragmentation; part of being human is being complex and at times contradictory, but that lack of consistence does not mean an individual or community is any less “whole.” Individual interlocutors often held contradictory positions, or in different contexts would make completely different points. An individual interlocutor in Shadian, for instance, insisted that contact with the rest of the Muslim world had not influenced the Arabization we see in Shadian, although in a different conversation she later described that contact as having had great influence on Shadian’s Arabization. Similarly, individuals could be at once emotional and rational, as in the case of my landlady Mrs. Ding, who was typically a rational, calm, matter-of-fact woman but occasionally

became very emotional. This happened not only in different contexts but also in the course of a single occasion. When, for example, Mrs. Ding recounted the Shadian Incident to her daughter, she was arguably using her emotion rationally, in order to persuade her daughter to embrace her Hui heritage. Moreover, although Mrs. Ding's emotion during that recounting was definitely real, she also managed to rationally choose details that would elicit a desired response from her daughter. Other interlocutors, such as Ma Lian and Su Jing, negotiated internal contradictions such as the desires to be both a good Muslim daughter and a modern, urbanized Chinese woman. Although on the surface these desires are not mutually compatible, Ma Lian and Su Jing did not view them as contradictory or feel fragmented as a result of these desires, and managed to balance both as aspects of their whole selves.

If even a single interlocutor could – and did – hold such contradictory positions, how can anyone expect a community of individuals to be homogeneous? A group of pious Shadian Muslims at one mosque, for instance, were both charitable to those in need and joyful in the wake of Japan's Tōhoku disaster, and held positions that were simultaneously Islamic transnationalist and Chinese nationalist. No doubt some individuals, perhaps even the “silent majority,” disagreed with these positions, but such disagreement did not make them any less a part of the group. Similarly, communities, like individuals, are fundamentally complex and contradictory; there are no entirely homogeneous communities. Such heterogeneity, however, does not make the community less whole; rather, the shifting of blurred boundaries between those who belong and those who do not, between self and other, are part of the process of the (re)production of communities and selves.

The broader analytical concerns discussed above unite the seemingly disparate threads of this dissertation. Overarching themes include the effects of modernity and urbanization, the rise of trans/nationalism, the practices of religion and ethnic identity, and the formation of subjectivities and sovereignties are interwoven throughout the dissertation; these interrelated parts make up the whole of this dissertation. At the same time, however, practical ethnographic concerns remain crucial, particularly given recent events in Yunnan.

Following the recent knife attack at the Kunming Train Station, in which 29 people were killed and more than 140 injured, the Chinese government has reportedly deported hundreds of Uyghurs from Yunnan back to Xinjiang. In Yunnan, Kunming and Shadian hosted among the largest Uyghur populations in the province. Shadian in particular attracted pious Uyghurs who sought a place where they could practice Islam (relatively) freely. Other internal deportations of Uyghurs are allegedly in the works, with ethnic profiling becoming an increasing problem, and nearby Thailand is reportedly deporting Uyghurs back to China, too. As tensions over the Eastern Turkestan secessionist movement flare, conspiracy theorists are even positing that Malaysian Airlines Flight 370 was hijacked by Uyghurs intent to murder the predominantly Chinese passengers and use the plane to stage a 9/11 style attack. In such a climate, Yunnanese Hui-Muslims are at once being eyed with suspicion and being viewed as a potential “model Muslim minority” who can foster solid relations abroad and rebuild the “hajj diplomacy.”

All of my Hui-Muslim interlocutors in Yunnan with whom I have kept contact have deplored the attack itself, and bemoaned its aftermath. Some are outraged that they are once again under suspicion merely for being Muslims; others are fearful of latent Han hostility; while still others are resentful of being used, or content to bask in the good graces of the state. As with

the hajj applications, some Hui criticize the government's anti-Uyghur bias, even as they themselves benefit from it. A handful of cynics (understandably) noted that the Chinese government purposely sows discord between the Uyghurs and the Hui in order to create cleavages that will forestall a Chinese Pan-Islamic union.

Governmental favor enables the Hui to cultivate the transnationalism to which they aspire, and also rebuilds trust between the state and the Hui. And yet, in order to maintain this, they must pursue forms of "authenticity" that are recognized (and recognizable) by the governmental authorities who control access to opportunities such as the hajj, relative religious freedom, and preferential policies. In order to benefit from their position as a model Muslim minority, they must perform all three of those roles: the model citizen, the Muslim, and the minority. This potentially forecloses opportunities to Hui who do not strive to strike a balance between assimilation to the majority and performance of state-sanctioned forms of "authenticity."

In this dissertation, I attempt to carve out a space in which to unravel such situations. By comparing the two communities of Kunming and Shadian, I show how these questions take on specifically local forms. Shadian Hui-Muslims, for instance, as pious Muslims, would be able to perform that role well. However, their reputation for violent "uprisings" and their deep sympathies with the Uyghurs as fellow Muslims could potentially diminish their ability to perform Chinese governmentally sanctioned forms of "authenticity" and their access to state-controlled benefits. In contrast, Kunming Hui-Muslims, especially secular ones, may not be able to perform the roles of "authentic" Muslim or minority well enough to become a model Muslim minority. Ultimately, however, it is up to Hui-Muslim individuals and communities whether or

not they would even be willing to perform authenticity. As it stands now, most of my interlocutors hope that the current tense climate soon calms, and they can continue to produce their own forms of “authenticity,” (relatively) free from state pressure to do otherwise.

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