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Between the State and the Ummah: The Hui Negotiation of Identity in Northwest China

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Abstract

This study examines the genesis and on going development of Hui identity in Xining, Qinghai. The people today known as Hui have always negotiated their identity between the Chinese governing centre and Islam. Employing a theory of centre-periphery civilisational influence pioneered by Stevan Harrell, this ethnography seeks to determine the relative influence of the Chinese hegemonic centre on the one hand, and the Islamic *ummah* on the other, on the construction of national, ethnic and religious identity. Historical Islamic influences have resulted in a peculiarly sectarian nature to Islam in northwest China, and attitudes to the identity project of the governing centre are shown to vary across the sectarian spectrum. The Party-State actively promotes the *Zhonghua minzu* national identity, and employs the concept of ethnic unity *(minzu tuanjie)* to seek to incorporate China's ethnic minorities into this one over-arching national identity. Arguably, Islam teaches the brotherhood of all Muslims, and sees this faith identity as superior and prior to all others. The strategy for inclusion of Muslims in the Chinese identity has been a project of the Chinese State, and involves the adaptation and utilisation of Islam to achieve the purposes of the State.

Through a content analysis of core publications, I first describe the process through which the Party-State sought to adapt Islam to be in harmony with China's socialist society, and then how the State actively promoted this correct version of Islam through a series of authorised sermons and political tropes in the Muslim directed media. Then, using detailed interviews and participant observation, I explain how Hui responses to this correct Islam are shaped by the different expressions of Islam in Xining, reflecting the various external and internal Islamic influences. The strong sectarian nature of Islamic identity in Xining directly influences the acceptance or resistance of the hegemonic centre's communication of national, ethnic and religious identity. The persistence of sectarian identity represents the strongest influence on Hui identity formation, and is possibly encouraged by the Party-State to counter the political power of a fully united Muslim Hui identity.

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Chapter One: Islam in the People's Republic

At the Feast of Fast Breaking (*Id al-Fitr*) at the end of Ramadan in August 2011, at least 200,000 white-capped Muslim men gathered for Id prayer on the main street of Xining, Qinghai in northwest China. The main road through the city centre was closed by police for two hours, and loud speakers along this main East District thoroughfare broadcast the instructions for prayer, and the Id sermon. This apparent unity of large numbers of Hui Muslims from all over Qinghai Province gathering in one united expression of the *ummah* was observed by hundreds of observers, foreign tourists and local non-Muslims alike. This public demonstration of the Hui practice of Islam, and the tolerance of this practice by the State, occurs twice each year outside the main East Gate mosque (*dongguansi*) in Xining city.

Just three blocks away on a parallel street an alternative gathering takes place outside the *Yangjiazhuang* mosque. The men are fewer in number, around 10,000, and the Id prayer has a more passionate, emotional tone, and sounds very different from the main gathering. Following the public prayer and accompanied prostration, all the men stay for about twenty minutes in private prayer (*du'a*), listening to further Qur'anic recitation over the loudspeakers. Why are these men not joining with the main body of the Muslim community in a common expression of unity?

A further gathering of around 1,000 Muslims meet for Fast Breaking prayer in a third location, inside the courtyard of a more recently built mosque on *Shulinxiang*. In this gathering the religious leaders are dressed in full length white gowns, and wear the Arabian style red-and-white-chequered headdress. When I greet them (*Asalam alaikum*) they smile broadly and rapidly talk to me in Arabic, though when I reply in Chinese, the smiles fade somewhat, and a guarded suspicion emerges. They warn me that the police are rapidly taking an interest in our conversation, and I should probably leave. Sure enough, three uniformed officers are casually approaching, so I smile and cycle away.

Who are these three separate groups, praying in three separate locations at the same time on this great Feast Day of Islam? Why are they not meeting together, in

true demonstration of the united community that is such a key tenet of Islam? The answer to this has its roots in the complex history, theology and politics of northwest China and the Hui nationality group.

The first group meeting outside the Dongguan mosque represent the majority Muslim community here, those aligned with the Ikhwan (*Yihewani*) related to the Muslim brotherhood (*al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin*), which dominates Islam in Qinghai Province. Of the twenty-five mosques in East District (*Chengdongqu*), only two are not affiliated to this teaching school, or sect. One of these two, *Yangjiazhuang*, is where the second group of Fast-breakers met for prayer. This mosque was rebuilt in 2011, and is known as the Old Teaching mosque, frequented by those aligned both to the older and more traditional Qadim group, and also attended by many Sufis. The unusual and distinctive Qur'anic reading style is a characteristic of the Qadim, as is the heightened emotional involvement in worship, demonstrating strong Sufi influence. The third group described meet in a newer mosque, and are the so-called White Sect (*baipai*), also known disparagingly by the wider Muslim community as the Three Raisers (*santai*), owing to their practice of raising their hands three times during prayer out of respect for the three groups of 'Pious Predecessors' (*al-Salaf al-Saleh*) from earliest Islamic history. They refer to themselves as *Sailaifeiye* (*al-Salafiyah*).

These three groups broadly delineate the historical development of Islam in Xining's East District, and present a fascinating case study on the entry of Islam into a majority non-Muslim society; a society with strong social cohesion, a dominant historical Confucian tradition and a current post-Communist atheistic capitalist ideology. As the historical development of Islam in China is traced, the initial interaction of Islam with a 'foreign' Chinese culture is succeeded by the beginning of an indigenization of Islam and the concurrent emergence of the Hui people (*Huimin*) during a period of political isolation associated with the Ming dynasty. Later, the comparatively open policy of the early Qing dynasty allowed the arrival of Sufi mendicant missionaries, and the subsequent fragmenting of Muslim society along theological lines (though often for political or economic reasons), and subsequently over the last one hundred and twenty years repeated reform movements entered China seeking to reform Chinese Islam. Throughout

Islam's history in China, Muslims have sought to position themselves between being Muslim and being Chinese. They have been influenced both by the changing governing centre, and by their faith and the changing trends of that faith.

Each of the national-level Islamic waves of teaching entering China has a unique local expression, and each has left behind a 'remnant' Islamic community, with its own particular teaching school, or *jiaopai,* with its own history of relationship with the hegemonic centre. Each has its distinctive interpretations in the areas of practice, praxis and of the role of Islam in relating to the governing majority. Each likewise interacts with the Chinese political centre in different ways.

Religious identity has been reviving in the People's Republic of China. Many mosques have been rebuilt and extended in the past five years, and other Islamic sites likewise. Each of the teaching schools has seen an increase in mosque attendance, evidenced by the impressive expression of Islamic piety at the two major festivals, repeated each Friday on a smaller scale. There is a fear among Chinese of a potential growing trend towards Islamism among the Hui in Qinghai, and a growing Islamophobia reflected in social media. By Islamism I mean the desire to assert an Islamic identity above a Chinese or an ethnic identity, and to reform what are perceived to be corrupted Islamic practices, thus establishing a pure Muslim community that strengthens its ties with the Islamic world. This study examines the relationship between the Hui and the Chinese Party-State in the area of contested national identity.

In this introductory chapter I will situate the project within the field of current Hui studies, discuss the methodological principles that underpin this study, and outline the hypotheses that will be explored in the thesis.

1.1   The Field of Hui Studies

Chinese Muslim and Hui studies conducted by foreigners appeared earlier than those by Chinese scholars, and can be broadly divided into three sources; those written in English, those in Japanese and those in languages of the European continent, largely French, Russian and German. Other than scarce mention of

Muslims (*Saracens*) in such early works as Marco Polo's Travels (Polo 2004: 168, 177), the earliest of these dates to the nineteenth century, and the majority are the work of Christian missionaries. Russian missionaries Vasilev and Palladii wrote some of the earliest accounts (Palladii 1888), as well as French writers Vissieres, d'Ollone, de Thiersant and Deveria. Marshall Broomhall cited Gabriel Deveria's book, "*Origine de L'Islame en Chine*" as the most valuable book yet written (Broomhall 1910: 308), Samuel Zwemer reviewed the work of the d'Ollone mission which had significant influence on raising awareness of Muslims in China, although like many writings of the nineteenth and early twentieth century were preoccupied with the recently ended Mohammedan[*] rebellion, thus exploring the Muslim relationship with the Qing dynasty (d'Ollone 1912: 295; Zwemer 1918: 90). Broomhall's book "*Islam in China: A Neglected Problem*", produced in 1910 by the China Inland Mission, was the earliest written in English, and sought to bring before a western Christian public the spiritual need and condition of the Muslims of China, to promote a missionary endeavour to convert them to Christianity. As an introduction it is a comprehensive and valuable study, yet suffers from the orientalist spirit in which it was written. Many missionaries contributed articles to the journal "*The Moslem World*", founded in 1911. One hundred and thirty-three such articles on Islam in China were produced between 1911 and 1949, mostly by western missionaries in China (Zhou Chuanbin 2005: 101), such as Isaac Mason (Mason 1929), George Harris, who spent upward of 30 years in Xining in the early twentieth century (Harris 1935), and the renowned Claude L Pickens, who in addition to several articles in Moslem World (Pickens 1936) is also responsible for the valuable collection of photographs taken in 1933 and 1936 when Samuel Zwemer toured northwest China, and now held in the Harvard Yencheng library (available on Harvard Library website). These resources reveal a great deal about Muslims in northwest China in the period of the nationalists, but again are somewhat polemical, being written to promote an evangelistic effort.

During the Sino-Japanese war, the study of Muslims in China by westerners decreased, and Japanese researchers grew in their study and analysis of the Hui, though primarily for political and military purposes (Wan 2012: 13). This

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[*] The use of the term Mohammedan for followers of Islam pervades the early western literature on Islam in China.

corresponds also with a rise in Chinese studies of the Hui, with numerous publications and bulletins produced by Hui scholars living in Japan, such as "*Awakening the Hui*" (*Xing Hui pian*), edited by Huang Zhenpan, considered by some to be the earliest Hui study in modern times (Ding 2001: 53). These early works are very introductory, and tentative in their conclusions. Many portray an antagonistic relationship between the Chinese and the Muslims resident among them, and an inordinate focus is given to the northwest Hui rebellions contemporaneous with much of this work.

During the first decade of the People's Republic of China western scholarship on Hui and Islam decreased significantly, and Chinese Communist scholarship became dominant, particularly under the prolific Bai Shouyi (1909-2000), who published a series of works between 1942 and 1949, including "*A Brief History of Islam in China*" and "*The Outline of Islamic History in China*", which although guilty of conflating the terms Hui and Islam, yet reveals a desire for incorporation of Muslims within the national identity, though very much on Communist terms. The most significant publication of this period in Chinese was the pamphlet "*On the issues of the Huihui minzu*" (*Huihui minzu wenti*), the work of a Committee and first published in 1941 (Ethnic Issues Research Committee 1980). This first distinguished Islam as a religion from Hui as an ethnic group, and was foundational in shaping the Chinese Communist Party's approach to ethnicity and Islam (Cieciura 2014: 12). Bai Shouyi continued as the doyen of Hui studies in the Communist period, producing "*The New Life of the Huihui Minzu*" in 1951, and after 'reform and opening up' (*gaige kaifeng*) also published "*The History of China's Huihui minzu*" in 1981. Other significant Chinese scholars of Islam include Ma Tong, and the several works he wrote introducing sectarian diversity in China, such as, "*A Historical Record of China's Islamic Teaching Schools and Menhuan System*" (Ma Tong 1983) and "*The Origins of the Islamic Branches and Menhuan of China*" (Ma Tong 1986), both widely used and referred to by western scholars of Chinese Islam, particularly evident in Michael Dillon's "*China's Muslim Hui Community*" (Dillon 1999). In addition, "*Selected Reference materials on China's Islamic History 1911-1949*" by Li Xinghua and Feng Jinyuan is a significant work (Li and Feng 1985), and Li Xinghua went on to publish historical articles in *Journal of Hui Minority Studies* tracing the development of Islam in significant provinces and

cities, including "*Xining Islamic History*" (Li Xinghua 2008), widely referred to in chapter three of this thesis.

The opening of China to the outside world in the last few decades has increased the access of scholars to the Hui, and much work was done on describing the process and mechanisms by which the Hui consider their identity in a rapidly changing cultural and political context. During the Cultural Revolution (1966-76) scholarship was at a low ebb, but Hui studies by westerners began to grow again with the period of reform and opening, with Raphael Israeli's study "*Muslims in China: A Study in Cultural Confrontation*" significant among them (Israeli 1978). Israeli, as the title of his book suggests, represents a particularly antagonistic view of the relationship between Muslims in China and Chinese people, essentially claiming a fundamental incompatibility of Islam with Chinese culture. His view seems largely unchanged in his later publications "*Sectarian Islam and Sino-Muslim Identity in China*" (Israeli 2000) and "*Islam in China*" (Israeli 2002). Australian Donald Leslie likewise began his studies in the 1980s, and produced a masterful account of historical sources of Chinese Islam, "*Islam in Traditional China: A Short History to 1800*" (Leslie 1986).

Dru Gladney is perhaps the best-known of scholars from the 1980s, completing his PhD in 1987 based on fieldwork in northwest China, and publishing the influential book, "*Muslim Chinese: Ethnic Nationalism in the People's Republic*" in 1991, followed by "*Dislocating China: Muslims, Minorities and Other Subaltern Subjects*" in 2004 (Gladney 1991; Gladney 2004), and numerous papers in between and since, looking at various aspects of Chinese Islam, including a significant book chapter introducing the Salafiyya as a potential new 'tide' of Islam (Gladney 1999). Gladney is widely regarded as a pioneer in understanding the Hui ethnicity, and particularly of how the State created the ethnic category Hui, as well as (following Joseph Fletcher's pioneering work, (Fletcher 1994)) tracing the different 'tides' of Islam that influenced Islam's development in China. Gladney sees the construction of Hui identity as "*a process of dialogical interaction between self-perceived notions of identity and sociopolitical contexts, often defined by the state*" (Gladney 2004: 159-160). Jonathan Lipman, similarly respected as a pioneer western researcher on the Hui, wrote an historical overview of the Muslim population in China,

"*Familiar Strangers: A History of Muslims in Northwest China*", which explores the historically changing relationship between the people now known as Hui, and the Chinese, and particularly studies their growing sense of belonging (Lipman 1997). It further develops his previous historical work covering the Ma warlords of northwest China (Lipman 1984), and exploring the Han-Hui violence of the Qing period (Lipman 1990). "*Familiar Strangers*" is a useful study that led Lipman to coin the neologism 'Sino-Muslim' to describe the bicultural nature of China's Muslims, though the book's weakness is in its scant attention given to post-1949 China. Lipman was the student of the late Joseph Fletcher, who wrote widely on Sufism in northwest China, posthumously publishing a collection edited with Beatrice Manz, "*Studies on Chinese and Islamic Inner Asia*" (Fletcher and Manz 1995). His cautionary word to scholars of the Hui, "*that the wide distribution of Muslims…took place in a bewildering variety of contexts*" calls for "*careful research, which must be local rather than generalized*" (Lipman 1997: 39) is reflected in this localised study.

James Frankel believes that the more general 'Islam in China' studies of the last century are now outdated, and need to be augmented by more focused, narrower scholarship on aspects of the subject, coming from different although interrelated disciplines, such as "*economics, anthropology, sociology and political science*" (Frankel 2011a: 251). Frankel's own work "*Rectifying God's Name*" (Frankel 2011b) was the latest in a series of books that examined the historical process of adaptation of Islam to Confucianism in the late Ming and early Qing dynasty, building on pioneering work carried out by Sachiko Murata, William Chittick and Tu Weiming in 2000 on the unique expression of Chinese Islam found in what was known as the Han Kitab, in "*Chinese Gleams of Sufi Light: Wang Taiyu's Great Learning of the Pure and Real and Liu Chih's Displaying the Concealment of the Real Realm*" and on the later work by Zvi Ben-Dor Benite, in 2005, "*The Dao of Muhammad: A Cultural History of Muslims in Late Imperial China*" which continued this study of the Han Kitab, but primarily looked at the social and cultural context of the collection (Ben-Dor Benite 2005; Murata et al. 2000). Other scholars examined other focused subjects, such as Maris Gillette's 2000 work "*From Mecca to Beijing: Modernization and Consumption Among Urban Chinese Muslims*" which is an ethnographic study of the Muslim quarter in Xi'an, and looks at how the Hui,

although equally modern in their material consumption practices, yet maintain a difference from their Han neighbours by what they consume (Gillette 2000). Maria Jaschok, working with her Chinese colleague Shui Jingjun, conducted a thorough study of that fascinating Chinese Islam anomaly - mosques run exclusively for women - in "*The History of Women's Mosques in Chinese Islam: A Mosque of Their Own*", and continues to publish on Chinese Hui Muslim women (Jaschok and Shui 2000). Élisabeth Allès published articles looking at the development of Muslim religious education (Allès 2003), and Jackie Armijo explored the international connections of Muslim schools in Yunnan province (Armijo 2009). Allès also, along with Chérif-Chebbi and Halfon, published articles looking at the sectarian challenges and development of reformism and particularly the Ikhwan in China (Allès, Chérif-Chebbi and Halfon 2003). Chérif-Chebbi's contribution in understanding the origins and development of reformism for the Ikhwan is an especially valuable work of scholarship (Chérif-Chebbi 2004).

Zang Xiaowei conducted a thorough ethnographic study in Lanzhou, and his 2011 book "*Ethnicity and Urban Life in China: a Comparative Study of Hui Muslims and Han Chinese*" based on his 2001-2004 fieldwork is a comparative analysis of Hui and Han lifestyles (Zang 2011). He seeks to focus on how ethnicity influences urban populations, concluding that Hui are more traditional and Han more willing to embrace modernity – hardly a surprising conclusion, yet reinforcing Party-State assumptions about the evolutionary development of minorities in relation to the Han majority – a clear example of the centre as a civilising influence (see chapter four). Most recently, Matthew Erie brought together training in anthropology and law to conduct a study of the relationship of China's national law with Islamic law in his 2016 book, "*China and Islam: The Prophet, the Party, and Law*" (Erie 2016). While exploring the changing relationship of the Hui with the State, he concludes that the effective inclusion of Islamic understanding of the law should be thought of as a *minjian* practice, a flexible and rapid interpretation of law that aims to avoid engaging with the formal rigid Chinese law, perhaps a further illustration of a pragmatic relationship between peripheral Hui and the hegemonic centre.

Other than internally generated and ideologically controlled articles in Chinese journals and magazines, largely reinforcing the Party-line (one magazine is

considered as evidence in chapter five below), there is an increase in more independent Chinese scholarship on Islam in China. This includes not only general summary studies on Islam in China (Gui et al. 2016; Mi and You 2004; Zhou and Ma 2009), but also studies focusing on Hui contribution to anti-Japanese war, evidence of patriotism, such as Wan Lei's "*The Hui Minority in Modern China: Identity and Struggles*" (Wan 2012), and excellent studies on the role of cyber-Islamic environments in influencing the Hui by the Hong Kong scholar Wai-yip Ho (Ho 2010; Ho 2012).

With Frankel's encouragement in mind, this work is a localised study on identity construction among Hui in a district of Xining city, Qinghai, and how that identity is influenced by a changing relationship with the governing centre, and how the differing Islamic influences have also shaped this identity construction. It contributes to the field of study in examining the particular role of sectarian identity and consequent Islamic influence in the contested identity construction of Hui people, who continue to negotiate that identity between being Chinese and being Muslim.

1.2   Methodology

The theory of a twin civilisational centre-periphery influence defines the conceptual framework for this study in identity contestation among the Hui in the East District of Xining, Qinghai (a theory discussed in detail in chapter four). I was resident in the city from 2006 until 2012, working full time for an NGO, and lived in the East District during that time, in a Muslim-dominated living compound. Although not Muslim, nor assuming a Muslim identity, I adopted a *halal* lifestyle to facilitate better working relationships with Muslims, allowing me to befriend colleagues and neighbours. This involved only eating in Muslim restaurants and maintaining a ritually clean home. In order to understand how this qualitative study was conducted, and on what philosophical basis I make my conclusions, some consideration of epistemological foundations will be helpful. This cross-disciplinary study draws on literature from the fields of sociology, anthropology, political science and Islamic studies. This section describes these foundations, and then looks at some of the challenges and detailed methods employed in carrying

out the research.

1.2.1 An epistemological reflection

In my fieldwork I begin not from philosophical presumptions, but from a real-life research issue, how my Hui neighbours and friends negotiated their identity between religious, national and ethnic categories. In the course of my work and social life, each Hui I interacted with seemed to exhibit varying and changing ways of expressing their identity as Chinese, as Muslims and as Hui. The diversity of sectarian allegiance seemed to influence my friends' perception of their core identity, and led to this study. This study is essentially about identity politics, and looks at the ways in which the Party-State nation-building project, and the various Islamic teaching schools' promotion of religious identity, influence individuals' conception of collective identity. From considering individuals' reflections, I explore how the negotiation of a Hui ethno-religious identity is pursued in the context of both a strong centralised project of establishing a national Chinese identity, and a similarly strong, centralised religious project of establishing an orthodox, Islamic identity. The theoretical framework in which this question of identity will be considered is thus political, exploring the construction of national identity as a means of establishing a stable, unified nation-state; anthropological, in the ethnographic tradition, examining the real life experience and reaction to questions of identity of individual Hui men in Xining, among whom I lived for six years; and sociological, in that it seeks to explain the societal impact on the Hui community of their negotiation of identity.

Since I am exploring the nature of social reality, and seeking to describe and explain the influences that ascribe, affirm and shape identity categories among Hui Muslim men, the natural epistemological position would initially seem to be constructionist and interpretivist in nature. A pure positivist, so-called 'scientific approach', is generally no longer employed in the social sciences, since reality may not always be measurable and observable through empirical means - a consideration I return to in section 1.2.2 below. In the real world of social science, measurability is not necessarily the key criterion of reality. As I will explain in my summary of social identity theory in chapter two, I consider reality to be socially

constructed, with the human factor impossible to overstate, whether expressed through institutions, or through individuals. The ambiguity, uncertainty and subjectivity of human reality is a recognition of the need to employ a different epistemological approach to positivism in the social sciences.

Constructionism (or interpretivism) may be viewed as being at one end of the spectrum from objective to subjective reality. Since social reality is constructed by individuals as they interact with one another, it is by definition subjective. A constructionist approach asserts that there are no tangible, material qualities that allow social reality to be measured or observed in some literal way, since reality is constructed in the minds of people, and re-enforced through social interaction. Objective knowledge of social reality is not possible, since this reality is not something tangibly 'out there', but something subjectively present in the minds and social discourses of individuals and communities in the real world. Such subjectivity opens up the weaknesses of a constructionist epistemology, which are relativism, uncertainty and an accusation of lacking scientific rigour. If all is interpreted, then how can anyone be sure or confident that your interpretation is the best one? If nothing is true, real and observable then all our theories, explanations and interpretations are relative, and of questionable value. Aspects of this study fit well with the constructionist approach since, as I will show in chapter two, ethnic identity is very much an interpreted identity that only exists in a real sense in social interaction, since there is no primordial quality that imputes ethnicity to any individual, only adopted, assumed or ascribed identities, reinforced and affirmed in social interaction.

With positivism too objective, and constructionism too subjective, a middle ground seems desirable. Increasingly over the last two decades just such a middle ground has been proposed by the post-positivist school, that seeks to explain what it describes, but with a certain degree of humility, and less absolute in its conclusions. This approach seeks to balance the objectivity of evidence, with the subjectivity of interpretation and application by human agency. It is neither a fully embraced interpretivism, but a form of modified positivism. One can observe and tentatively measure certain phenomena, one can describe and seek to interpret other phenomena, and one can then suggest explanations that contribute to an

understanding of the interplay of these factors. Perhaps the best articulation of post-positivism relevant for this study is realism, which:

> "…can provide a model of scientific explanation which avoids both positivism and relativism" (Robson 2011: 29).

Realism enables social researchers to acknowledge values in a way not open to positivists, permitting a new integration of subjectivist and objectivist approaches to social theory. Whereas objectivists deny the causal role of agency and subjectivists deny any objective character for society, realists marry the two, and claim that social structure is at the same time the product and the medium of human action (Robson 2011: 35). This study seeks to employ a critical realist approach, that examines the ways in which real Hui men at a given moment in time reflect on the influences they have experienced, conceptualised as being influences from a Party-State ideological centre, and an Islamic ideological centre.

1.2.2   The problem of detecting and measuring influence

Influence is a subjective concept, and any empirical measure of influence unlikely, since the measuring of changes in human behaviour lacks a quantitative basis. Some posit a Durkheimian deterministic causality, that seeks to show that a given influence always results in a given effect (Russo 2009: 103). In the social sciences such positivist determinism is unrealistic, both because of the complexity of social networks and actors, as well as the multiple factors that cause change in opinions, values and beliefs. The results of any given influence may be detectable, but those results do need to be interpreted, and a critical realist approach that suggests the effects of influence based on the real world responses of those influenced is the model this thesis embraces. This ethnography thus makes some use of phenomenology as a discipline, studying how through the opinions, responses and lived-behaviour of respondents one can determine the impact of a given influence. Triangulating between the message and influence transmitted, the acceptance and internalization of that message and its reflection and echo by the recipients will qualitatively reveal how the centre-periphery discourse has been accepted and retained, or otherwise.

Likewise, measuring change in such a synchronic study is not possible, since there is no baseline viewpoint that can be demonstrated against which the responses of interviewees may be compared, nor how the emphases and nuances in an imam's teaching gradually adapt to the influence of one or other civilising centre. People are not blank slates upon which civilising centres directly inscribe the correct belief or course of action to be followed (Bastow, Dunleavy and Tinkler 2014: 3), and yet opinions are shaped and views changed by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) Central Propaganda Department (*Zhongxuanbu*). Religious belief is shaped and transformed by the teaching of imams, the opinions of on-line experts, and the discourse and debate of Muslims in the public sphere. Although empirical measures are impossible, what can be usefully explored is the way in which influence is reflected in the responses of the people, and in suggesting possible reasons for the diversity of responses to the same question. The interaction of the twin centre influences, and the relative weight given to each message is reflected in the diversity of response.

The Party-State seeks to exert its political influence on the Hui periphery through effectively communicating the Party-State position on questions of national, ethnic and religious identity. The Party-State goal is the acceptance and conformance of all China's people to the official party line on belonging to China's unitary multi-ethnic nation. As Tobin says,

> "The party-state is promoting a transformative identity politics based on the conceptual apparatus of ethnic unity. This seeks to convince Han and ethnic minorities that they are part of the same national community" (Tobin 2011: 8).

This construction of a national identity involves transforming ethnic people into national people, with a final goal of disappearance of ethnicity through fusion into the common identity of *Zhonghua minzu* (Tobin 2011: 11). Thus, the Party-State seeks to advocate the following core messages:

i. **Ethnic Unity** *(minzu tuanjie)*
    All the ethnic groups of China should unite under one national identity, and ethno-nationalism, extremism and separatism are to be firmly resisted.

ii.   **The Chinese Nation** *(Zhonghua minzu)*
China has always been one indivisible people, with shared history and
origin, and has always been multi-ethnic.

iii.   **The Chinese Dream** *(Zhongguo meng)*
By uniting under one common identity, China will be renewed and take her
rightful place in world affairs, becoming a strong, prosperous global leader,
and overcoming the perceived century of humiliation received at the hands
of foreign oppressors.

iv.   **Religious Freedom** (*zongjiao ziyou*)
China has always operated a policy of freedom of religious belief, and
China's Muslims have freedom to practise their faith with the support and
supervision of the State. The Party-State protects the Muslim people from
extreme foreign influences that would threaten the integrity of the Chinese
people, specifically from the three evils of terrorism, extremism and
splittism.

As the Hui on the periphery receive these messages in various ways through the
CCP propaganda department, their attitude and opinions are shaped. The evidence
chapters explore some Hui responses to many of these State-driven messages.

There is a parallel influence of the Islamic centre message, communicated through
the mosque, imam, and social intercourse that likewise shapes the response to
these political centre messages about identity. Both the Party-State and the Islamic
centre exert an influence on the Hui periphery, but they also exert an influence on
each other, in that the message of the Party-State centre is shaped by its Islamic
context, and the message of the Islamic centre is shaped by its Chinese socio-
political context. Influence is certainly not mono-directional.

In this ethnographic study I focus on a description of the opinions of the
interviewees, followed by a suggested interpretation and attempted extrapolation
to wider Hui society in Xining. One significant limitation of the research is that the
interviewees are all Hui men, and that the majority were contacted through

meeting at the mosque. Indeed, seventeen of the thirty-three interviews were conducted with imams, and seven with students (manla), with only nine conducted with Hui business people, or university students. The primary reason for the gender imbalance is limitations of access. It is incredibly difficult, if not socially inappropriate, for a foreign man to gain access to female Hui in the home. Xining is unlike central and eastern China and does not have women mosques (*nüsi*), and so meeting female clergy or Islamic students was impossible. Being unable to explore how Hui women interact with the Party-State message of national, ethnic and religious identity necessarily limits the conclusions that can be made from this study. The disproportionate selection of imams and students from mosques as interviewees must also be considered when applying the findings of this study to the wider Hui context, as the conclusions to this thesis will reflect. Further consideration of the research strategy and recruitment of interviewees is provided in section 1.2.4 below.

Within a critical realist epistemology is must however be highlighted that nothing is determined as 'proven'; my conclusions in this study are propositional rather than categorical, and there is a necessary limit on how far these conclusions may be extended to represent the views of the wider Hui community. However, the present study does make a significant contribution to understanding influence on the Hui community in Xining, since it explores in detail one sector of Hui society – a powerful, influential and religiously authoritative sector - whose influence on Xining Hui society is suggested to be significant.

1.2.3   Research strategy

This critical realist approach seeks to combine the how and the why, the understanding and the explanation, of observable and unobservable social phenomenon in Hui Muslim communities in Xining, Qinghai. It examines social identity, mechanisms influencing and shaping the revival of ethnic and national identities, and explores the impact of Islamic trends as a primary mechanism. Within the centre-periphery framework I attempt to describe the conflicting forces influencing the identity formation and development of a peripheral people in response to the National and Islamic Projects, and make some preliminary

assessments of the various responses to these forces. Such a research design is clearly in the ethnographic tradition, but required a somewhat flexible design structure, since the initial data generated was reflected on and refined as the research progressed. Such an evolving design incorporated a mixed-methods approach, making use of a range of data collection methods, primarily interviews, but also content analysis and some participant observation.

1.2.4   Detailed methods

Balancing desirable methods with practical and pragmatic methods, the twin constraints of access and permission gave some limitation on the collection of data. As previously stated, this study is in the ethnographic tradition, since it is examining the feelings and attitudes of Hui people in the negotiation of their self-identity in response to the twin projects of the Party-State and Islamic centres. Significant use is made of primary and secondary documents relating to the content of the message from each centre, relying both on Party-State documents, the publications of the Party-State organ the China Islamic Association, and national and local level media. However, the primary evidence relating to how these messages are received and internalised are ascertained through a combination of detailed interview, and some participant observation, which combine as the primary data collection methods.

a. Interviews
Recognising that in such a study the exploration of participant's opinions, feelings, emotions and experiences are at the heart of the research, semi-structured one-to-one interviews and participant observation are the most suitable methods. This was the primary data collection strategy, being most suited both to the research design exploring feelings and attitudes, and also sitting in the ethnographic tradition.

As a non-Muslim, foreign researcher I was initially concerned that I might not be able to gain access to the leaders of the mosques in Xining, partly because of the sensitivity of my line of questioning in interviews, and partly because I did not belong to the same faith community. I initially experienced the limitation that very

official interviews brought; in my trial interviews (conducted before the main field work data was collected), I had a letter of introduction from Durham University which stated my credentials. This seemed to have an unhelpful influence on the respondent that formalised the interview, and truncated the answers to my questions to a concise, politically careful and relatively insipid series of responses. I was keen to develop a much more informal 'discussion' style, which ranged across relevant subjects, and maximised the time given to responses, in the expectation that a more relaxed approach was more likely to generate 'real' responses. Thus my semi-structured, conversational interview style was developed, which I enlarge upon below. Clearly, the interviewer effect continued to be significant, but my assessment is that the data I generated by this approach was less formal, less guarded and more reflective of the feelings and opinions of the respondent than a more formal, official method. Listening to the changing tone and volume of the interview responses demonstrates the shifting emotions during the interviews that in my view confirm the more natural responses generated this way.

I also initially sought some legitimacy from the local minorities university (*Qinghai Minzu Xueyan*), and discussed my research project with them in 2010, with a view to conducting a joint study. The financial demands that the university made would greatly increase the cost of this self-funded project, and I was additionally very concerned of an excessive politicisation of my project – ethnic affairs were (and are) particularly sensitive in the north-west of China, particularly between Hui and Tibetans, and I feared that any official approval of the project would also require official supervision which would limit the access I had to mosques yet further, and potentially limit the naturalness of interview responses. The Public Security Bureau were aware that I was present in the city as a research student, though I had very limited interaction with them during my time in Xining. I relied upon my own network of contacts, mainly through friendships, and particularly through the approval and acceptance by one of the senior imams in the city, Jin Biao. Having first accessed and interviewed Jin Biao it was a simple matter to visit a new mosque and make an appointment with the imam; by mentioning that I knew Jin Biao and had interviewed him I gained further legitimacy in the eyes of the community.

My recruitment of interviewees was simple and pragmatic. I wanted each primary mosque in Xining's East District to be represented, and so systematically visited eighteen mosques and three tomb complexes. Each time I would seek an interview with the imam, which was granted in fourteen of the twenty-one sites visited. I would introduce myself as a British researcher in Chinese Islam, doing a study of the Hui in Xining. More often than not I was greeted with enthusiasm. Each time I visited the mosque I would also visit the student accommodation, and on seven occasions was given permission to interview some of these Islamic students. As my sectarian schema of mosque categorisation developed, I wanted to ensure that a non-clergy representative of each sect was also interviewed. To ensure that this was the case I attended the larger Id festivals at *Yangjiazhuang, Dongguan, Beiguan, Nanguan* and *Shulinxiang* mosques, and informally met a number of non-clergy, nine of whom were willing to meet with me and be interviewed. These non-clergy interviews always took place at a venue away from the mosque, a tea-house, coffee shop, or occasionally in the interviewees' home.

The use of semi-structured interviews allowed the flexibility sought in the design to enable the researcher to pursue what he considered as valuable lines of enquiry that may not have been predicted in a given interview. It also allowed the conversational style designed to put the interviewee at ease, and to take a line of enquiry that began with what were perceived to be safer questions, and developed into more sensitive areas wherever possible. Respecting the interviewees' feelings was very important to me, and whenever he seemed uncomfortable, I would offer to shift the conversation away from 'sensitive subjects'. My semi-structured design sought to cover the following broad question areas:

1. Initial questions regarding the history of the mosque, or local Islamic history, or sometimes how Islam came to China – designed to put the interviewee at ease.
2. Personal history of the interviewee, where they were from, where they studied and especially looking at how they self-identified, and the influence of Islam in their upbringing.
3. Questions around the allegiance of the particular mosque they attended (or led), the student numbers, the curriculum followed (for imams and

students), recognition or otherwise of the Han Kitab.[*]

4. Questions regarding the Islamic practices of that mosque, the festivals celebrated, how they differed from other mosques' practice.

5. Relationships with attendees of other mosques, attitudes towards those who differed in practice, questions about other sects and their origin, history and inter-relationships.

6. Discussion of the role and status of the China Islamic Association, (sometimes developing into discussion of the role of the State Ethnic Affairs Commission and Religious Affairs Bureau), the role of the local mosque management committee, and the influence of propaganda, media and the internet.

7. Relations with the Han majority, or relationships between ethnic groups.

8. Where their greatest Islamic influence came from, and who they admired in the Islamic world.

9. Questions on current affairs in the Middle East, *Dar al-Harb, Dar al-Islam*, the caliphate and the role of Jihad.

In the semi-structured design the interview process ranged between these subject areas, rather than systematically progressing from 1-9, but I ensured that the interview covered each of these areas wherever possible. The interviews lasted on average 44 minutes, with the longest 99 minutes and the shortest 20 minutes. All interviews were conducted in Mandarin Chinese, recorded with the permission of the interviewee, and later transcribed and translated by the author for ease of analysis. (See appendix 3 for excerpts from five sample interviews, one for each sect). A sample size of thirty-three derived from the snowball sampling method, employed, though a deliberate range of interviewees was targeted: an imam from each of the five significant Islamic sects in Xining (Qadim, Sufi, Ikhwan moderate, Ikhwan hard-line and Salafi, which are introduced in detail in chapter three); a student from each of the sects, and a non-clergy figure from each of the sects.

b. Participant Observation

Having been present in the context for six years, my attendance at most mosques

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[*] Han Kitab: a coillection of Chinese translations of Islamic works from the Ming/Qing dynasty – indicative of a Qadim influence (see page 79 for more details).

was unremarkable, and as such allowed the use of participant observation in a number of contexts, including attending mosques associated with the various traditions, and observing the interactions between participants, listening to the imam's teaching and advice to his students, and noticing the subtle variety in orthopraxy indicative of allegiance to the various orders. Invitations to attend key life-stage events such as weddings, funerals and naming ceremonies gave further opportunity for participant observation of the public practice of Islam.

c. Analysis of Data

The generation of vast amounts of interview data and participant observation can render qualitative research as cumbersome and difficult to generate verifiable and reproducible data. Recorded and transcribed interviews, supplemented by field notes, formed the basis of the data generated. The software NVIVO was employed to code interview responses, seeking the frequency of certain phrases and assessing the relative importance to the respondents of the key tropes that emerged from the analysis of official Islam.

d. Content Analysis

The selection of core documents for analysis was strategic, rather than comprehensive. I chose the highly significant collection of officially produced Muslim sermons, "*A Collection of Newly Edited Wa'z Speeches*" (*xinbian wo'erzi yanjiangji*), together with 2014-2015 editions of the key China Islamic Association magazine, *China Muslim,* for detailed content analysis. The former represented the clearest example of the Party-State's attempted promotion of an adapted Islam to serve its political goals, and the latter a representative example of how the Party-State seeks to comprehensively influence Muslim thinking through the pervasive use of adapted Islam and State ideology in popular Muslim publications. Through a systematic, iterative process of coding and frequency analysis, key repeated themes and phrases were identified in these publications, and their significance thus identified.

1.2.5   Challenges and self-reflection

As a white, Christian, western researcher, fluent in Mandarin, but limited in local

Qinghai dialect, there were some challenges in the data collection. The presence of a number of western missionaries in the city led to many questions about Christianity permeating and interrupting the interviews. I chose not to transcribe these, as they were fundamentally irrelevant to the research project. Ethics demanded that I clearly identify myself as both a researcher and a Christian, and not to adopt an Islamic identity as some have done for ease of access, but this did encourage theological questions which took a lot of time.

I was sensitive to Akbarzadeh's observation that, "*recognizing religious Muslims as representative of Muslim interests leads to a simplistic picture...conferring an unwarranted amount of legitimacy onto a minority voice*" (Akbarzadeh and Roose 2011: 321), and so I endeavoured to include in my interview sample a balance of religious and non-religious personnel, but the imams interviewed were disproportionately more expressive in response to the questioner, and thus one weakness of this study is in potentially extrapolating too much from what is perhaps a minority, and Islamically biased, group. The limitation of this bias is reflected in the tentative nature of the conclusions, since, in a critical realist approach, describing and suggesting an explanation is more tentative than setting out to categorically prove a particular perspective from a small sample.

The other significant limitation is that of the gender imbalance, since access to women was highly problematic in my research strategy. It is important that the conclusions recognize that the views of women regarding national, ethnic and religious identity were not sought, and as such the conclusions reached cannot be extrapolated to represent the view of 'the Hui people', merely the views of a selective group of largely Islamically-biased Hui men.

Because of my long term presence in the city, I was able to access almost every imam I wanted to interview, through mentioning the names of significant Muslim personalities known to me in Xining. Two significant imams were unwilling to be interviewed (reason unknown). All interviewees were fully fluent in Mandarin Chinese, though I was disappointed to discover that not only were all sermons in Xining mosques preached in local dialect (with the exception of the Salafi mosque), but that I could not find anyone, Hui or Han, who could understand the recordings

I made, or be willing to transcribe them. This created a hole in the research which I attempted to fill with an analysis of sermons posted on an imam's blog, which he assured me were simply the ones he preached in the mosque, but the variety of sermons across the sects is missing. This aspect of the research would be one that I would revisit as a further development (see section 9.5 for further study suggestions).

A foreign researcher interrogating the salience of various identities in China was politically sensitive. Probing the depth of penetration and internalisation of the common political slogans that so easily and readily are quoted by respondents meant interrogating the veracity and success of government policy, which potentially lead to either evasion, or usually, an over-sensitivity on behalf of the questioner, thus necessitating a careful examination of the responses to detect undercurrents through the often contradictory things that are said. Choosing a strategy that chose to avoid prominent official approval, either through partnering with the local university, or by having interviews arranged through the aegis of the China Islamic Association I believe resulted in responses closer to the real feelings and opinions of the interviewees. The promise of anonymity given to my interlocuters also contributed to this, and as such interviewees are anonymised. Appendix 1 gives a schedule of interviews, and appendix 2 a schedule of mosques detailing the sectarian allegiance (where known) at the time I conducted my study, as well as indicating in which mosques interviews were carried out.

1.3   Detailed Hypotheses

Chapter four will explore the theoretical framework for this study in more detail, explaining the concept of civilising projects, but in essence the Hui people can be considered to be located between two primary centres of influence, known as the Party-State and the Islamic centre. The earliest studies on the Hui were largely descriptive, as section 1.1 above shows, making known the existence of Muslims in China, and describing their origins and distinctives. Some of this earlier scholarship on the Hui has focused on the relationship between the hegemonic centre and the peripheral Hui, exploring the strategies employed by those on the periphery in accommodating or assimilating to the narrative of the centre. A

number of studies explore the ethnic categorisation of the Hui and other minorities, which can be seen as an exploration of the response of the peripheral people to a project of the Party-State centre. The most recent studies are more focused and detailed in their consideration of different aspects of Hui studies, whether geographically, theologically, economically or politically focused. This study seeks to bring together two distinct aspects of scholarship, and examines the relative influence of the hegemonic centre of government and the Islamic influence on constructing Hui identity. The primary hypothesis tested in this thesis explores the interaction between the ethnic group Hui, the global Islamic community (*ummah*) and the Chinese Party-State, and posits that:

> "The identity of the Hui community of Qinghai has always been shaped by its location between the Islamic community (*ummah*) and the political condition (and problems) of Chinese statehood. In contemporary Qinghai, despite intensive efforts of the Chinese state to control and shape the Hui identity, perceived or actual inter-relations with the Islamic world remain the dominant influence."

In order to explore this hypothesis, close examination of the Chinese state efforts to shape Hui identity will be required, as well as exploring the way in which relations with the Islamic world and derived influence interact with the Hui in the area of identity construction. In order to structure this study the following three tiered questions will be addressed:

1. *How was Hui identity in Qinghai created/ constituted and why/ how does it change?*

This question explores identity politics among Hui in Xining. Specifically, it asks how Hui identity was formed and continues to be reformed and refined, and how this identity is mobilised as a political category by the Party-State, and as a religious category by the notional Islamic centre, and by the Hui themselves. I look at the Party-State driven *Zhonghua minzu* ideology, the strong promotion of ethnic unity (*minzu tuanjie*) by the organs of State, and then consider the global Islamic *ummah* identity in the teaching of Islam in China, as well as examining the political

space permitted by the Party-State for expression of that *ummah* identity. How the religious/sectarian character of various solidarities of Hui in Xining shape their responses to these influence centres demonstrates the changing nature of Hui identity.

2.   *How does the Chinese state interact with the Hui in the area of identity construction, and with what consequences? How does the global Islamic community interact with the Hui in the area of identity construction, and with what consequences?*

This question looks more deeply at the enmeshed identities of nation, ethnicity and religious faith, and how the Party-State and the global Islamic centre each seek to exert their specific influence on the Hui in Xining. The primary organ of State influence on the Hui in the China Islamic Association (IAC) is examined, and how the IAC constructed and promotes an official, correct and adapted Islam explained. The response of the Hui interviewees demonstrates the consequences of that project of mutually adapting religion to socialist society promoted by the Party-State. The sectarian diversity of Islam in Xining gives rise to varied Islamic influences on Hui, and stratifying the responses of Hui to the identity construction projects of the Party-State reveal the ways in which Islamic influence shapes their conception of identity categories.

3.   *Explain and define the balance between external centres and internal change.*

This question evaluates the relative influences based on the changing responses to identity construction, and returns to the main research hypothesis in seeking to understand the relative importance of connections with the Islamic world in shaping, and perhaps preferencing, a Hui religious identity.

In order to present a study that is grounded historically, theoretically and methodologically, I present the thesis in two parts. Part One, consisting of three chapters, provides the theory underpinning the study, as well as the historical background to the Hui and Islam in Xining, before setting up the methodological framework for the study. Part Two, consisting of four chapters, then looks in detail

at how the Hui community interacts with the Party-State and the global *ummah* as centres of influence. The following overview of chapters makes clear the thesis structure.

Chapter Two provides the social identity theory underpinning the study, looking at how identity is constructed, and examining race, ethnicity and nation as identity categories, as well as focusing on Islamic religious identity in some detail, together with the concept of the *ummah* in Islam. Chapter Three provides a chronological overview of the development of Islam and the Hui in China generally, and Qinghai specifically, and also considers the ethno-genesis of the Hui identity. The theory and chronology of Chapters Two and Three are used to build a model of a twin centre-periphery civilisational influence in Chapter Four, which provides the methodological foundation for the fieldwork, which is presented in Part Two.

In Part Two, Chapters Five and Six present the Party-State influence on Hui identity construction, with Chapter Five looking at the role of the China Islamic Association (IAC) in fulfilling the Party-State influence on the Hui through the adaptation of Islam, and the Party-State control of most aspects of Islamic religious life. Chapter Six examines in detail the way in which the Party-State through the IAC has adapted the Islamic message and promoted this correct version of Islam through official sermons produced by the IAC. An analysis of the political content of these sermons shows how the IAC presents an Islam that has been adapted to China's national situation, and critically, how the Hui themselves receive this adapted teaching. Chapters Seven and Eight present the Islamic influence by examining how the Hui perspectives on national, ethnic and religious identity reflect their response to State-driven identity politics, and how that response is possibly shaped by their sectarian allegiance and international Islamic influence. Chapter Seven looks at the question of national and ethnic identity, specifically exploring the relative prominence of a *Zhonghua minzu* national identity against an ethnic *Huizu* identity, and also examines the way in which ethnic unity *(minzu tuanjie)* is understood and interpreted by the Hui. Chapter Eight goes on to consider the question of divided loyalty, examining patriotism and the way Hui express prior allegiance to the Chinese nation, and to the Islamic *ummah.* Chapters Seven and Eight present interview responses stratified by sectarian allegiance to

demonstrate that the diversity of response is related to sectarian allegiance. The thesis concludes with Chapter Nine, which returns to the research questions and concludes by evaluating the veracity of the central hypothesis.

PART ONE: THEORY AND LITERATURE ON HUI IDENTITY

Chapter Two: The Construction of Identities and their Contestation

At the core of this thesis is the much discussed question of identity, specifically the contestation and politicisation of various social, political and religious identities of the people known today as belonging to the Hui ethnic group (*Huizu*) in China. It is important to theoretically underpin this study with a consideration of current social identity theory, to enable an understanding of how these various social identities are determined or created, instrumentalised and contested in modern China. The Hui people are described officially by the Party as one of the minority ethnic groups in China who believe in Islam (*xinyang yisilanjiaode shaoshu minzu*), and their sociopolitical identity is situated between an ethnic identity ascribed to them by the Chinese Party-State, and a Muslim religious identity assumed by them on account of their historical ancestral commitment to Islam. Understanding ascriptive and assumptive identities in social identity theory, and especially considering the Chinese Party-State understanding of identity, as well as Islamic perspectives on social identity, is important foundational work. The Chinese Party-State describes China as a multi-ethnic nation of fifty-six ethnic groups, and stresses the full equality of each under the leadership of the Communist Party of China (State Council 2009), and exploring how the Chinese Communist Party sought to incorporate ethnic groups with strong Muslim religious identities into an atheistically-based national identity requires some theoretical groundwork.

This chapter first reviews current themes in social identity theory, particularly on how identity is formed, and then looks at the core elements of racial, ethnic and religious identity, particularly in the Chinese historical context. Significant consideration is given to national identity in a Chinese political context, since this is a primary question examined in this thesis. The chapter then concludes by looking at Islamic views of ethnicity and nationality, and considers the question of divided loyalty for Muslims in a nation-state. In each of the collective identities discussed, the question of political contestation is introduced as preparation for this study on contested identity among Hui in Xining.

2.1 Social Identity Theory

When we consider social identity, we are studying a psycho-sociological concept with a long history of scholarly debate, and it is clearly impossible to exhaustively explore the wide span of literature pertaining to this subject*. Social identities are the ways in which people think about and categorise themselves, and how they are perceived and categorised by others. Social identity therefore comprises aspects both of assumed identity (how we view ourselves) and ascribed identity (how others view us), and is concerned both with identifying oneself as an individual relative to others, and identifying where one fits in a collective in wider society. These dual questions are very much negotiated in society through a process of identifying similarities and differences. It is an on going process of classification: a process of associating oneself (or others) with someone else with whom one is similar, and disassociating oneself from others from whom one is different (Duijzings 2000: 18). It refers both to who we think we are and to who we act as being. Identity is an extremely powerful, universal social concept, and one can argue that all socio-political movements come from organizing identities at a collective and a personal level.

> "Solidarity, when it is successfully conjured up, is a powerful force" (Jenkins 2008: 23).

As such, questions of identity formation and identity politics are extremely significant for the present study, since the unique interplay of national, ethnic and religious identity for Hui people in Xining greatly shapes both their social cohesion and their potential political mobilisation, as well as deeply influencing the complex interpersonal relationships and networks that constitute society in Xining today.

There are three main issues that recur in recent literature on social identity (Schwartz et al. 2011: 5). Firstly, should one view identity primarily as a personal, relational or a collective phenomenon? Secondly, should one view identity as something to be discovered, personally-constructed or socially-constructed? Thirdly, is identity to be viewed as relatively stable, or as fluid and constantly

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* a good summary of the history of identity as a socio-philosophical term is found in (Robson 2011)

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changing? Each will be considered in turn.

2.1.1 Personal, relational and collective identity

Generally speaking, we think of identity in several ways: firstly, what we conceive of as our own unique, personal identity; that is, me as a centre of self-consciousness and my own inner life or selfhood. Secondly, what we term our relational or social identities; that is, those identities which flow out of our interaction and relationships with others. Thirdly, our collective identities, that is me as a member of different collectivities, whether cultural, religious, ethnic, occupational or national (Deschamps and Devos 1998: 3). Some may add a further collective, that of our common overall identity as human beings (Parekh 2008: 28). This is of particular relevance in political theory, since modern liberal political theory is based on the acceptance of universal human equality, and thus our identity as members of the human race is our prior identity, one that supersedes all others, and one that we hold in common with all humanity - a truly universal identity.

However we conceptualise identity, we need to recognise that all our identities, whether individual, collective or relational, are interconnected, and are thus resistant to any attempt to separate issues of individual identity from collective identity. Thus, though sometimes people do talk of multiple identities, it is more true to reality to consider one multi-faceted identity, since each person is a unitary figure, with a single, however complex, identity, that will incorporate different facets of the individual, collective and relational, many of which may be held at the same time, and some of which are exclusive and need to be held as primary at any given time. Each facet of identity has particular valence in particular circumstances, thus demonstrating the situational importance of identities. This situational aspect of identity recognition, and the prominence of one facet of identity over another at any given point in time, is one of the aspects of identity that make it such a powerful tool in political mobilisation.

2.1.2 *Primordial and constructed identity*

The contemporary belief that we are all discovering who we are - 'finding the real me' - is based on a popular understanding that we are born with a natural, inherited, primordial identity that is just waiting to be discovered (Waterman 1984: 322), the so-called 'vitalistic model'*. An alternative, and more scholarly prevalent view, is that we construct our identity from a range of choices over our lifetimes, perhaps especially in the adolescent/young adult period, but each of us is born with a 'blank sheet of paper' in terms of identity, a position known as the 'mechanistic model' (Berzonsky 1986: 113). This is a second contentious issue within scholarly debate, how much of our identity has a primordial nature; that is, something we have inherited, were born with and that was biologically transmitted to us? Alternatively, how much of our identity is socially or culturally constructed, or shaped by ourselves and others?

The idea that our identity is constructed from absolutely nothing, as if all people have the same free range of choices is unrealistic, since much of our initial identity at least does stem from the biology and circumstances of our birth: our gender, our kinship, our skin colour, perhaps our sexual orientation or even our faith community†; we initially have little or no say in any of these apparent primary identities. As such, these facets of one's identity may be viewed as lying towards the primordial end of a spectrum. However, to see all identities as fixed, given and inherited, is also patently untrue in reality. To view identity as a thing which just 'is' implies that no negotiation, no development and no change may take place. It assumes that pre-formed, primordial categories exist that we are bound by, and cannot escape from, rather than seeing that where such boundaries seem to exist, they are constructed by society, such as gender roles, class differences, racial stereotypes and racial discrimination.

This process of identity formation and the socialisation of these identities takes

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* A Google search for 'discovering the real me' resulted in 12,400,000 pages (conducted 24 July 2017)
† Tariq Modood argues that 'Muslim' could be seen as an inherited category of identity, since it is not the choice of the child to be born in a Muslim family (Levey and Modood 2009: 176)

place in social interaction, in what Jenkins calls the "*internal-external dialectic of identification*" (Jenkins 2008: 40), and he identifies the simultaneity of similarity and difference as the important process in identity formation. All identities, individual and collective, are constructed through a simultaneous synthesis of internal self-definition (assumption) and external definitions of oneself offered by others, either by affirming the assumed category, or more often through others ascribing identities to individuals and to collectives. This understanding of how our identities are expressed and understood in dialogic interaction with others, and how our self-consciousness results in our assumption of an identity, and then this identity being either affirmed or rejected in interaction with others is a significant social process of identity formation that recurs in the literature, and is seen in practice in northwest China with a Party-State seeking to ascribe a common national or ethnic identity, and a Hui people who interact with that attempted ascription, whilst assuming a common identity as Muslim.

2.1.3   The stability of identity

The relative stability of identities is linked to the primordial/constructionist dichotomy. A primordial position that believes identity to be inherited or formed at a very early stage of life would be more inclined to view identity as fixed, stable and unchanging. Those believing identities are constantly being formed and reformed take a position that identities themselves are fluid, and are continually in flux, being negotiated and renegotiated through interchange with others.

My considered position is that all identities are negotiated, and have a reflexive and an interpretative dimension, negotiated between the twin poles of self-assumption and others'-ascription. The negotiation of identity is a significant process in the politics of recognition, where previously marginalised or overlooked groups make a strong claim for recognition, and then their claimed collective identity is either accepted or rejected by society. Were identities primordial and simply fixed and unchanging, then this process would be one of recognising the inherent nature of a collectivity, one which had been unrecognised in the recent past, perhaps always overlooked. However, the reality is that identities are situationally constructed, and are made to matter in certain contexts,

by certain actors, for particular social or political benefits, and thus exhibit a fluidity of definition. A full understanding of identity can only be reached when we reject the dualism of culture/nature, and instead see culture as a part of nature (Marranci 2008: 92).

This brief survey of issues in social identity theory is intended as a foundation for the more specific discussion that follows. Although we should not consider identity to be deterministic, in that our behaviour is driven by our identity, yet identity is important, since it is in the mobilisation of identity as a tool for solidarity and consequent collective, political action that identity is made to matter, a sociological truism that is increasingly apparent in the evidence chapters seven and eight below. This mobilisation of identity for political purposes frequently leads to some contestation, greatly influenced by the power structure between the one ascribing identity, and the recipient of that ascription, who often has an alternative assumed and perhaps conflicting identity. In the present case, the Party-State and the Islamic centre can both be considered to be ascribing identity to the Hui, and seeking to mobilise that identity for different goals. The recipients of this attempted ascription have different assumed primary identities, which may or may not differ from the hegemonically ascribed identities.

As I now turn to specific facets of identity relevant to the present study, I want to keep in mind the important consideration that although identity is largely fluid, constructed and negotiated, people themselves largely behave as if identity were primordial (Gil-White 1999: 803-805). Despite the view of modern scholarship, the prevailing common belief is that who I am has been determined, and I engage in a process of self-discovery that is founded on a primordial view of identity. Although scholarly opinion may reveal this as an erroneous belief, yet in a real-world research context, it is important to recognise the powerful mobilising force that a belief in an inherited identity has. I turn now to specific discussions of those collective identities most salient to the present study: racial, ethnic and religious identities.

2.2 Race, Ethnicity and Religion as Identity Categories

Primordial invocations of race, nation, gender, faith group and a host of identities remain common in everyday discourse throughout the world (Calhoun 1994: 331), and are reinforced by the social and cultural histories by which they have been constructed (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983: 1-14). However, although it is possible to demonstrate a process of collective identity construction to counter claims of essentialism, it is important not to weaken the fact that many essentialist identities are deeply felt today, and that this social and political reality is very often employed by hegemonic political centres seeking to build a strong, cohesive national identity. In many situations, the 'actors' themselves very much own their primary collective identity, however constructed it may be. Although these groups themselves may not be 'real' in terms of essentialism, the shared sense of groupness owned by those in the collectivity is very real (Brubaker 2004: 64-87).

"The only reality that we should attribute to a group derives from people thinking that it exists and that they belong to it" (Jenkins 2008: 9).

In this section I explore how the identity categories of race, ethnicity and religion should be considered, and introduce their construction and political utility in China.

2.2.1 Race and racial identity

There is a significant amount of overlap between the concepts of race and ethnicity. The two terms are sometimes used interchangeably, with 'ethnic' simply being used as a more acceptable term for what is commonly thought of as 'race' (Cornell and Hartmann 2007: 31). This demonstrates the confusion surrounding these terms, particularly in popular discourse. 'Race' as a differentiated category of identity is usually linked to some obvious physical or visible difference, giving the impression that such categories are somehow biologically distinct, whereas 'ethnic' is usually used in the context of cultural difference, and is associated with common ancestry, language markers and perhaps national, or at least regional, origin (Fenton 1999: 4).

Prior to the last century, there was a widespread belief in the biological distinction and separation of the races of the world (Banton 2009; Cornell and Hartmann 2007; Eriksen 1993; Meer 2014; Miles and Brown 2003; Miles 2009). These races were conceived of as being genetically distinct sub-populations of the human species, with clear phenotypical markers, such as skin colour, body size, body morphology, hair structure and skull shape (Benedict 1983: 22). In addition to physical differentiation, a biological determinism of certain behavioural and characteristic traits was believed to likewise differentiate the races (Miles and Brown 2003: 39). This led to the development of race theory, where fixed and definite boundaries between the races were assumed, determined genetically, and it was therefore possible to establish a hierarchy of civilised and intelligent races relative to uncivilised and less able races (Fenton 1999: 66). Race theory led to a justification of the oppression of the 'lower' races by the 'superior' races, often portrayed as a fact of social evolution stemming from the social Darwinism that had become popularly accepted in the latter half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century (Hirschmann 2004: 392).

However, more recently race is now simply seen in scholarly circles as:

> "...an entirely social or cultural construction; there is nothing 'natural' about it, save the mere facts of phenotypical variation" (Wade 1993: 17).

The combined consequences of the abolition of slavery in the nineteenth century, the ending of the colonial period and the decline of the imperial age, together with the civil rights movement in the United States and a strong egalitarian political discourse in this country, have led to race becoming a discredited sociological term, only really discussed in terms of the effect of racial ideas – the racialisation of certain societal concepts.

Such a race theory was a relatively recent focus in Chinese social sciences, since traditional Confucianism thought more in categories of 'us' and 'them': the 'us' being *Xia* (Chinese) and 'them' being *Yi* (barbarian), which differentiated on a cultural-civilisational basis those that belonged from those that didn't. The introduction of western classification of human groups into different races in the late nineteenth century reinforced a social-Darwinian world view that saw the

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struggle against European powers as a struggle of the 'yellow race' competing against the 'white race'. Frank Dikötter has effectively shown that the racialisation of Chinese identities was a particular emphasis of reformers like Liang Qichao and Kang Youwei in late imperial times, yet refutes the notion of Chinese racial identity being in any sense a negative, racist discourse derived from 'white racism' (Dikötter 1997: 12-15). He writes:

> "...the reformers ordered mankind into a racial hierarchy of biological groups where 'yellows' competed with 'whites' over degenerate breeds of 'browns', 'blacks' and 'reds'" (Dikötter 1997: 16).

Likewise He Baogang argues that the term 'yellow race' is not derogatory, but is used as a unifying nationalistic term (He 2005: 77). He demonstrates the high symbolic meaning attributed to the imperial colour yellow, and its value in the mythical descent narratives throughout dynastic history, which meant that as a common racial identifier 'yellow' was of equivalent value to 'white' in Chinese racial discourse.

The desire of the Chinese hegemonic centre for a narrative of similarity to bind the people together led to the development of an accepted common ancestry for China's different ethnic groups, which utilised the myth of descent from the Yellow Emperor and Peking Man to construct a homogenous national identity (Dikötter 1997: 15), giving a basis for a racial nationalism that binds China's ethnic groups biologically as well as culturally (Sautman 1997: 76-83). This ascribed identity category has proven remarkably successful, in as much as the diverse people now ascribed the identity category 'Han Chinese' have:

> "A sense of belonging to a group which shares more or less the same culture, a history and a vague sense of belonging to the 'yellow race'" (Chow 1997: 34).

The father of Chinese Republicanism, Sun Zhongshan, held to an ethnic theory based on blood lineage (Ma Xuefeng 2013: 162); in his famous *Three Principles of the People* he writes:

> "The greatest force is common blood. The Chinese belong to the yellow race because they come from the bloodstock of the yellow race" (Sun Wen 1927:

4-5).

In the post-Xinhai construction of the Republic of China, Sun moved from the
political compromise of his theory of the unity of the five races (*wuzu gonghe*), to a
theory of Han nationalism in which all other races assimilate to the superior blood
line of *Hanzu*. Post-dynastic China was, and is, far more politically concerned with
establishing a national unity based on a single national identity, the *Zhonghua
minzu*, which although multi-ethnic, is demonstrably an identity of common
descent, an identity shared by all the ethnic groups of China. The purpose of
utilizing such a politics of similarity is to bind all China's people to one common
racial identity.

2.2.2   Ethnicity and ethnic identity

Ethnicity as a term derives from the Greek word '*ethnos*', meaning a nation
conceived as a unity of persons with common ancestry (Meer 2014: 37). As a
sociological identity category, ethnicity is a collective identity defined classically
by Max Weber as,

> "Those human groups that entertain a subjective belief in their common
> descent because of similarities of physical type or of customs or both, or
> because of memories of colonization and migration…it does not matter
> whether or not an objective blood relationship exists" (Weber 1968: 389).

The belief in common descent was more important in Weber's view than the fact
of common descent. In Weber's time the opinion that race (and therefore
ethnicity) had a lot to do with biological inheritance still dominated, a position
first articulated by Edward Shils, and developed by Clifford Geertz (Geertz 1973:
259-260; Shils 1957: 140). Geertz felt that since the given identities of kinship,
neighbourhood, common language, religious belief and customs all owed their
origin to the circumstances of one's birth, they were thus 'primordial' in nature.
Geertz's primordialist position has been heavily criticized (Eriksen 1993; Grosby
1994; Smith 1998) since it is said to lead to a conceptualisation of a fixed ethnic
identity that is discovered; a primordial, inherited, pre-existing ethnic identity.

Such determined ethnicity is over-simplistic and inaccurate, since like all identities, ethnicity is constructed, and has to be made to matter. Major critics of the primordial position successfully proposed different mechanisms for the construction or development of ethnic identity. Such mechanisms included a circumstantial approach offered by Barth in his seminal work *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* (Barth 1969), seeing ethnic solidarity as a product of social interaction, totally dependent on the circumstances of that interaction, and critiquing the prevailing model of isolated, separate ethnic groups with clear, distinct boundaries between them as not true to reality. Gradually, this social constructionist position gained the ascendancy; ethnic groups are what people think them to be, both those belonging to the group, and those external to it, a reflection of the internal-external dialectic of identification, and that cultural differences mark groupness, they do not cause it (Jenkins 1997: 53-55).

This idea of a shared ethnic consciousness, a repeated theme of a simultaneity of similarity and difference, shapes both our self-assumption and our others'-ascription. Ethnicity is never something people automatically have, or to which they belong, but is constructed, negotiated and renegotiated. The dynamic between an identity assumed and an identity affirmed is evident here; others may ascribe an ethnic category to us, but only our claim to that identity makes us an ethnic group.

> "An ethnic group is self-consciously ethnic" (Cornell and Hartmann 2007: 19-20).

Ethnic identities are neither ascribed nor assumed: they are both.

The importance of ethnic identity as a category for a collective identity is highlighted in the case of China, since the recent Party-State uses the formulation of China as a multi-ethnic unitary nation (*tongyi de duo minzu guojia*). Incorporating the diverse peoples inhabiting the former Qing dynasty geobody into one national identity as the Chinese people (*Zhonghua minzu*) was a challenge for creating nationhood. The ethnic categorisation programme of the early Communist period was rooted in the propaganda of the Chinese Communist Party during the civil war, when the promise of national self-determination was offered

to China's ethnic minorities. In the first census of the People's Republic of China in 1953, more than four hundred separate groups initially registered as separate ethnic (*minzu*) identities. The construction and consolidation of the 'fifty-six ethnic groups in China' model has been remarkably successful for the people thus categorized (Mullaney 2011: 1-8). The inclusion of this ethnic category on the Chinese citizen's identity card (*shenfenzheng*) has ascribed this identity to each person, and it is difficult to find any dissenting voice today among those so categorised, indicating widespread acceptance of each ethnic category. I discuss the particular construction of Hui ethnic identity in section 3.5.2 below.

2.2.3   Religious Identity

Religious identity is treated differently from other forms of cultural identity owing to its historical significance in the rise of liberalism (Levey and Modood 2009: 4), and yet it does share similarities with other cultural identities, in the idea of shared descent and common culture. The primary debate surrounds the issues of secularism, the separation of church and state and the relationship of religion with minority cultural rights. Despite the strong atheist worldview of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), and several decades of religious repression, there is significant evidence for the phenomenon of a rising religious consciousness in contemporary China (Madsen 2007: 288-295). Religious identity remains a strong cohesive force for many people, seen by sociologists as an expression of ethnic collective awareness (Rowe 2012: 17), and China is no exception, despite the attempts at enforcing a secular, atheistic worldview on the populace.

Religious identity, and how it interacts with other social identities, involves considering a deeply complex sociological realm, and a detailed discussion of the definition of religion and religious belief is beyond the scope of this study. I want to consider religious belief in a very modern and prudent way for this study, following Charles Taylor who thinks of religion simply as a generic term to describe and define the transcendent and immanent spiritual realities that underlie the world, with the focus on transcendence defining those with religious belief (Rowe 2012: 21; Taylor 2007: 15). It is essential to understand the place of religion in developing Chinese modernity, since although officially secular, China

still has a strongly religious society, and is experiencing a revival of particularistic religious identities (Asiwa and Wank 2009; Goossaert and Palmer 2011; Lambert 1994; van der Veer 2011; Yang 2006). This rising religious consciousness can be expected to relate closely to both personal and collective identities, and this is likely to be especially so for those Muslim ethnicities for whom Islam is a symbol or expression of their ethnic identity.

Religion in Asia is quite unlike religion in the West, the difference being best conceptualised as a 'diffused' as opposed to 'institutionalised' religion. The traditional system of three teachings (*sanjiao*) - Buddhism, Confucianism and Daoism - were deeply embedded in Chinese society, and lacked the force of institutional identity. Diffused religion is:

> "A religion having its theology, cults, personnel so intimately diffused into one or more secular social institutions that they become part of the concept, rituals and structure of the latter" (Yang 1967: 295).

The Republic of China transformed this three teachings system with the notion that there were five acceptable world religions – Buddhism, Daoism, Catholicism, Protestantism and Islam (van der Veer 2011: 274). The institutional religions, such as Islam (and Christianity), were later introductions to China. The gradual localization of Islam to China, considered in more detail in chapter three, was rooted in the desire to seek its acceptance by the elite, thus removing aspects of its foreignness and accusations of heterodoxy. A key difference for Islam as opposed to Christianity, especially Catholicism, was the absence of an Islamic equivalent to any supra-national, ecclesial authority, as Marshall writes:

> "While the sentiment of solidarity is an intrinsic part of the Islamic faith, and the image of an Umma organized under a spiritual and temporal leader is deeply held, there was rarely an organized form along these lines" (Marshall 2013: 77).

The 1911 Xinhai Revolution germinated an attempted secular regime in China, incorporating the modern notions of evolution, progress and rationality, seeking to replace the mythically derived religious concept of authority:

"Modern governance derives its sovereignty from the people rather than from the blessing of the supernatural realm" (Poon 2011: 4).

Although it is common to associate the main secularisation project in China with the atheistic, materialistic Communist regime, it is a mistake to assume that secularisation only became a project in China in the Communist period, since secularisation is a corollary of modernity, it entered the Chinese political context in the late Qing period (van der Veer 2011: 270-272). The CCP anti-superstition policy should be understood simply as continuing, and perhaps intensifying, the campaigns begun in the Qing.

Most studies of the relationship between state and religion in China do so in the shape of a state-control framework of antagonism and conflict (Ashiwa and Wank 2009: 3), but these are gross oversimplifications, and the reality is much more complex. Creating national unity and maintaining social control was and is the focus of China's government, and thus controlling religious practices was essential, especially those that fostered particularism, regionalism and ethnic distinction. Islam clearly fits in the category of a religion fostering particularism, with the question of absolute loyalty to an entity beyond the state of China remaining in the imaginary, despite the absence of institutional leadership. Since such religious faith commands an allegiance to a community that transcends political authority, and the CCP has a goal of eliminating social and ideological competition, conflict is perhaps inevitable. The control of religious activity is effected by the state policy of establishing state-approved Patriotic Religious Associations (in the case of Islam, the China Islamic Association), and confining religious activities to such sites as mosques, recognising only clergy trained in state-approved religious associations, vetting sermons and monitoring the foreign contacts of religions, all described in detail in chapter five.

The reviving religious consciousness evident in modern China is best considered as a diffused religious spirit laying dormant through the great oppressions of the Cultural Revolution, but the continued importance of spiritual belief was revealed in the period of reform and opening up (*gaige kaifang*) by the phenomenal rise of religious belief in the post-Tiananmen period, and demonstrated in the rapid rise

of evangelical Christianity, a renewed interest in Confucianism, and the current revival of Islam as a religious identity. Scholars suggest that religious belief and practice in China is probably at the highest level for a century, despite the strongest attempt at secularisation in history (van der Veer 2011: 275; Yang 2006: 93).

In this section I have emphasised the social construction of the various described identity categories, and demonstrated the way in which the Chinese Party-State has sought to construct a common national identity to which all the people living in China can subscribe. Although race theory is discredited in western scholarship, it persists in Chinese popular belief, and in some scholarly circles too, particularly basing common identity on the theory of belonging to a common yellow race, with putative descent from a mythical Yellow Emperor.

The diversity of ethnic groups within China was categorised and essentialised into only fifty-six *minzu*, an ethno-national identity category ascribed to all people, but seen by the Party-State as subordinate to the one multi-ethnic *Zhonghua minzu* nation. This process of ethnic classification and ethnic construction continues to be celebrated today, and the ethnic categorization is accepted as fact by the majority of citizens in China, even among the widely diverse people now constituting the Han. Each ethnic group has been ascribed particular characteristics, with minority ethnic groups (*shaoshu minzu*) exoticised by the Party-State and portrayed as distinctly 'other' (Gladney 2004: 64-69), exhibiting various quaint and 'backward' cultural distinctives. There are ten ethnic groups in China known as 'those believing in Islam' which includes the Hui. Many of these groups are likewise exoticised through emphasizing their distinctive dances, their clothing, or their songs. However, for the Hui such cultural distinctives are lacking, yet the Party-State is at pains to emphasise that Islam is not the defining element of a Hui identity. The ethnic category Hui is seen by the State to be independent of the religious identity Muslim, and based instead on ethno-cultural history (see chapter 3.5 below). This construction of an ethnic Hui identity in Qinghai, and the contestation of that identity, is a fundamental component of the tiered questions linked to the central hypothesis.

The construction of a Chinese national identity has been a project of the post-imperial nation-state, and considering the different formulations of that national identity across the various governments of the post-Qing state requires an initial consideration of what is meant by nation as an identity category, and particularly the utilisation of nationalism in the process of identity construction needs to be considered.

2.3   Nation, national identity and nationalism

The word 'nation' derives from the Latin root for birth, '*natus',* and as an identity category is based on that strong sense of belonging to the place of one's birth. The combination of either the place of my birth (*jus soli)* or the origin of my parents (*jus sanguinis)* are the commonly used criteria today for determining the right to citizenship of a given nation. This concept of 'nation' is a relatively recent one, a product of modernity (Smith 2000: 14; Smith 2008: 2), and defining what makes a nation is difficult, since the term has different meanings at different stages of history. Anderson (1983) proposed the definition,

> "An imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign" (Anderson 1983: 6).

The nation is thus seen also as a construct, and not simply something that develops from the will of a polity to form a nation, nor the commonality of those sharing a language or culture causing a nation to naturally emerge, since there are many ethnic groups with common language and culture that do not form nations. It is not possible to separate the modern concept of nation from political authority, that is, the nation derived from the emergence of a political body with authority over a given territory. However, the pre-modern origin of some nations is clear, with Anthony Smith particularly espousing the need for ethnic or cultural ties to allow the nation to emerge. He argues that distinction can be made between those nations that have a much longer cultural history, and those more recently created nations (Smith 1991: 8-10), a concept expressed first by Friedrich Meinecke in 1908 when he distinguished between the '*Kulturnation*' (cultural nation) and the '*Staatsnation*' (political nation). China quite clearly belongs to the former, a nation that grew from an empire that was centred on a shared cultural civilisation,

an ethnic background, and modern China has sought to emphasise the common origin of the Chinese people as a means to establish a firm national identity.

National identity can be described as an individual's identity as a member of a political community, the state (Parekh 2008: 56-59). People identify to a lesser or greater extent with the state, but the state is not synonymous with the nation (since many states are really multinational) (Salazar 1998: 118), and not every nation (in an ethnic understanding) results in a state, despite common assertion to liberal principles right to national self-determination, developed in nineteenth century Europe with Mazzini and John Stuart Mill (Heater 2014: 7-9). These core principles of liberalism, the equality of all and the right to national self-determination, were expressed as a universal principle around the First World War, first by Marx in its revolutionary form, and by Woodrow Wilson in its liberal form.

2.3.1 The nation-state

The modern nation-state is a territorial body with the monopoly on the legitimate use of violence and an administrative apparatus financed by taxation. The modern emergence of nation-states has usually arisen either from fission or fusion, and is a relatively recent phenomenon. Fission is the break-up of existing states or empires by secession or fragmentation, such as the USSR fragmentation, or the collapse of Yugoslavia; and fusion, or coalescence, is the drive to unify previously separated, yet purportedly similar communities, such as German reunification, and arguably the unity of the diverse people of China. China as a nation-state emerged from the fall of the Qing dynastic empire, and the hegemonic centre has struggled to maintain control over the populations inhabiting the former Qing geobody, and forming them into a nation, around national identity.

The state is best conceptualised as that political entity having the power of sovereignty over a clearly delimited terrain and over the totality of its members, whereas the nation connotes a political community shaped by common descent, or at least common language, culture and history (Habermas 1999: 107-108). The German social philosopher Jürgen Habermas argues that such an ethnic

formulation of the nation is less able to sustain a stable modern nation-state, since what is required is the commitment of the entire population living in the political territory (the *demos*), regardless of their ethnicity (*ethnos*), to a national project. Only as a civic state can political stability be ensured. The legitimacy of the state requires the creating of a national self-consciousness that allows citizens or subjects to become politically-active, and democratic participation is "*legally mediated solidarity via the status of citizenship while providing the state with a secular source of legitimation*" (Habermas 1999: 114). Despite the absence of true democratic participation in autocratic China, the theory that a strong and stable state is derived from the belonging of the *demos* rather than the *ethnos* underscores the Chinese political struggle for nationhood and stability. A common national identity shared by all China's people is crucial for achieving this sense of shared belonging. China seeks to achieve this by equating the *demos* and the *ethnos* through the construction of the national identity *Zhonghua minzu.*

2.3.2   Nationalism and the nation

Ernest Gellner wrote:

> "Nationalism is primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and the national should be congruent" (Gellner 1983: 1).

This principle assumes that nations should coincide with the political community, and should be self-ruling. If the nation is idealised as an *ethnos* claiming sovereignty over a territory, then the *ethnos* idealistically speaking becomes a nation-state, and thus an ethnic form of nation, with a single, relatively homogenous culture. However, this is not actually how the vast majority of nation-states have been formed. Nation-states, however mono-ethnic, almost always have both dissimilar ethnic groups included within the sovereign territory, which potentially leads to separatism, and people of one's own ethnic group living outside one's sovereign territory, which potentially leads to irredentism. Either way the nation-state embarks on a project of nation building that is essential if it is to survive politically. This nation building is founded on the need to establish a national identity, and in so doing an allegiance of all the people included in the sovereign state boundaries, whatever their cultural, linguistic, ethnic, religious

background. Thus, one's national identity will greatly depend on the nation-state project that seeks to preserve the stability of the nation-state, and homogenise the culture that becomes the national culture.

Returning to Habermas, and his argument for the *demos* (one's existence as a political being) being the basis of political life as opposed to the *ethnos* (one's identity as a member of a particular cultural community), he takes the view that the state needs to surpass ethnic ties and focus on 'constitutional patriotism' (Habermas 1999: 39). If, as he claims, the civic-state generates the stronger state, then surpassing the particularity of the *ethnos* is the project of nation-state construction, where the state seeks to homogenise to a national culture to allow full civic participation and identification with the new nation-state.

This potentially leads to some major conflicts, perhaps particularly in a liberal procedural deliberative democracy, but also in other more autocratic states. A major criticism of the Habermasian position recognises that the idea of homogenisation to a neutral lowest common denominator of culture is unrealistic, and in practice what would happen is that the majority ethnic group (as the hegemonic group) would effectively impose their own culture, or a modified version of it, as the homogenised national culture. This appears to be the situation in a Han-centric Chinese state, that the majority Han culture is in fact the much-advocated *Zhonghua minzu* culture that unifies the nation-state. The homogenised culture looks a lot like the majority culture, and marginalisation of minorities takes place, usually through an assimilation to the national culture. Such an assimilative process will bring about major tensions, and the rise of local and regional ethno-nationalisms is one of these tensions. In western liberal democracies, the tensions are best articulated in the discussion on the forms of multiculturalism, where the politics of difference and the politics of recognition play an increasingly significant part. In the illiberal developing Chinese state the discussion of multiculturalism is quite different, bearing in mind its Marxist origin, and the primary concern of the Party is preserving the unity of the Chinese state, and itself in power. The most recent strategy of the Party has been to seek to embrace a form of cultural ethno-nationalism based on the constructed macro-ethnic group called *Zhonghua minzu.* China's multicultural strategy is considered

in more detail in section 2.3.3 below.

It is important to take a historical approach when considering the development of a Chinese national identity, since what constitutes the category 'Chinese' has clearly varied over time. Agreeing with Hobsbawm that "*nations do not make nationalism, but the other way round*" (Hobsbawm 1992: 10), consideration needs to be given to the exercise of a variety of nationalisms in twentieth-century China's national construction. There are essentially two bodies of thought regarding the basis of nationalism: a modernist perspective, that basically considers nationalism to be a recent phenomenon that requires the structures of modern society in order to exist; and a more primordial perspective, that considers nationalism to reflect the ancient tendency of humans to organise based on affinity of birth. The interplay of these two approaches is evident in the various projections of 'Chinese' as a national identity – an identity focusing on civic citizenship, or an identity focusing on ethnic commonality. Ethnic constructions of the nation stress the ethnic and cultural similarity of members of the political community, and refer primarily to the commonality of birth, or to the common ethnic origin of our fellow citizens. Taking this more primordial approach certainly leads us more towards an ethnic basis for the Chinese national identity. However, if we were to consider 'Chinese' as a civic national identity, then the emphasis lies on the common citizenship of all those residing in the territory of China, who submit to the ruling authority, and abide by the values and morals that shaped the national constitution. This seeks to move away from an ethnic definition, and fits better with the constructed national identity associated with modernity, and an identity that is clearly much more potentially inclusive in a multi-ethnic former empire.

Whereas civic nationalism can be equated with state citizenship, and in principle is open and voluntaristic, ethnic nationalism on the other hand refers to a loyalty based on ancestry and descent. However, ethnic nationalism is inherent, is not something that can be acquired and cannot be changed – it is almost primordial in its conception (Greenfeld 1992: 11). It is this type of nationalism that has the power to demand ultimate sacrifice for the nation. Ethnic nationalism implies non-voluntary relationship to a collective, and entails particularity and involves exclusion. It can be argued to challenge the respect for universal human rights

since it elevates the needs of you and yours above the needs of them and theirs. In China, the nation has been conceptualised as having an essentialised ethnic core, and what may appear to be a civic, state nationalism, promoting the loyalty to a state, is actually a cultural nationalism founded on common descent from the mythical Yellow Emperor, and participation in traditional cultural practices which have been rehabilitated since the 1990s (Guo 2004: xii, 2, 4). This cultural nationalism is manifested today in the strong Party emphasis on patriotism as the core value of the people.

In modern Chinese history, the interplay between these various expressions of national identity has had a critical bearing on the national consciousness of those living in the territory of modern China. Whatever their understanding of the basis and origin of national identity, all China's twentieth century elites were agreed that a strong national identity was essential in maintaining national unity, social integration and consequent stability.

2.3.3   Multiculturalism and the modern nation-state

There will be other ethnicities and cultures within a nation-state, and how the hegemonic centre incorporates, assimilates or tolerates these different groups has the potential to cause internal ethnic tension. It is often the case in the construction of the nation-state that although there is a belief in some multicultural ideal, some desire to ensure that both individual freedom and collective freedom is respected, in fact the commonly accepted principle that national homogeneity is a necessary precondition for any exercise of political authority requires the dilution of the *ethnos* in favour of the *demos*, yet risks the problems of misrecognition (Habermas 1999: 135-137). There are always issues of hegemony and control in society. Homogenizing to a supposedly neutral set of difference-blind principles is in fact a reflection of one hegemonic culture's interpretation of neutrality (Taylor 2004: 43). In Habermas' view, national identity always seeks to supersede tribal or ethnic identities - the *demos* is always more important than the *ethnos*.

> "Only a national consciousness, crystallized around the notion of a common
> ancestry, language and history, only the consciousness of belonging to 'the

same' people, makes subjects into citizens of a single political community –
into members who can feel responsible for one another" (Habermas 1999:
113).

Minority cultural revival is thriving in modern China. Rising religious and ethnic consciousness in the context of a strong national consciousness are also evident in the acceptance, encouragement and even celebration of difference. McCarthy lists a number of hypotheses commonly cited to explain the phenomenon of ethnic consciousness observable in diverse ethnic minorities (McCarthy 2009: 6). Firstly, the assumption that this is a kind of separatist or at least proto-separatist behaviour, and is seen as a direct challenge to the Chinese state; secondly, seeing it as a type of quasi-separatist exit strategy employed by minorities to clearly demonstrate their opposition to Han hegemony; thirdly, that the minority cultural revival is one element of an emerging civil society in China, and fourthly that this cultural resurgence ultimately serves the state's interest, and is actually and unexpectedly fostered by the state apparatus.

How successful China has been in constructing a *Zhonghua minzu* identity, which is inclusive of Hui as well as other ethnic minorities, is of crucial importance in judging the success of China's multicultural strategy. Ethnic sentiment, ethnic consciousness and ethno-nationalism may all have their place, but above all political control and national unity are paramount. Can a healthy political society develop in a less than homogenous *ethnos*? This has been the vexing question over the past century since the collapse of the Qing. Attempts to force assimilation, encourage assimilation, and accept difference have all had their emphasis. Having recognised the failure of both forced assimilation policies and the risk to national unity of national self-determination, a strategy of affirmative action to encourage or attract participation in the national project is probably the best description of the current strategy.

So in the case of China, constructing a national identity that is neutral to ethnic sentiment is simply not possible – what is known as 'Chinese' in the minds of the ruling Han Chinese is the 'national' culture – to the other ethnic minorities in China it is Han culture imposed upon them:

"The People's Republic of China established a two-tier national structure, with the *Zhonghua minzu* at the top, and fifty-six *minzu* at the bottom" (Ma Rong 2014: 237).

Multicultural societies can be held together by political culture if democratic citizenship pays off in social and cultural rights, and in material terms. This is the unspoken social contract in China; there is recognition of minorities, and there is material benefit, and as long as these continue then unrest and alienation will, where they take place, be overlooked. Such preferential policies that favour minorities are intended to encourage them to recognise the benefit of belonging to the nation-state, and to minimise opposition to the national project. This multicultural strategy has emerged in recent years to reinforce the concept of the unitary multi-ethnic state. Some feel that this strategy is high risk, since it is accused of fostering the stronger ethnic consciousness that we see today in China, and this in turn could lead to greater demands for autonomy, and thus is counterproductive to the State's intention (Hu and Hu 2011; Ma Rong 2007: 211). Political discussion on changing this multicultural policy continues at the highest level (Leibold 2013: 12-38). It is difficult to understand why a government that seeks to maintain stability and unity above everything should instigate policies that emphasise the differences between the dominant Han and the developing others, though there is diplomatic and reputational benefit to the Party-State. It is however clear that minority ethnic groups are so developed, protected and favoured that to be a minority in China is to have opportunities to modernise, develop and prosper, through subscribing to the national project and yet still retain some cultural distinctive as an ethnic group. Tensions are created both for the Han who resent the favouritism shown to minorities, but also by some strongly nationalistic minorities who resent the exploitation, Han in-migration and placid submission of the national minority to the dominant other.

Tensions between a Chinese national identity and a variety of sub-national identities remain, and could unchecked potentially give rise to ethno-national behaviour that could lead to secession. Much depends on the organizing strength and the focus of the sub-national collective; where they already have a distinctive geopolitical territory, as the Uyghur do in Xinjiang, and the Tibetans in Xizang,

then the risk of secession is greater. It is evident that in such areas the Chinese government pursues a stricter interpretation of law and a tighter control, as well as employing strategies termed 'internal colonialism', such as Han immigration and the twinning of cities in minority areas ('less-developed' is the State's description) with developed (and Han-dominated) coastal cities, to dilute the proportion of ethnic groups in Xinjiang and Tibet. The situation with the Hui is less sensitive, mainly because, other than Ningxia, the territorial identity is less, and the identification as a patriotic Chinese minority group much stronger. However, there have been several sub-national projects among even Hui in the northwest that, fostered by the persecution mentality of yesteryear, and driven by the new Islamist-influenced movements, may be challenging the prominence of national identity once again (Cooke 2006).

2.4 Islam, the *ummah* and the nation

In a world of modern nation-states there is a growing concern regarding the compatibility of Islam with modern, liberal values, particularly those of democracy, equality, liberty and a political system founded on the concept of the nation-state. This concern has been variously expressed, most popularly in Samuel Huntington's provocative 'clash of civilisations' thesis (Huntington 1993). Akbarzadeh divides scholarly opinion on the compatibility of Islam with the western ideas of the nation-state into two camps, calling them the detractors and the proponents (Akbarzadeh and Roose 2011: 309). Proponents, he says, argue for the positive engagement of Muslim groups with broader society, and attempted dialogue and adaptation to modern society. They argue that the detractors' accusations of incompatibility, portraying a violent, oppressive, 'medieval' Islam, are prejudiced and reflect a selective, ahistorical reading of the Qur'an. The detractors, on the other hand, argue that Muslims are, or should be, bound by the limits and framework set in the eternal and unchanging Qur'an, and thus see Islam as fundamentally incompatible with modernity (Cox and Marks 2006: 30-31; Levey and Modood 2009; Mentak 2010: 40).

In this sub-section, I rehearse the conceptual formation of the Muslim notion of the *ummah*, the community of faith, and examine identity categories from an Islamic

perspective, particularly considering ethnicity, nation and nationalism and the accusation that Muslims have competing loyalties. Recognising the challenge of essentialism in much western treatment of Islamic anthropology (Marranci 2008: 104), I aim to be careful not to portray Islamic belief in a monolithic way.

2.4.1   The Muslim ummah

In pre-Islamic Arabian society primary allegiance was to family and tribe, but after the *hijra* to Medina in 622CE this was replaced by a unifying identity as a Muslim, one loyal to Allah. Between 622 and 632CE the Muslim community expanded and established its hegemony over Central Arabia, uniting the tribes with this common ideology and new identity. The Constitution of Medina, the most important text in the history of the early Muslim community (al-Ahsan 1986: 613), sets out a political order that supersedes the original tribal authorities in Medina, and surpasses that tribal loyalty with a new, prior loyalty, to the larger community of faith, known as the *ummatul muslimin* (the *ummah* of Muslims) (Marranci 2008: 108). The death of the Prophet Muhammad in 632CE led to two major political crises involving political authority: the issue of succession, and the problem of fragmentation or civil war. The concept of *ummah* did not die with Muhammad, but neither did it survive in its pristine form (Ahsan 1992: 24). Esposito divides the caliphate period that followed Muhammad into three broad phases: the 'Rightly Guided Caliphs' (632-661), the Umayyad Dynasty (661-750) and the Abbasid caliphate (750-1258), and asserts that this period is particularly important as a reference point for Muslim self-understanding, a time in history:

> "To which both conservatives and modernist Islamic activists return for guidance in their attempts to delineate the Islamic character of modern states" (Esposito 1998: 7).

This first period of the Rightly Guided Caliphs is seen as the normative, exemplary period of Muslim life for the *ummah* (al-Ahsan 1986: 614), and is the inspiration for all reforms and revivals in Islam. It did, however, lead to the fracture between Shi'ism and Sunnism with the issue of the succession (the first *fitna*), and thus the first division within the Muslim *ummah*.

The first dynasty, the Umayyad (661-750), ushered in a time of huge geographical extension of the Islamic empire, conquering the Byzantine and Sassanid empires, and forming a centralised Islamic governance, with hereditary succession. During the Abbasid caliphate the world was divided into Islamic and non-Islamic territory, known as *Dar al-Islam* (realm of Islam) and *Dar al-Harb* (realm of war), the jurists interpreted Islam and the four Sunni schools of jurisprudence established (Hanafi, Shafi'i, Maliki and Hanbali), and the *hadith* were collected and systematised. This golden age of Islam ended with the Mongol conquest of Baghdad in 1258CE, though political unity of the Abbasid empire had been in decline since 945CE. The Mongol conquerors were non-Muslims and thus the land of Islam was destroyed, and Muslim life and identity deeply challenged. Prior to the Mongol conquest, a concept of *ummah* was retained, a belonging to a transnational religio-political community/state with the caliph as symbolic head and governed by Islamic law. Thus the ideological prerequisites for being Muslim were retained: living in an Islamic state, following the *Shari'a*, and seeking to extend the borders of *Dar al-Islam*. The basic identity during these first six centuries of Islamic political history was provided by religion, either being a Muslim or being a non-Muslim.

The political fragmentation of the Islamic empire into medieval sultanates, with the Ottoman, Safavid and Moghul the most significant geographically, retained an underlying unity of faith and culture, with Muslims of various states maintaining an awareness of a broader affiliation and identity with a more universal community.

> "Whilst there were significant differences between the three great medieval Muslim empires they each carried over the basic features of Islamic state and society" (Esposito 1998: 27).

The sense of trans-nationalism persisted, and was grounded in the Qur'anic concept of the *ummah*.

In the modern Muslim world, the notion of *ummah* is an integral part of religious, political and ideological discourse on Islam. There is a general consensus among Muslim scholars that *ummah* refers to a spiritual, non-territorial community distinguished by the shared beliefs of its members (Hassan 2006: 313), and is

founded on the Qur'anic understanding.

Ummah in the Qur'an

The term appears over sixty times in the Qur'an in the sense of religious community (Denny 2000: 862), though it does have multiple and diverse meanings within this, ranging from the followers of a prophet, the trans-historical community of all prophets, a religious group and a small committed group within a larger community of believers, among others (Ahsan 1992: 9; Hassan 2006: 312). Al-Ahsan (1986) gives a good overview of the concept of the *ummah* in the Qur'an and in early Islamic history. First, the whole of humanity was created as an *ummah* (Surah 10:19), indeed, each individual species is an *ummah* (Surah 6:38), yet man is the only species within which more than one *ummah* exists, and the division is based on a difference of idea, thus followers of each prophet form an *ummah* (Surah 10:47).

> "*Ummah*, therefore, means not only a well-knit community but also the set of beliefs within a community, and exemplar of community, a more committed group of people within a community and the lifetime of a community" (al-Ahsan 1986: 609).

It is in the later Medinan verses that the Qur'an explains the role of the *ummah* of Muhammad in history, to be a:

> "*...*community of the middle way (*Ar. umatan wasatan*), so that you may be witness to the truth before all mankind" (Surah 2:143).

The Qur'an not only establishes the ideas of the unity of Allah and the prophet-hood of Muhammad as the foundations of the Muslim *ummah*, it also provides the followers of Muhammad with a common 'physical' identity, in the common direction of prayer and centrality of the *Ka'ba*. The physical unity of the Muslim *ummah* is demonstrated in their collective prayer directed towards the *Ka'ba* in Mecca, and essentially in the annual mandated pilgrimage, when more than two million representatives of the Muslim *ummah* gather at the holy sites in Saudi Arabia.

The fervour of the *ummah* identity was so strong in early Islam that the previous

social structure based on family ties and blood relations was destroyed. The Qur'an does not retain the use of *ummah* exclusively for Muslims, but in the chronological development of the meaning, it became a term more used for the emerging Muslim community (Denny 2000: 862). However, it is also a term that has many different nuances of meaning in the minds of those who conceptualise it, so we need to beware such essentialist interpretations based only on theological and historical use (Marranci 2008: 109). We need to seek to understand *ummah* also as a developed sociological concept that incorporates both the *ummah* as 'imagined' community and the *ummah* as collective identity (Hassan 2006: 312). Like all identities then, *ummah* identity is constructed, and its importance and contemporary relevance subject to politicization – it too needs to be made to matter.

2.4.2   Islam and ethnicity

When examining the earliest sources regarding an Islamic perspective on ethnicity it is very easy to read back into the tradition contemporary concepts that did not then exist. The sociological concept of ethnicity has a relatively recent history. Prior to the emergence of the nation-state as the modern way of ordering the world, social identities were largely thought of in terms of 'races', ethnicities, or as 'tribes' by hegemonic centres, as a way of determining belonging or not belonging.

The word 'ethnic' or 'ethnicity' does not appear in the Qur'an, as it is a much more modern term. Ataman summarises the basis of the Islamic view of ethnicity:

> "All Muslim ethnic (linguistic, cultural, territorial and racial) groups are considered as one nation or one political entity. The *ummah* is the name given to this…entity" (Ataman 2003: 90).

Islam teaches that Allah created all humanity as a single community from one couple, but separated humankind into nations and races as a necessity of creation, since the tribe or nation brings people together in order to establish a social entity and community order. The Qur'an states clearly:

> "O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye

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may despise each other)" (Surah 49:13).

Islam teaches two kinds of unity: the one community of humankind, and the community of the believers (*ummah*). Muslim unity is seen as the precursor to eventual universal unity under Islam (Surah 42:15). The existence of national and tribal divisions today is the will of Allah, for a purpose – "*that ye may know each other.*" This one political entity derived from multiple tribal or national identities is described as the *ummah*, the foundation of Islamic ethnicity theory. Abd al-Rahman Azzam, first Secretary General of the Arab League, said:

> "The Muslims form a nation over thirteen centuries old...The Prophet Muhammad was the first citizen of this nation, its teacher and its guide" (Azzam 1995: 5).

That multiple Muslim nations together form one Muslim nation seems contradictory, but this categorical confusion is symptomatic of identity theory. The critical point is that the ties of Muslim community, created through common submission to God, supersede those of kinship, tribal loyalty and ethnicity (Eickelman and Piscatori 2004: 100), a point which leads some Islamic theorists to argue that ethnicity is in fact antithetical and antagonistic to Islam. Indeed, Sayyid Qutb (1906-66), influential as a reformist literalist in Egypt at the time of the Chinese Republic, taught that any other sense of identity beyond *ummah*, whether familial, tribal, ethnic, or national belonged to the age of ignorance (Ar. *jahiliyya)* (Piscatori 1986: 106).

However, given that ethnicity and tribalism are virtually indistinguishable in many traditional societies, and that *ummah* did not abolish tribal identity, merely relegated it to second place, ethnicity as constructed in certain socio-political contexts persists in Muslim societies. Indeed, in some societies the oxymoronic idea of a 'Muslim ethnicity' has some valence (Eickelman and Piscatori 2004: 103), including among some Hui respondents in the interviews examined in chapter seven. As a religious identity, Muslim has been used as both ethnic and national identity, and continues to be so used today.

2.4.3 Islam and the nation

The synonymy between *ummah* in the Qur'an and the modern concept of the
nation is contested. Yusuf Ali in his notes accompanying his English interpretation
of the Qur'an states that:

> ""Community", "race", and "nation", and "people" are words which import
> other ideas and do not quite correspond to "Ummah"" (Ali 1996: 815).

He prefers to see the Qur'anic *ummah* as referring to a community sharing a way of
life, which is transnational, but does not have a political unity as its goal.

The collapse of the last caliphate, the Ottoman empire in 1924, and the transition
from colonial partition of many Muslim lands into modern nations, created a real
crisis of identity for Muslims. After Muhammad died, the caliphate institutionalised
the *ummah*, and the leader of the *ummah* was the caliph, or imam, Muhammad's
successor, who theoretically led all Muslims wherever they were located. In the
days of the Muslim empires, or indeed in the relatively recent existence of a
Caliphate, allegiance to the caliph was at least technically prior. Since 1924, the
nation-state has effectively taken prominence. A primarily Muslim religious
identity was superseded by a common national identity, a loyalty to the nation-
state over a loyalty to the transnational conception of the *ummah.* Prior to the rise
of the nation-state, Turks, Egyptians, Arabs and Chinese Muslim Hui described
their identity as Muslim first, not yet being made primarily concerned with ethnic
or national designations, and were often described in this early period as
Mohammedans, or as Saracens, or Moors.

Some believe Muslims are confused about their identities, whether their primary
loyalty should belong to the *ummah* or to the nation-state (Ataman 2003: 89; Ho
2010: 74). How a modern Muslim nation-state handled this conflict of loyalty
varied widely. Turkey under Kemal Atäturk pursued a secularization of society,
with religion only a symbol of identity, but becoming secondary as the secular
nationalist ideology was established. The new Turkish national identity was
effectively introduced at the expense of the *ummah*, "*the prime objective of
education was to transform loyalty of Turks from the ummah identity to Turkish*

national identity" (Ahsan 1992: 75). In Pakistan, formed in 1947 in part to preserve the religious identity of Muslims in British India, a strong conflict over the nature of the constitution, whether it should be secular or Islamic, emerged. The influential reformer Abu'l A'la Mawdudi (1908-1979) was strongly in favour of an Islamic constitution, notably saying:

> "We fought for a separate nation on the basis of Islam, and now if we fail to make Islam a constitutional reality our struggle and sacrifice are meaningless" Abu'l A'la Mawdudi quoted in (Ahsan 1992: 91).

In Egypt, there were also persistent efforts to change the loyalty of Egyptians from traditional Muslim identity to a secular national identity. Persistent Arab nationalism (which led, under Sadat, to the short lived United Arab Republic 1958-1961) competed with the Muslim Brotherhood ideals of the supremacy of *ummah* identity. In the view of influential Islamist Hassan al-Banna:

> "...the horizons of the Islamic fatherland transcend the boundaries of geographical and blood nationalisms" (Ahsan 1992: 87-88).

Wilfred Cantwell Smith, the historian of religions, believes:

> "No Muslim people have evolved a national feeling that has meant a loyalty to or even a concern for a community transcending the bounds of Islam" (Cantwell-Smith 1957: 77).

While this may be considered a somewhat suspect Orientalist attitude, it is however echoed by more recent Islamic scholars such as Kurshid Ahmad, a disciple of Mawdudi, who wrote:

> "The nation-state has never succeeded in becoming the centre of individual or collective loyalty of the Muslim people" (Ahsan 1992: 1).

Piscatori also quotes Ahmad's starting position as:

> "The nation-state is incompatible with Islam and nationalism is an alien imposition on Muslim peoples" (Piscatori 1986: 119).

He goes on to make the point that accommodation to a Muslim nation-state may be made when Islam shapes that state. Indeed, the existence of pluralism within the

earliest Islamic community is evidence for the compatibility of diverse nation-states with Islam. Bhikhu Parekh contends that although Muslims in Europe are suspected as having "*little loyalty to their country of settlement*" and being "*more concerned about their fellow religionists in other parts of the world than their fellow citizens*", yet he finds that "*loyalty to ummah has rarely led to disloyalty to their country of settlement*" (Parekh 2006: 182). Although the outcome of this clash of loyalty is debated, what is certain is that the emergence of nationalism challenged the foundation of the *ummah*, since the nation-state demands absolute loyalty, and Islam demands absolute loyalty. Turner says:

> "The *ummah*…is not political at all, but rather a transnational spiritual concept operating aloof to power politics and nation-states. It is a sense of community and belonging without political ambition" (Turner 2014: 58).

Nationalism is seen as fundamentally incompatible with Islamic theory, yet in a world of nation-states, pragmatism demands that acceptance of reality, and a rethink of *ummah* identity into a faith community of imagination. The rise of *wataniyya* (nationalism) coincided with the post First World War division of the old Ottoman empire into French, British and International supervised nascent nation-states along a colonial pattern; the independence of Muslim territory was seen by some as the precursor to a wider Islamic unity (Piscatori 1986: 82). In Muslim countries nationalism has often incorporated the concept of the *ummah* (Hassan 2006: 314).

2.4.4   The ummah and the Islamic state in the modern world

With the rise of the Muslim nation-state in the post-colonial era, some Muslims may be seen to be confused about their identities, whether their primary loyalty belongs to the *ummah*, or to the nation-state. For Muslims living under non-Muslim majority rule, as in China, this question is even more nuanced. In the traditional Abbasid conceptualization of the world between *Dar al-Islam* and *Dar al-Harb* (realms of Islam and War respectively), all areas of the world not yet under Muslim rule were regarded as areas of contestation, that is those areas in which Islamic law is not applied and/or Muslims are not in political control. *Dar al-Harb* refers to the country or countries of the unbelievers or the polytheists between whom and

the Muslims there are conflicts. Such a theory is widely used by modern Salafi Jihadists in their quest to render the West and all non-Muslim countries (as well as some Muslim nations) as the Realm of War, a place where it is incumbent on all Muslims either to fight to bring Islam to the fore, or to leave and move to the *Dar al-Islam*. Israeli used this framework in his early work on Islam in China, concluding the fundamental incompatibility of Islam and Chinese worldview, and the consequent perpetual struggle that Muslims would face in China (Israeli 2002).

The vast corpus of holy texts that constitute the Qur'an and the *hadith* were written down in pre-modern times, before the development and emergence of the modern day world political structure of nations and states. Thus, the question of how a faithful, orthodox Muslim should consider the balance between his membership of his country of birth or citizenship and his membership of a pan-national faith community is a relatively recent phenomenon. There have been a number of pan-national movements that seek to create some sense of pan-Islamic solidarity among Muslims in Muslim states at least, but none of these are seen as in any way functioning as modern day caliphates, but they may be seen as modern representations of the *ummah*. So for example the Muslim World League and the Organisation for Islamic Cooperation are pan-national organisations between nation-states – but they do not claim nor demand the allegiance of that nation-state's peoples. Indeed, Ataman sees these confederate-type systems as 'macro-nationalistic struggles' since the aim is cooperation and coordination between Muslim nation-states (Ataman 2003: 90).

The idea of the Islamic state emerged in the twentieth century as a reinvention of tradition, a reinterpretation of the caliphate for a modern world. The Egyptian reformer Rashid Rida (1865-1935) was an important link between the classical notions of the caliphate and the modern notions of Islamic state (Donohue and Esposito 2007: 31). The school of thought that emerged from late nineteenth century and became known as the Salafiyya illustrates this tendency to find inspiration in the early Muslim community. Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905), a key reformer argued that it was the neglect of the common good in matters of justice that led to the decline of Islam, and Islamist activists continue this refrain to this day. Return to the traditions of the first community, and Islam will revive.

The Islamic religious identity question is significant, since the identity category 'Muslim' is fraught with challenges. Is it primarily a religious, an ethnic or a racial category, or even a combination of each? Is it inherited or assumed? When the modern nation-state seeks to categorise people based on ethnicity, where do Muslims fit?

> "The advent of the War on Terror has spurred Islamic organizations into action...Islamic community groups have sought to mobilize and assert their collective, this time religious, identity while reiterating their loyalty to the state" (Akbarzadeh and Roose 2011: 310).

Ummah identity like all identities has to be intrumentalised politically to be made to matter. Though some believe that 'Muslim' should be treated as an inherited, almost primordial identity (Levey and Modood 2009: 176), the reality is that Muslim identity is constructed, and is politicised. The politics of struggle for identity are heavily influenced by wider nation-building concerns, and the use of religious, ethnic and national identity categories that incorporate Islamic identity a symptom of a complex problem. In a Chinese context, the prior loyalty of the Muslims in China was in question, they needed to be incorporated into a Chinese state, and the Party-State has chosen to do this through ethnicizing Islamic identity. The struggle for identity within Chinese Islam is a power struggle between the two centres of influence, that of the Party-State and that of the Islamic *ummah*.

Conclusions

The politics of identity in the Chinese nation-state are complex. Notwithstanding the historical complexity of how the Chinese nation-state was constructed in the aftermath of the Xinhai revolution, the question of the place of religious and ethnic minorities in the new nation-state was and is a critical matter, particularly so given that 60% of the geographical Chinese territory is inhabited by these minorities, and many of these locations are in areas strategic for national security. The critical importance of a strong national identity lies in its unifying power, and its claims to exclusive loyalty, and is key in the construction of a stable, prosperous and secure nation-state. The Chinese Communist Party,

since coming to power in 1949, has utilised traditional racial and civilisational theory to define the people belonging to the *Zhonghua minzu* as sharing a common ancestry, traced back to the mythical Yellow Emperor, and the legend of being created from the yellow loess of the Central Plains of China. All the people of China are branches of one 'nation' (*minzu*), which is multi-ethnic, consisting of different ethnic groups at different stages on the developmental scale. The most advanced groups are the Han, the Korean and the Manchu, and the other minority ethnicities are the recipients of a civilisational development, a centre-influencing-periphery development. The fundamental goal of Chinese ethnic policy is assimilation to the *Zhonghua minzu* identity; yet since in reality this identity looks a lot like Han ethnic identity, there is considerable resistance to this constructed identity by the peripheral peoples.

The challenge that Islamic identity is a priority for those ethnic groups who believe in Islam, including the Hui, was perceived as a major threat to the national identity project. Religious identity for many Muslims is a primary personal and collective identity, and involves belonging to a supra-national, largely imagined, community called the *ummah.* In the short history of the Party-State, the government has attempted different strategies to overcome or minimise the power of this religious identity, including extreme suppression during the Cultural Revolution, yet this identity has persisted, and may even be growing. Currently, Islam is treated as part of the Hui ethnic groups' unique customs and habits (*fengsu xiguan*), and official policy is to deny that Islam in any way is a primary identifier of Hui ethnicity.

The Party-State seeks to maintain a unified national identity through pragmatic use of incentives for ethnic minorities, including perceived loyal Muslims, with the goal being both a diminishing of ethnic solidarity, a weakening of Islamic solidarity and a strengthening of national Chinese (*Zhonghua minzu)* loyalty (Bao Erhan 1957: 2). The success of Party-State policies in incorporating the Hui in a national identity, and weakening the Islamic solidarities that could lead to notions of disloyalty, or even secession, are currently under increasing scrutiny, even within the Party itself (Leibold 2013; Ma Rong 2007). As ethnic and religious consciousness have grown in modern China, so too the people's self-

identification has also developed, and is shaped (or constructed) by multiple influences. This study explores the interaction between the Chinese Party-State and the Islamic influences.

Chapter Three: The History and Identity of the Hui in China

China is home to the world's third largest Muslim population not under a Muslim government. There are ten official Muslim ethnic groups in China, six Turkic language speaking groups (Uyghur, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Salar, Uzbek, Tartar), two Mongolian-language groups (Dongxiang, Bao'an) one Persian-language group (Tajik) and the Chinese speaking Hui. The most recent census records more than twenty-three million Muslims in China (Population Census Office 2010). This thesis is concerned only with the largest of these ethnic groups, the *Huizu*, numbering 10.5 million people. Unlike the other nine Muslim ethnic groups largely located in China's northwest Xinjiang Autonomous Region, the Hui are widely dispersed all over China, living in most of the counties in all of the provinces*. They are however particularly concentrated in the northwest, in the crescent of Gansu, Ningxia and Qinghai provinces. The relationship between the Hui and the Party-State differs markedly from that of the second largest ethnic group, the Uyghurs. This study however only relates to the Hui.

This chapter sets the historical foundation of the study, looking first at the origin and beginning of Islam in China, before moving on to trace its development through dynastic periods, and localization in the present day. The final section explores the ethnogenesis of the people now collectively belonging to the *Huizu*. Two primary themes pertinent to the central hypothesis are traced through the historical account: firstly, the persistent transnational Islamic influence on the development of Islam in China (Lai and Mu 2016: 529), and secondly, the changing relationship between the Hui Muslims and the differing historical hegemonic centre. Islam in China has always developed between these two influences, that of the Islamic world and the Chinese empire or nation. The arrival and establishment of Islam in China, and its continuing relationship with various Islamic centres of influence, has played and continues to play a significant role both in the place of Islam as a component of Hui identity, and in the localization of Islam in China. The way in which the varying governments of China have interacted with the Muslims of China demonstrates a continuing evolution both of religious and national

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* Gladney notes that the 1982 census reveals Hui living in 2,308 of the 2,372 counties and cities in China (Gladney 1991: 27).

identity for the Hui, and of the relationship of Chinese Islam with various international movements, nations and influences. The second section of the chapter discusses the question of official Hui identity, tracing the ethnogenesis of the people known as Hui, and situating this thesis in the field of Hui studies.

3.1   Origins and Beginnings of Islam in China

In this section I will outline the historical background to this study, looking at the origin and arrival of Islam in China, and particularly introducing the complex international influences on Chinese Islam. With a broad sweep of Chinese Islamic history, this section and the following two are important in highlighting the development of the various 'teaching schools' (*jiaopai*) that characterise Islam in northwest China today. Joseph Fletcher's theory of Islam's "*successive tides of influence and individuals entering China*" was first proposed in the 1980s (Fletcher 1994), and was further developed and popularised in Hui studies by Dru Gladney (Gladney 1991). This section introduces the polycentric influence on the development of Chinese Islam in history through this paradigm of successive tides, and identifies the recurring theme of various Islamic reform movements entering China, followed by the adaptation of Islam to the local circumstances, known as localization, or sometimes Sinification.

3.1.1   Arrival of Islam in China

Although surrounded by myth, legend and tradition, there is little doubt that the first Muslims in China were traders and diplomatic envoys from the country known as *Dashi* in the Chinese sources, which equates to the modern Arabian Peninsula. The trade routes that pre-dated the birth of Islam by at least a century (Reichelt 1951: 155) were generally of two types: one, a series of northwest overland routes, collectively referred to as the Silk Road, and the other an earlier sea-route through the southeastern ports of Canton (Guangzhou), Quanzhou, Hangzhou and Yangzhou.

Chinese sources engage in a lengthy discussion regarding the earliest arrival of Islam in China (La et al. 2009; Li Xinghua 1998; Ma Tong 2000; Wan 2012), but

indisputably at some point between 570 and 632CE envoys and traders from Arabia, who had converted to Islam, would have entered China in the course of their normal business. The commonly accepted origin legend among Hui surrounds the person of Sa'ad Waqqas, a maternal uncle of Prophet Muhammad (Broomhall 1910: 74; Lipman 1997: 25), known in Chinese sources as '*Woge'ersi*', supposedly one of three envoys sent by the Prophet Muhammad in response to a request from the Tang Emperor (Li 1994: 237-244) following a dream of a turbaned man. Donald Leslie sees these legends as having a Persian origin, and as being adopted by the early Qing dynasty Muslim scholar Liu Zhi (1660-1739) to legitimise the claims of Muslims to historical longevity in China (Leslie 1986: 75).

Official diplomatic relations existed between the Tang court and Arabia. Thirty-seven diplomatic missions are recorded as having taken place between Tang China and Umayyad Arabia (La et al. 2009: 23), with the earliest recorded date for an Islamic diplomatic envoy in the Chinese sources given as 651CE, when a group of envoys sent by the third Caliph Uthman visited the Chinese court (Ma Zhaochun 1986: 373)[*]. The unofficial presence of temporary traders in China in major trading centres and key sea ports (such as Hangzhou, Fuzhou and Quanzhou), and the occasional diplomatic representation, was the first presence of Muslims in Tang period China.

A second major source of Muslim immigrants was military, rather than trade (Mason 1929: 262). Since the second Caliph Umar (634-644CE), until the ascendance of the Umayyad empire in 661CE, Islamic territorial expansion had been unstoppable, reaching Africa, Europe and Central Asia. The interaction between Tang China and the growing Islamic empire is reflected in military tensions and alliances. In 638CE Yezdegard, King of Persia, requested Tang military assistance to resist Arab expansion on China's western frontier Reichelt 1951: 155). Persia was conquered by the Muslims in 651CE, but Muslim expansionism eventually led to conflict between the Tang and Arab armies at the Battle of Talas River in 751CE, after the founding of the Abbasid dynasty, where Tang troops (supported by mercenaries) were destroyed by a numerically superior Abbasid army (Frankel 2016: 574). However, this conflict was over-

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[*] including Sa'ad Waqqas, according to some Chinese sources (Israeli 2002: 82)

shadowed in China by the devastating An Lu Shan rebellion (755-763CE) that threatened the downfall of the dynasty, and all Tang armies were recalled to retake the recently lost capital, Chang'an, in 755CE. Intriguingly, a number of Arab troops were supplied by the Abbasid dynasty to help the Tang in this recovery mission, and they were rewarded with land in China when demobilized (La et al. 2009: 22). The exact numbers of soldiers fighting with the Tang army during the An Lu Shan rebellion is hard to establish precisely; secondary sources cite from four thousand Arab (Dreyer 1976: 26; Ma Zhaochun 1986: 373; Reichelt 1951: 156) mercenaries, twenty-two thousand Arab mercenary soldiers (Frankel 2016: 574), to as many as two hundred thousand foreign mercenaries (La et al. 2009: 21), of whom Abbasids or 'black-robed Arabs' formed a part. Whatever the actual number, the later demobilisation of such a significant Muslim-dominated force was the first large influx of Muslims to China.[*]

The city of Xining in Qinghai can trace its origin to 222CE, when it was fortified as a garrison of Wei state during the Three Kingdoms period (220-280CE) (Li Xinghua 2008: 81). Whilst there are historians who hold to a possible Tang date for Islam's first entry in Xining, whether military, trade or missionary-related (La et al. 2009: 23-24), Li Xinghua concludes that a Tang date for entry of Islam to Xining is:

> "…a little strained, for there is no single precise record of Islam entering during the Tang…Islam may have come during the Tang, but only temporarily, and it did not then settle" (Li Xinghua 2008: 84).

A generally more accepted date for the entry of Islam into Xining is during the Northern Song dynasty (960-1127CE). The instability of China's border regions at this time is exemplified by the establishment of the Karakhanid kingdom around

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[*] A key piece of evidence regarding the existence of sizeable Muslim communities in China's trading ports during the Tang is found in the historical record. In 758CE Canton was sacked by Arab and Persian sailors, and in response several thousand Arab and Persian traders were killed by rebels in Yangzhou (Leslie 1986: 36), and in the period known as the Huangchao (879CE) rebellion, responsible for hastening the decline and fall of the Tang dynasty, (La et al. 2009: 23) records one hundred and twenty thousand Muslims, Jews and Christians killed in Guangzhou. Arab historian Abu Zayd Hassan al-Siraf records several hundred thousand (quoted by Mason 1929: 260).

840CE in today's Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and this kingdom progressively converted to Islam between 840 and 1212CE. In addition, Tibetan Tanguts established the Western Xia kingdom in strategic territory between the Mongolian and Central Asian trade routes, including the Gansu corridor, with huge consequences for trade. The periodic closure of the northern Silk Road through the Gansu corridor directly led to both the rise in sea-trade, and the increased use of the southern Silk Route (*Kong Dao*), which passed directly through Xining. This event was instrumental in establishing both Xining and Linxia (in Gansu Province) as flourishing Muslim trading centres. The Song period is also held by local folklore in Xining to be the time of the arrival of Islam in Xining, and the main mosque in Xining, the Dongguan Great Mosque, dates its foundation to this period (La et al. 2009: 24-25).

By 1009CE, Li estimates there being Arabs, Persians and Karakhanid Muslims living in Xining, with several thousand settled by 1099CE (Li Xinghua 2008: 84). The Xining Dongguan Mosque Chronicle also records the detention of 10,000 Karakhanid Islamified '*Huihu*' merchants and diplomatic envoys in Xining between 1098 and 1100CE (Xining Dongguan Mosque Chronicle Editorial Committee 2004: 55-58), though Li Xinghua feels this must be inaccurate, since such a huge number would be such a major event in China's Islamic history that it would be more prominent in the historical record (Li Xinghua 2008: 85). The Song period was a very unsettled time in Qinghai, with little stability of government, and power and control fluctuating between the Tubo, the Western Xia, the Song and the Jin dynasties.

Although the Yuan dynasty did not officially begin until 1271CE, Mongol influence and control of northwest China started much earlier with the subjugation of the Western Xia in 1209CE, followed by the Jin in 1215CE. Xining was captured by the Mongols in 1227CE, and the residents forced into exile and replaced with immigrants. Thus, the first sizeable Muslim immigration to Qinghai occurred under the Mongol Yuan dynasty. With the progressive conquest of much of Central Asia preceding the final conquest of the Southern Song dynasty in 1271CE, the establishment of the Yuan dynasty corresponded with a marked increase in forced immigration of conquered peoples as a result of the western march of Genghis

Khan and his armies (Yang 1996: 14). Such immigrants largely comprised craftsmen and artisans from major cultural centres, such as Bukhara, Samarkand and Baghdad. In China, the Mongols instituted a four-tier hierarchical system of government, with Mongol at the top, and the two 'Chinese' groups of Han people (*Hanren*) and Southerners (*Nanren*) at the bottom. The second, intermediate, tier was effectively the civil service, and the Mongols made great use of intelligent and skilled immigrants, appointing them to key positions. Collectively, the sources refer to these people as the 'coloured-eyed people' (*semuren*), and one source lists thirty-one disparate groups, which included some called *Huihui* (Ethnic Issues Research Committee 1980: 5).

Although this second tier civil service was not exclusively Muslim, in the northwest it was certainly dominated by Muslims: Sayyid Ajall was appointed Governor of Sichuan/Shaanxi/Gansu in 1272CE (Xining Dongguan Mosque Chronicle Editorial Committee 2004: 58); in Qinghai, twelve of the sixteen non-Mongol ministers were Muslim (Leslie 1986: 83). The three 'kings' of Xi Ping, An Xi and Xining were Mongol aristocrats, but were also pious believers in Islam (La et al. 2009: 3). Suleiman, the 'king' appointed as governor of Xining by Kublai Khan was a follower of Sufi Islam, and he had a relaxed and tolerant attitude to other religions, frequently inviting Central Asian Muslim scholars to teach in Xining. One such was the Baghdadi Sufi missionary Abdul Rahman in 1274CE, who according to some sources led 150,000 Mongol soldiers to convert to Islam (Li Xinghua 2008: 85). Other sources attribute this to the influence of Prince Ananda, grandson of Kublai Khan (Chang 1987: 65). Whatever the veracity of the event, the tomb of Abdul Rahman on South Mountain (*Fenghuangshan*) is known as the oldest Islamic site in Qinghai, and remains a centre of Sufism.

Islam developed strongly in rural Qinghai during the Yuan period, in common with much of the border regions of China. Muslims joining the Mongol army were formed into elite units that undertook garrison duties in remote northwest China. Government policy was to utilise Hui to establish garrisons that also opened up wasteland and grassland to pastoral agriculture (Xining Dongguan Mosque Chronicle Editorial Committee 2004: 58). By the end of the Yuan dynasty, Muslim populations were becoming established in the Chinese hierarchy, and were first

referred to as *Huihui* households in 1252CE – a significant upgrade from the previous ascribed category of *fanke*, which simply means visitors. Their presence in the highest echelons of government gave them prestige and influence, and an increasingly Islamicized Mongol Empire gave them a strong connection with Mongol Persia, but less connection with the Islamic Arabian heartland, which remained unconquered by the Mongols. The Persian influence on China's Islam is most pronounced from this period – a period that is significant in Qinghai's Islamic development.

3.1.2 The first 'tide' of Islam: Qadim

From the original entry of Islam into China in the Tang dynasty, through the successive early influxes of Muslims in the Song and the Yuan dynasty, Islam took root in the Chinese milieu. The international influences on Islam's initial development in China generally, and in Qinghai particularly, were widespread, as can be seen from the different empires and nations mentioned in the preceding section, including the Arabian peninsula, the Persian empire and Central Asia. The original form of Islam that gradually took root in China became known retrospectively as Qadim (*Gedimu*), to distinguish it from the various new teaching schools that entered China from the Qing dynasty onwards. Qadim is from the Arabic for 'ancient', and is widely known today in China as the Old Teaching (*laojiao*)[*]. Despite the inevitable complexity of its long historical development in China, the commonality shared by those known today as Qadim lies in its ancient origin, and in its Sunni, Hanafi[†] allegiance. In fact, its existence over a long period of time together with the incorporation of certain Chinese forms, especially the use of the Chinese language, are significant markers of Qadim orthodoxy.

A key characteristic of Qadim is its focus on independent, autonomous, mosque-centred communities called *jiaofang*, that choose their own imam. Until the seventeenth century no institutionalised Muslim authority existed above the local

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[*] *Laojiao* as an appellation is fraught with difficulty, since its specific referent varies according to historical context. In this thesis *laojiao* refers to a particular synthesis of Qadim and Sufism in Qinghai.
[†] The oldest of the four major schools of thought in Sunni Islam, founded by Abu Hanifa an-Nu'man ibn Thabit (699 - 767CE).

mosque, and virtually all Muslim communities in China focused their communal life around the local mosque, and could thus be categorised as Qadim (Lipman 1997: 47). The significance of this for any sense of Islamic solidarity is clear: though in a given geographical area Muslim communities did relate to each other in terms of trade, basically they were isolated communities, a 'patchwork society' geographically, ethnically, religiously and politically (Lipman 1984: 250-262) surrounded by Han Chinese (Gladney 1991: 37).

In 1983, Qadim were considered the majority sectarian group among the Hui (Wang 2001: 37). Gladney cites Ma Tong's figures of 58% adherence across China (Gladney 1991: 58), though official figures are hard to find, since statistics on such affiliation is rarely gathered. At a national level, Qadim may still be the largest Islamic teaching school, but in Qinghai the situation is quite different, with only an estimate of 13% of Qinghai Hui following Qadim, with the remainder divided between Ikhwan (70%), various Sufi *menhuan* (16%) and a small population of Salafis (<1%) (La et al. 2009: 285-290) – alternative teaching schools whose development will be discussed below.

Chinese Hui scholar Ding Shiren describes Qadim as "*Orthodox Islam expressed in Confucian terms*" and in his view it represents a sort of contextual expression of Islam (Ding 2009: 2). The strong Chinese flavour of this mode of Islam, developed in the isolationist period of the Ming, was prevalent until the entry of the second wave. Over the seven hundred years of Islam's presence in China (before the earliest recorded Sufi influence), some localization to Chinese culture would be expected. After all, as Fletcher notes:

> "Cultural absorption in Islam is to be seen in all the Muslim inhabited regions of which we have knowledge, beginning in Arabia itself, and in China as elsewhere, Muslim populations offered a high degree of resistance to the lure of the surrounding non-Muslim culture" (Fletcher 1995a: 3).

The adaptation of Chinese Qadim Islam can be seen to be in two directions: the first incorporates new religious trends brought by new immigrants from India, Central Asia and the Mongol empire, and is an illustration of the influence of the changing Islamic centre on Chinese Islam. The second direction of adaptation is

towards Chinese cultural values and to the philosophy of Confucianism, an influence of the cultural or civilisational hegemonic centre. This latter process of localization or sinification of Chinese Islam has been widely propounded, and is a key current theme in Chinese Islamic scholarly literature (Jin Gui 2016; Ma Qiang 2016; Zhou Chuanbin 2016). The development of the Han Kitab (*Han Ketabu*), a corpus of Islamic books written in or translated into Chinese, including Persian, Arabic and Chinese writings, demonstrates the multi-centric influence on Chinese Islam's development, as well as the localization of Islam in China by the end of the Ming dynasty (see section 3.2.1 below). Indeed, the very genesis of a Chinese Muslim identity is accorded to the influence of the educational network that gave rise to the Han Kitab (Ben-Dor Benite 2005: 10, 126), and the Han Kitab became the basic curriculum of Chinese Muslim education. An analysis of the origin of the works in the Han Kitab show the variety of Islamic influences - Indian, Arabian, Persian - but overwhelmingly the influence of Sufism[*], a development in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that corresponds to the second wave of Islam (see section 3.2.2 below).

There were two main sources of connection for China with the Islamic heartlands – the Sea Route, and the overland Silk Road. These two directions of influence on trade also impacted Islamic development, with northwest China looking largely towards Persian Central Asia as a connection with the Islamic world, and southeast China looking towards Arabia via the sea routes, leading to Islam in the north and west having a very different character from that in the east. Historians tend to agree that the Persian influence on northwest Chinese Islam is significant (Israeli 2002: 148-150). However, the period of the Ming dynasty saw northwest Chinese Muslims gradually losing touch with the Muslim communities in Central Asia (Lipman 1997: 41), as a consequence of increasingly isolationist policies, and the suspicion of northwest Muslim collaboration with Central Asian Muslims (Ben-Dor Benite 2005: 40). This fear of Muslims as a potential fifth column for foreign invaders persists in the state imaginary[†].

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[*] Key texts such as Zhang Junshi's translation of *imani majmu'* (*Guizhen Zongyi*), Wu Zixian's translation of the Mirsad (*Guizhen Yaodao*) demonstrate this Sufi influence (Ben-Dor Benite 2005: 128-133).
[†] the concept of the "fifth column", an internal undetected traitor or spy, emerged in the Spanish civil war (Akbarzadeh and Roose 2011: 310).

3.2   The indigenisation of Chinese Islam

Islam arrived in China with traders, diplomats and military personnel during the Tang, Song and especially the Yuan dynasty. International influences on these temporary yet increasingly accepted residents of dynastic China have been described, and some initial indications of adaptation of Islam to the Chinese context mentioned. This section describes the important Ming dynastic period for both the acceptance of Muslims as residents of China, fully belonging to the empire, and to the development of an indigenised Chinese form of Islam.

3.2.1   Beginnings of indigenisation

It was during the Ming dynasty (1368-1644CE) that Muslims in China began to be fully incorporated as residents, no longer treated as temporary sojourners (*fanke*), nor as foreign *semu* people, but as *Huihui*, permanent residents belonging to China (Lipman 1997: 37-38). The overthrow of the Yuan dynasty in 1368CE and its replacement by the Chinese Ming dynasty established a long running dynasty with a increasingly strong isolationist policy. The persecution by Chinese of their former Mongol overlords did not extend to the *semu*; rather, the Ming employed the Muslims in their civil service roles (Ben-Dor Benite 2005: 23), though strict rules encouraging inter-marriage and the adoption of Chinese surnames were introduced, as part of a stated policy towards assimilation of these resident visitors to the Chinese (Frankel 2016: 575). This 'forced' assimilation was leading to a steady decline in Islamic knowledge, and Muslim literati could see that it would only be a matter of generations before Islam perished in China. They therefore began to produce a new style of literature that sought to express Islamic truth in Chinese, Confucian terms, and to translate or transliterate Islamic texts into Chinese. Such a contextualised approach was to lead to the survival of the Islamic faith in Hui communities, but also led to problems later on, as the contextual approach to Islam met with opposition from returning Muslim pilgrims (*hajji*) in more open periods of history. It was during the Ming that Islam really took on Chinese characteristics; it was also during the Ming assimilation that the last remaining original languages spoken by Hui ancestors died out, and Chinese Muslims largely began to only speak the local vernacular, adopt Chinese surnames

and Chinese material culture (Ben-Dor Benite 2005: 17). The ability to access Islamic Scriptures and religious books written in Arabic and Persian was thus correspondingly reduced, and Muslims were becoming concerned that their children were not receiving an adequate Islamic education (Lipman 1997: 49). No Chinese texts on Islam written by Chinese Muslims are extant before the seventeenth century (Murata et al. 2000: 13). (The first complete translation of the Qur'an into Chinese did not appear until 1927). Pressure to conform to the cultured norm was leading to the extinction of Islam in civilised China, and thus led to the production of Chinese Islamic materials.

In addition to translated works in the afore-mentioned Han Kitab, original works were also penned by Muslim scholars of the southeast, such as Wang Daiyu (1592-1657), Liu Zhi (1660-1730) and Ma Zhu (1620-?), that expressed Islam in a way that the literati of the Ming period could understand, and the court accept, using Confucian terminology. The development of a Chinese phonetic pronunciation of Arabic, and the beginnings of scripture hall education (*jingtang jiaoyu*) under Hu Dengzhou (1522-1597), following his several years spent in Mecca (Ben-Dor Benite 2005: 41) were also significant in preserving and adapting Islam to the local context. This development of Islamic education in the late Ming and early Qing is said to be entirely within the Qadim tradition (Dillon 1999: 96).

The Muslim communities in the northwest suffered under harsh state policies in the Ming, and were in frequent conflict with the imperial government, increasingly so during the Ming-Qing transition. In Xining, the Ming was a time of further immigration – for example, the government had a programme of resettlement of Hui from places such as Nanjing in 1371CE,[*] immigration by East Turkestani refugees in response to the Chinese defeat in 1513CE by the Moghul Khan in Hami, and by East Mongolian herders moving into Qinghai in 1509CE (Li Xinghua 2008: 82). A growing discontent with the corruption of the Ming dynasty led to popular participation in anti-Ming rebellions that finally deposed the dynasty in 1644, with Xining itself stormed by Li Zicheng's commanders.

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[*] several Xining Hui families trace their ancestry to Nanjing immigration in the early Ming.

3.2.2 The second 'tide' of Islam: Sufism

> "We may say, without exaggeration, that from the 12th century the history
> of Central Asia has been dominated by the activity of the Sufi *tariqa*"
> (Lemercier-Quelquejay 1983: 23).

Given the close connection with Central Asia, it is unsurprising that the second tide
of Islam to influence Chinese Muslims was Sufism, which had a major impact on
Chinese Islam from the late seventeenth century (Gladney 1991: 41; Lipman 1997:
58), and arrived in the northwest from Central Asia. Sufism has always proven
difficult to define categorically, and is usually referred to as 'mystical Islam',
though this is a gross oversimplification (Chittick 2008: 2; Schimmel 1975: 3).
Theologically speaking, Sufism emphasises three dimensions to the faith, as
opposed to the singular focus of Qadim, that of *shari'a* (Muslim law), *tariqa*
(mystical path) and *haqiqa* (truth). In Chinese Sufism these three are defined as
three vehicles: the vehicle of teaching (*jiaocheng*), the vehicle of the way
(*daocheng*) and the vehicle of truth (*zhencheng*), each a successively heightened
state of awareness of the divine. The emphasis on these three levels of Islam mark
Sufism out from Qadim, Ikhwan and indeed all other schools of Islamic teaching in
China. In its earliest period Sufism meant an internalization of Islam, a personal
experience of mystery.

Sufism traces its origins back to the Prophet Muhammad, and looks to the mystical
experiences of the Prophet as the prototype of the individual's spiritual ascension
into the intimate presence of God, but was only really integrated into mainstream
Islamic thought by Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (1058-1111), the most influential
theologian of medieval Islam (Schimmel 1975: 96).
> "Sufism was systematically developed after the ninth century...and the
> great Muslim philosopher al-Ghazali succeeded in reconciling Sufism with
> orthodox Islam" (Adamec 2009: 293).

A number of Sufi brotherhoods were founded, the most significant in the Chinese
context being that founded by Abdul al-Qadir al-Jilani (1077-1166), the *Qadiriyya*.

In very general terms, a key socio-political difference caused by the entry and widespread adoption of Sufism was that it unified larger groups of people under one charismatic leader, the *murshid* (sometimes called *shaykh* or *pir*). Former local Qadim communities that had been centred around individual village mosques gradually became united around a charismatic leader, whose 'path' was unique, but was shared by many formerly disparate communities. The Sufi paths were not merely focused on religious experience, but were also collectives loyal to their shaykh in many types of social and political activity (Lipman 1997: 107). Social commonality led to economic prosperity, and these lineages, known as *menhuan* in Chinese, grew in number, wealth, governing authority and religious strength. The divisions in the Hui community arising from these different allegiances and the struggle for economic survival led to serious conflicts in the fracturing community.

Despite the common reference to Sufi missionaries in the late seventeenth century being the origin of Sufism in China, in fact, Sufism had been influencing Chinese Islam since the Yuan and Ming dynasties (Jin 1984: 34), with some evidence that it was present in China even earlier (Israeli and Gardner-Rush 2000: 448). Sufism was likely influencing Xining Islam from the Yuan period, given the accounts of the Mongol Muslims above, and particularly the presence of the missionary Abdul Rahman in the thirteenth century, and his interment in the Sufi tomb complex on South Mountain, Xining. It is also notable that most of the works translated into Chinese and incorporated into the Han Kitab in the late Ming/early Qing period were Sufi works. The confusion seems to be regarding the entry of Sufism and the rise of the *menhuan*; the former can be dated to early fourteenth century with some certainty, but the latter development was most significant as a change in the organisation of Islam in China, particularly in the northwest. The early Qing period was a key time in the emergence of the *menhuan* in China proper. This emergence of Sufism also led to sectarian violence, as the original Qadim Islam clashed with successive perceived heterodox Sufi teachings in the northwest, and the Sufis often clashed with one another (Lipman 1990: 69; Lipman 1999: 554). The Sufi reform movements of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries can be considered to be the most fundamentalist and divisive through the history of Islamic reform in China.

The discussion about the nature and structure of the *menhuan* in China is complex, and impossible to detail concisely. Chinese sources (after Ma Tong 1983) frequently use the traditional interpretation for Chinese Islam as "*three big teaching schools, four big Sufi teachings*" (*san da jiaopai, si da sufei xuepai*) which has been critiqued as overly simplistic, and even inaccurate by Ding Shiren (Ding 2009). I do not want to engage in the details of that discussion here, but simply to set out the two primary branches of Sufism that are prevalent today in Qinghai, and to trace in particular their origin and, critically, their continuing transnational connections.

a. Naqshbandiyya tariqa

> "A Sufi order originating in Central Asia that takes its name from its founder, Muhammad Baha al-Din Naqshband (1317-1389)" (Adamec 2009: 236).

Debate over which Sufi lineage was the earliest to take root in China centres on the persons of Khoja Afaq and Khoja Abd Alla[*], respectively the twenty-fifth and twenty-ninth generation descendants of Muhammad, who came from modern-day Xinjiang promoting Sufism in northwest China in the late seventeenth century. Joseph Fletcher gives a detailed description of the development of the Naqshbandiyya Sufi line in the Altishahr, which is south Xinjiang today, but was not part of China until the mid-Qing annexation (Fletcher 1995a: 4-11). Khoja Afaq's father, Muhammad Yusuf, had been a successful itinerant Sufi missionary throughout Altishahr, Uighuristan and China proper. Following his father's death, Afaq toured Gansu (1671-1673) and taught a number of Muslim clerics the Naqshbandiyya Sufi path (*tariqa*) in Xining, and the surrounding areas.[†] The result of this charismatic itinerant teacher's missionary activity was the conversion of many Hui, to the Khufiyya lineage of Naqshbandiyya Sufism. When Khoja Afaq was in Xining in 1673 a number of students gathered to learn from him, many of whom then went on to establish a *menhuan* (Li Xinghua 2008: 95), as a subgroup of Khufiyya Naqshbandiyya. Two expressions of Naqshbandiyya in fact entered China

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[*] Khoja is from the Persian word for master, and is used as an honorific title for Sufi saints.
[†] Xining Mosque chronicle cites an early date of 1628 for this visit (Mosque Chronicle 2004: 195).

- the earlier Khufiyya (*Hufeiye)* promoted by Khoja Afaq, and passed on to the significant figure of Ma Laichi (1673-1753)[*], was followed by the later Jahriyya (*Zheherenye*) brought by Ma Mingxin (1719-1781). Both were regarded as having a Yemeni connection by Fletcher (Fletcher 1995a: 2), and both Chinese propagators had significant cultural capital in the eyes of local Muslims, since they spoke Arabic and Persian well, and had spent significant time in Mecca, as well as being trained in Yemen. The violent sectarian conflict between these two Naqshbandiyya groups, and the pre-existing Qadim, in Qinghai and Gansu is well-documented in the Chinese sources (La et al. 2009: 112-142; Li Xinghua 2008: 98-100), as well as by Lipman (Lipman 1990: 68-74; Lipman 1997: 103-114).

The primary Naqshbandiyya shrine in Xining is the Fenghuangshan tomb (*gongbei*) on South Mountain, which was built to remember the Baghdadi missionary of the Yuan period, Abdul Rahman, and was rebuilt in 2012 at significant expense. It is a primary teaching hall of the Khufiyya, and has currently five *murshids*, or trainee monks, being an ascetic community. The Naqshbandiyya continues to be a transnational movement, with branches in Turkey, Bosnia, Syria, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, China, Britain and the Americas (Sijapati 2009: 518). The connection with the wider Muslim world, with Mughal dynasty in India, the Ottoman empire, southeast and Central Asia are documented by Fletcher (Fletcher 1995b: 81-88).

b. Qadiriyya tariqa

> "A Sufi order named after Shaykh Abdul Qadir al-Jilani (1088-1166), an ascetic preacher, acclaimed one of the most popular saints in the Islamic world" (Adamec 2009: 254).

One of the notable Hui visiting Khoja Afaq in Xining in 1673 was Qi Jingyi (1656-1719), but Afaq sent him away with instructions to wait until the following year when his own teacher would arrive. The following year a further itinerant Sufi missionary, Khoja Abd Alla (*Abdul Donglaxi*), twenty-ninth descendant of the

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[*] Ma Laichi is historically significant in Qinghai as the founder of the Huasi *menhuan*, but was one of the protagonists in the 18th century violence that sprang up in Xunhua county over the vocalizing of the ritual remembrance, or *dhikr* (Lipman 1997: 103).

Prophet[*], came to Hezhou (Linxia) and taught Qi Jingyi the Qadiriyya path (Fletcher 1995a: 15). Unlike the generally accepted Ma Tong interpretation, Qadiriyya should be seen as an equivalent category to Naqshbandiyya (Ding 2009: 2) and not merely one of the four Sufi teachings (listed by Ma Tong as Khufiyya, Jahriyya, Qadiriyya and Kubrawiyya[†]). Together these two paths dominated northwest China Muslim society, particularly in Qinghai, Ningxia and west Gansu, and resulted in a large number of smaller *menhuan.* Prominent in Xining is the Xianmen *menhuan*, named after Xian Meizhen (1661-1739), one of the group who met with Khoja Afaq and with Khoja Abd Allah. After his death, devotees built a tomb (*gongbei*) for his remembrance in Xining, which was rebuilt in grand style in 2011. A smaller adjacent Qadiri *gongbei,* Guangdemen, was also rebuilt in 2012, and houses the remains of their *shaykh,* Ma Tonghai (1896-1941), a descendent of Qing period Qadiryya missionary Ma Xinyue[‡]. Both these complexes are centres of Sufi activity for members of the Qadiriyya in Xining. Qadiriyya is one of the oldest and widespread of the Sufi orders, particularly in the Arabic-speaking world, and can also be found in Turkey, Indonesia, Afghanistan, India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, as well as the Balkans, and in Morocco, Nigeria and Mauritania. The rebuilding of the three Xining tomb complexes in recent years is an example of the present revival of Islamic identity, and of the political space given for such expression of Islamic identity, a subject returned to in chapter seven.

The entry of the Sufi *menhuan* during the Qing dynasty transformed the practice of Islam in northwest China. No longer disparate local mosque-centred communities without organisational structure, the *menhuan* provided local Muslims with transnational solidarity, and an allegiance to a hierarchy of leaders (Lipman 1999: 572), viewed as holy men standing between Allah and men (Erie 2016: 103).

> "The importance and extensiveness of these Sufi orders for uniting disparate Hui communities transnationally throughout China cannot be underestimated" (Gladney 2004: 130).

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[*] Abd Allah studied in Medina under a Kurdish mystic, and was initiated into several Sufi orders (Gladney 1999: 118).
[†] Kubrawiyya is numerically inferior in Qinghai, Ma Jinhu (2006: 152) records 2720 followers in Qinghai, less than 0.5%.
[‡] Information from the memorial stone in the courtyard of Guangdemen gongbei in Xining, 2011.

At annual remembrance gatherings Sufis belonging to different lineages still gather in their tens of thousands from across China at the principal tomb complexes (Muslim Online 2011a). During the Qing these Sufi orders developed significant land-holdings and economic power, and the internecine conflicts that developed in this period were in some part due to the power struggle between rival orders. In addition, the threat to the Qing hegemonic centre of these wealthy, well-resourced solidarities in the northwest were a significant factor in the conflicts and rebellions that marked the Qing dynasty. The patronage of Sufi masters by powerful Hui warlords[*] in the northwest as a way of seeking to consolidate their local powerbase was also a direct challenge to central governance.

3.3   Conflict and Reform in Chinese Islam

With the defeat of the Ming by the Manchu Qing, China again experienced the governance of a non-Han dynasty, where initially those known as *Huihui* were regarded with less suspicion than the majority Han, and favoured by the Qing. However, growing discontent, economic hardship and imperial corruption led to a series of rebellions, in which the Hui played an important part. The rebellions in the northwest of China centred around Gansu (which then included Qinghai and Ningxia) and Xinjiang in the eighteenth and particularly nineteenth century, and continue to impact the collective memory of Hui in Xining today.

The relative openness of the Qing court, and the developments in Islamic thought in the post-medieval world, led to the rise of reform movements, and the increase in transnational connections between China and the Muslim World led to a number of these reform movements being brought to China. This section explores and introduces these two phenomena.

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[*] The Warlord Era (1916-1928) refers to the time when control of China was divided among military factions, yet a number of these warlords persisted in their control even after the Northern Expedition unified the country under the Nationalist government. The Ma warlords exerted control in northwest China until the Communist Liberation.

3.3.1 Sectarian Conflict in the Qing Dynasty

In northwest China the series of conflicts involving Muslims, Han, and the Qing court became collectively known as the northwest Hui Rebellions (*xibei Huizu qiyi*), and are a painful enduring memory for the Hui in regard to their historical interaction with the hegemonic centre. The stereotyped reputation of Hui Muslims as a fierce, predatory and hard to control people has its origin in this period (Atwill 2005: 42; Lipman 1990: 67; Lipman 2006: 88-90). Although it is common among Chinese Communist scholars to portray the oppressive, discriminatory policies of the Qing as precipitating a popular ethnic rebellion, and the Qing suppressing the rebellious Muslim minority, in fact history reveals much both about Han participation with the Muslim rebels, and Muslim participation with the Qing army in suppressing rival sects' rebels (Li Jianbiao 2008: 96). It is unhelpful to simplistically portray these rebellions as an example of the incompatibility of the Islamic and the Chinese worldview (Ma Jinhu 2006: 152), or even to portray it as primarily Qing against Muslim rebels. It is important to recognise that Muslims fought on both sides in all the northwest rebellions.

Generally there are three significant rebellions that impacted northwest Muslim communities. I will briefly outline each:

a. Su Forty-Three Rebellion (1781)
This rebellion had its roots in sectarian disputes in Qinghai's Xunhua county, between Ma Laichi's Khufiyya Sufi path and the dominant Qadim group, regarding the timing of breaking the Ramadan fast. Appeals to the Qing court to legislate against the new teaching resulted in censure of the Qadim, and the penal servitude of the appellant. The key point to understand is the way in which the Qing officials understood the dispute, as the charge was one of teaching heterodoxy to delude the people (*xiejiao huozhong*), a very serious charge in that context of rising numbers of subversive anti-Qing groups. A later and more serious dispute in 1761, with Ma Mingxin's Jahriyya Sufi path over the recitation of ritual remembrance, similarly was handled as a case of heterodoxy by the Qing officials, with much more serious results (Lipman 2006: 98-99), namely the persecution first of the Jahriyya, and then of all Muslims by the Qing. This directly led to the rise of a man

called Su Forty-three (*Su Sishisan*) in defense of the Jahriyya in the sectarian feud, which turned into a rebellion against the Qing after the importunate reaction of local governors. The results were disastrous from a public stability perspective – the public execution of Ma Mingxin, and the crushing and execution of all the Jahriyya rebels that took part. As soon as the rebellion grew out of a local Hui/Salar dispute into a wider revolt against the Qing, we see Muslim combatants fighting on both sides. For example, the Shaanxi Provincial Commander, Ma Biao, was Hui – and it was his force that was sent out initially by the Qing to destroy Su's rebels. However, this first attempted suppression of the rebellion in March 1781 failed, leading to a further mass mobilisation of 20,000 Qing troops – and the policy (used frequently by the Qing to 'use rebels to attack rebels' (*yizei gongzei*)) employed the Khufiyya in the vanguard of the attack on these Jahriyya rebels, as well as later adding 1,000 Tibetan troops and 700 Mongolian mounted troops. The rebels fought to the last man, and were finally destroyed on 6 July 1781 (La et al. 2009: 116-120). The evident animosity between the hegemonic centre and the peripheral people is coupled with the ferocity of inter-Muslim sectarian violence, the collective memory of which can contribute to contemporary societal tensions.

b. Great Northwest Hui Rebellion (1862-1874)

This was the widest ranging, longest-lasting and the rebellion having the deepest influence in China's Hui history. It was not a coordinated anti-state movement by Muslims, but action taken by some Muslim communities to defend themselves against perceived state persecution (Lipman 1990: 72). At the height of the Taiping rebellion, the discriminatory policies of the Qing against Hui, and the excessive taxation of the northern cities to fund the southern anti-Taiping war, led to huge dissatisfaction, both of the Hui and the Han. Local militias were formed, and in 1862 in Weinan County, Shaanxi, the rebellion broke out, with cities all over Gansu also rising against the Qing court. Modern day Chinese historians prefer to interpret this rebellion as a peasant uprising against the feudal lords of the Qing state, but the leaders undoubtedly were Hui Muslims, and the four centres of rebellion were also Hui dominated areas – Jinjibao in today's Ningxia, Gansu's Hezhou (today's Linxia), Xining and Gansu's Suzhou (today's Jiuquan). The Qing general Zuo Zongtang was recalled in 1867, having suppressed the Taipings, and appointed Imperial Commissioner and Governor General of Shaanxi/Gansu, and he

suppressed the rebels, first in Jinjibao, slaughtering the Hui rebels there, and then Hezhou, although only aided by the treachery of the Hui leader Ma Zhan'ao, and his son Ma Anliang. The defection of the Khufiyya Hui to the Qing paved the way for much betrayal and suspicion between Hui, and is an early demonstration of the pragmatism of Hui in switching sides in order to survive. Ma Anliang and his descendants were to have a significant impact on the Republican period in northwest Chinese history.

c. HeHuang Hui Rebellion (1895-96)

The last major northwest rebellion was the 1895 HeHuang Hui rebellion, this time focused on the Xining and Qinghai area, where again Muslim rebels were suppressed and then massacred by their co-religionists, under the leadership of Dong Fuxiang, Ma Anliang and his brothers. The conflict began with the heavy-handed tactics and interpretation of a sectarian dispute by the Qing official, who massacred eleven Khufiyya leaders and displayed their severed heads. The memory of the Great Rebellion led to an early mobilisation of Qing forces, who announced that they would kill all Muslims regardless of their *menhuan* affiliation. What started again as a sectarian dispute quickly became a Muslim versus Qing rebellion, with some Muslims once again fighting on the side of the Qing. One of the loci of the rebellion this time was Xining, and the conflict between the Muslims of the East District and the (largely Han) residents of the city were observed by resident western missionaries (Andrew 1921: 94), with attacks on the city by the Muslims, and reprisals by the Han after the rebellion was suppressed, including the evening notorious in the history of the Beiguan mosque in Xining, several hundred Hui men, women and children were enticed into the mosque, and slaughtered by the Qing and their warlord supporters (La et al. 2009: 141).

It can be argued that despite the complexity of the reasons for the origin of these conflicts, at least one of the factors unifying the Muslim protagonists in their particular factions was their adherence to a particular teaching school, an interpretation of Islam introduced by successive returning *hajji*, who aimed to reform Islam to the original, pure form that they had observed in Arabia. By introducing pure, orthodox Islam they thus sought to heal the fractured, divided community and unify, thereby strengthening the political, economic and social

base of these now China-resident Hui Muslims. This trend was to continue in the decades ahead, as charismatic returning *hajji* brought their own reformist agendas to China's fertile soil. The struggle at that time between the Qadim, two or three branches of Sufis and the new rising teaching of Ma Wanfu (see below) was one of a conflict for religious supremacy, thus commanding Hui loyalty and establishing political authority to address the social issues arising from the Qing oppression. A united body of Hui Muslims would have immense political influence in northwest China, and the Qing policies can be argued to be aimed at maintaining the fractured community, and fostering the internal conflict, as well as those conflicts with the Han majority, since it suited their political ends to keep the enemy divided.

One peaceful development during the Qing, as a result of the open policy, was the increase in the number of Muslims making the pilgrimage, and a corresponding increase in the number of Muslims making the journey to China, each bringing an interpretation of Islam. It was during the Qing dynasty that the major reform movement that transformed Islam in Qinghai entered China.

3.3.2   The third 'tide' of Islam: Ikhwan

Ma Wanfu (1849-1934) was a Sufi, belonging to the Beizhuang *menhuan* of Khufiyya path of Naqshbandiyya, and was from Dongxiang County in Gansu province – a member of the Dongxiang ethnic group (*Dongxiangzu*). Also known as Ma Guoyuan, he set out on the *hajj* in 1888, and while in Arabia spent several years studying Islam, coming under the influence of Wahhabi reformist teaching (Chérif-Chebbi 1999: 579-580), and observing that the Islam in the holy sites differed significantly from the Islam in his homeland. He returned to China in 1892 with a desire to reform Chinese Islam. His teaching came to be called Ikhwan (*Yihewani*), sometimes erroneously referred to as Chinese Wahhabism.

Upon his return to Dongxiang county, he taught that the *menhuan* and Islamic doctrines were incompatible, and left his order together with ten other influential imams. His reformist message was opposed not only by other Sufi orders, but his agitation for Hui participation in the 1895 rebellion led to his opposition and persecution by Ma Anliang, the Gansu Provincial Military Commander responsible

for putting down the 1862-1874 Hui rebellion, who himself was Hui. Ma Wanfu, pursued by Ma Anliang, was eventually arrested in Hami, Xinjiang in 1916 and accused of sedition, and sentenced to death (Lipman 1997: 206-207; Ma Tong 2000: 99-100). During his journey back to Gansu for execution, he was rescued by Ma Qi, the warlord in power in the Xining region at the time. Under the warlords' influence, Ikhwan became the preferred sect under which to unite the Hui against the *menhuan* power (Chérif-Chebbi 1999: 583). Thus, from 1918 on, Ma Wanfu gradually adapted Ikhwan's teaching to suit the political purposes of Ma Qi, and his son and successor Ma Bufang, which was to destroy the Sufi *menhuan* powerbase, thus ending the factional conflicts that were sapping the potential of the Hui collective power, and unite them under one Qinghai Islamic sect. Under the *Haiyi* hierarchical mosque system, instituted by Ma Qi, Ma Wanfu was involved in the leadership of the most senior mosque, the Dongguan Mosque in Xining, and most other mosques were under their jurisdiction. His grandson, Ma Changqing, currently serves as the lead imam of the Dongguan mosque, and as a vice-president of the national China Islamic Association.

One of the contemporary challenges is ascertaining the content of the original teaching that Ma Wanfu brought back to China, and how it developed during the patronage of the warlords. The literature is clear that Ma Wanfu's reforms founded on the twin slogans of "*lean on the scripture, establish the teaching*" (*pingjing lijiao*) and "*respect the scripture, reform customs*" (*zunjing gesu*), and his ten-point programme (*Guoyuan shibiao*) which effectively attacked Qadim and Sufi practices with the goal of establishing a reformed, less Chinese, Islam (Ma Tong 2000: 96-97). However, despite returning to China with Wahhabi books (Erie 2016: 105), the Ikhwan movement's relationship with Wahhabism is a source of considerable debate. Most sources seek to distance the Chinese movement from the Muslim Brotherhood *al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin* movement established by Hassan al-Banna in Egypt, whilst recognising the Wahhabi influence on Ma Wanfu's movement (Chérif-Chebbi 2004: 62). Since Wahhabism is Hanbali in its jurisprudence, whereas Chinese Ikhwan is clearly Hanafi, then the view that they are equivalent is misleading:

> "Ma Wanfu, the founder of the Ikhwan himself said that there is no direct
> relationship between Ikhwan and Arabian peninsula Wahhabism" (Ding

2009: 2).

Regardless of its origins, the Ikhwan today in China at least has diverged so far from the Egyptian Ikhwan Muslim Brotherhood roots that it is misleading to use the term Ikhwan to describe this movement today (Gladney 2010: 76). The transformation of the Ikhwan from its fundamentalist, scriptural-literalist, Wahhabi origins, into the modernist, patriotic and nationalistic reform movement is evidence not only of the adaptation of Islam to local contexts, but particularly the way in which Islam can be shaped and utilised by hegemonic centres to further their own political ends.

Such is the divergence within the so-called Ikhwan teaching school as to regard it as one consistent movement today is erroneous. In Xining, my research uncovered a significant and deeply-held dispute between the so-called hard-liners (*qiangyingpai*) and the moderates (*wenhepai*) within the Ikhwan, a dispute centred on the Ikhwan's connection with Saudi Wahhabism. This division within the Ikhwan is discussed in the evidence chapters that follow.

3.4   The Hui in the Modern Era

Perhaps the most significant event in Chinese history was the Xinhai Republic revolution of 1911, which overthrew centuries of dynastic history, and led to the beginnings of a modern nation-state, though the conflict and struggle for ideology, political control and, critically, a national identity persist to the present day. This section outlines this period.

3.4.1   The Hui in the Republican and Nationalist Period

The economic impact of the Opium Wars, and the political and cultural penetration of the western powers both humiliated and awakened China. The corruption of the Qing elite, and their failure to withstand the oppressive colonial policies against China, for instance the Russian annexation of Liaoning, the Germans of Shandong, the British of Hong Kong and the Treaty Ports, and the Japanese of Manchuria, Taiwan and Korea, together with the failure to modernise China for the modern

world led to their overthrow. The May-Fourth era led to a complete rejection of traditional Chinese, Confucian beliefs and the embracing of western ideologies such as democracy, nationalism, republicanism and modernism (Grasso et al. 2009: 84). A new system of education was introduced in 1904 ending the centuries-old examination system, and modern universities and colleges were founded, with increasing numbers of Chinese students going abroad to study western science and technology. Dr Sun Yat-sen founded the Tongmenghui in Tokyo in 1905, including several Hui in its initial membership (Allès, Chérif-Chebbi and Halfon 2003: 8).

The Xinhai revolution in 1911 signalled the end of the dynastic period, and the beginning of further instability, caused both by internal provincial struggles (especially between 1911-1927), as well as two major conflicts – the Communist/ Nationalist Civil War (1927-1950), and the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945). The control of provinces by warlords fragmented China into a series of effectively independent states, each pursuing aggressive policies against the other. The Nationalist Government sought to overcome the most powerful warlords by means of the so-called Northern Expedition (1926-1928), supported by Hui warlord Bai Chongxi.

In Gansu and Qinghai provinces, the Ma family warlords rose to prominence (Cooke 2006: 407; Lipman 1984). Ma Anliang was Provincial Military Commander (*tidu*) for Gansu; he was the son of Ma Zhan'ao who, in the 1862 rebellion, had switched sides to support the Qing against his Hui coreligionists. In 1911 he supported the Qing army in their battles against Republicans in Shaanxi, while securing Gansu on behalf of the Qing Prefect, Sheng Yun. Ma Anliang's subordinates were Ma Qi and Ma Lin, both of whom supported the Qing against the rebels in Ningxia and in Qinghai, preventing the early establishment of the Revolution here. However, when Ma Anliang finally learned the previously suppressed truth that the Emperor Pu Yi had abdicated, his loyalties changed, and after being courted by Ma Yugui (Shaanxi) and Wang Kuan (Beijing), he agreed to support Republicanism. This demonstrates to Hui scholars the complete Confucianization of Ma Anliang's worldview – his filial piety to his emperor never changed – only with the complete surrender of the dynastic system could Ma

Anliang switch sides.

This post-Xinhai period in northwest China was extremely unstable, and Hui were largely in control, through the so-called Ma family warlords. Ma Qi, fresh from his successes in Gansu, was rewarded with Governor of the new province of Qinghai in 1929. Ma Hongkui had inherited Ma Fuxiang's control of Ningxia, and Gansu was controlled by Ma Anliang's sons. The Hui were high profile citizens of the new China. Chinese Hui historians see the loyalty of the Hui in this period as a demonstration that they truly belong in China, as the Ma warlords never sought to 'split' from China, even when offered very favourable terms by the Japanese (Mao 2011: 380). For instance, in 1934 representation was made to Ma Hongkui (Ningxia governor) by Japanese agents offering to set up a Hui independent kingdom in the northwest, in return for Hui support for the Japanese (Wan 2012: 195-197).

The Long March of 1932 is one iconic moment of the Civil War – the hardship endured by the Communist army as they walked 5,000km from Jiangxi to Yan'an in Shaanxi is emphasised in popular remembrance. On route they encountered the oppressed minority peoples of China, and in order to garner their support, promised privileges to them. One such promise was made to Ma Hongkui in Ningxia. Ma supported the Communists in a battle against Nationalists, and was rewarded with the first Hui autonomous county in 1936 – Tongxin, in Ningxia. Further promises of autonomy were made to Muslims, and this began to turn the tide towards the Communists. However, Xining was a major exception to this, since Ma Qi, and his son Ma Bufang who succeeded him were strongly Republican in their allegiance, and sought to fiercely oppose Communism right until Ma Bufang's escape in 1949 to Taiwan, and thence to Saudi Arabia. He was able to support a guerrilla war against Communists in Qinghai for several years (Cooke 2006: 408).

The strong modernist desire of the architects of the Xinhai revolution to learn from other nations restored contact within the greater Muslim world, with more Hui for instance travelling to the Middle East on *hajj*[*] and to visit centres of Islamic

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[*] Ma Qi accompanied 130 people from Qinghai on the *hajj* of 1937 (Wan Lei 2012: 260).

learning (Frankel 2016: 576; Mao 2011: 375). Several dozen mature Hui scholars for instance studied at Egypt's Al-Azhar university during this period, and their translation of the Islamic reformist thought of people such as Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida into Chinese had a significant influence in the direction of Islamic thought in China (Chen 2014: 25). This period of Chinese Muslim history is known as the new cultural renaissance, and efforts to improve religious knowledge through developing education were at the heart of this movement (Yang 1996: 16-17). In 1925 the Chengda Normal School was founded in Shandong Province and quickly developed into the most famous and influential school in Hui society, aiming to reform traditional Islamic education. Among many social programmes launched by Chinese Muslims to modernise and strengthen China's Muslim society (Qing and Zheng 2016: 530), Ma Qi established the Ninghai Islamic Promotion Society in 1922, meeting in Xining's Dongguan mosque, and ensuring that all imams promoted Ikhwan (Ma Tong 2000: 100). The Chengda Normal School produced a thrice-monthly bulletin called *Yuehua,* which by 1931 had effectively transformed into a Chinese version of the Egyptian reformer Rashid Rida's *al-Manar,* due to the influence of the Chinese Azharite scholars (Masumi 2006: 124-129). In addition, Wang Jingzhai produced the first Chinese translation of the Qur'an in 1932, and many new Muslim schools were also established in this period.

3.4.2   The fourth 'tide' of Islam: Salafism

"Salafism is a very diversified and complicated ideologically and religiously motivated trend, and is thus not constructed by one unified discourse or group or authority" (Moussalli 2009: 3).

At the end of Ma Wanfu's life in 1934, the Ikhwan were dominant in the new Qinghai, and his successor pledged to continue his work, under Ma Bufang's patronage. However, under the Ma Qi-led *hajj* of 1937, Ma Debao and nine other imams from the Ikhwan came under Wahhabi/Salafi influence, and imported books to China resulting in the establishment of a split from the Ikhwan, one reforming on Salafi principles. This can be seen as the latest wave of Islam arriving on the shore of China's Muslim community (Gladney 1999: 130), and it was initially intensely persecuted both in Xining by Ma Bufang, and in the Gansu

heartland by the *menhuan* leaders. It was the Communist liberation and subsequent post-1980 interpretation of the policy on religious freedom that allowed Salafism to flourish, in part owing to the apolitical stance of Chinese Salafism, a view considered in the evidence chapters eight and nine below.

Ma Debao's Salafism was a further reform movement, seeking once again to remove Chinese cultural accretions from Islam, and to return to a purified form of Islam. All formations of salafism are based on reforming individuals and communities on the basis of returning to the pure Islam of the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* as understood and practised by the pious predecessors (*al-salaf al-salih*). Regarding Salafism in China, Gladney writes:

> "The Salafiyya in China put more stress on scripturalism and orthodox practice...they emphasize divine unity and criticize the Sufis and Qadim alike for their patronage of tombs, saints, and the miraculous...they regard the burning of incense during worship, still practised by the Qadim, as the syncretistic influence of Buddhism and Daoism" (Gladney 2010: 67-68).

Salafism denies allegiance to any Islamic school or *maddhab*, since this implies a submission to something other than God (Moussalli 2009: 14), likewise they reject all human-invented authorities and ideologies, such as human rights, democracy, and the imposition of ethnic categories in China, for instance. Salafis in China see themselves as followers of the original Islam and part of a theoretical tradition of strict, literal interpretation of the Qur'an originating with Muhammad himself and including Ahmad bin Muhammad bin Hanbal (d. 855) and Taqi al-Din Ibn Taymiyah (1263-1328). Al-Sudairi (2016) contends that Salafism in China should not be viewed as a sectarian movement in a formal sense, but more represents a fluid and elastic tradition of modality of orthopraxy (Al-Sudairi 2016: 30).

Linxia in Gansu is where Salafism first took root, and is still home to some of the most prominent Salafi mosques and scholars, but the movement has spread throughout the surrounding Hui heartland of eastern Gansu, eastern Qinghai, and Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region. It became prominent in Yunnan Province, especially in the town of Shadian, site of a 1975 conflict with the Party-State[*].

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[*] The Shadian incident in 1975 led to the bombing of the town by the PLA, and the

These Salafi communities are connected by a strong network of Salafi scholars, including alumni at Chinese and foreign Islamic institutions and businessmen who trade with both Chinese and foreign Muslims. The increasing popularity of Salafism can be seen in the growth of the order in Xining, where the small meeting place I regularly visited was knocked down in 2011 and replaced with a newly built five-storey mosque at a prominent street corner, opened in 2015 (see Figure 7.1 Photos 5 and 6). The popularity of Salafiyya especially with young people is perhaps causing a response from the Party-State, particularly given the reputation of Salafi Islamists in the international news.

3.4.3   Islam in Qinghai under the People's Republic of China

After the collaboration of Nationalists, Communists and Muslims under the United Front for the anti-Japanese war, the civil war restarted in 1946. The Qinghai warlord Ma Bufang commanded Nationalist armies throughout the northwest, but with defeat looming in 1949 he fled to Hong Kong and thence to Mecca, where he eventually became the Taiwanese ambassador to Saudi Arabia. On 1 October 1949, the People's Republic of China was proclaimed from Tian'anmen Gate in Beijing by Chairman Mao Zedong. Qinghai had welcomed the liberators in September 1949, yet Ma Bufang sought to direct a guerrilla war against the Communists from exile, though this was short-lived.

The religious freedom policy and national minority policy were to shape the Hui's experience of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Initially, owing to the patriotic fervour of the Hui and the support of several key Hui in the military, the Hui in particular, and Muslims in general, were well treated by the CCP. In Qinghai, the promise of an autonomous district in Xining (Dongguan Hui Autonomous District) lasted only nine months, though several Hui autonomous counties (Hualong, Menyuan, Minhe and Datong) persisted (Cooke 2006: 411). A further positive introduction by the Communists was the shift from referring to Islam as '*Huijiao*' (implying an ethnic religion) to using '*Yisilanjiao*' (which implied a global faith

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death of several thousand Hui. Restitution was made in the Reform and Opening period that led to Shadian becoming a centre of Islamic, largely Salafi, learning.

shared by millions)*, which correspondingly strengthened Hui ethnic identity, since now the Hui were clearly distinguished from the other nine Muslim minority groups.

In common with much of the country, the Great Leap Forward (1958-62) and subsequent Cultural Revolution (1966-76) had a significant negative impact on Islam, which was attacked as one of the 'four olds' (*sijiu*), and as examples of feudal superstition all mosques were closed and many reused as government buildings, factories, or even more offensively, pig sties. Imams and clergy were persecuted, and sent for ideological reform. Study of the Qur'an was abolished, and marriage propinquity prohibited (Dreyer 1982: 48). There were strong attempts through massive pressure and occasional force to bring ethnic minorities under control and assimilate them.

The Party policy was focused on control, the need to break the localism that favoured a particularistic loyalty to an ethnoreligious identity, or a regional solidarity, over the nation-state. In order to create national unity, religious belief and practice needed to be controlled, suppressed and replaced with a quasi-religious cult of the state and its leader. It is this project that defined the Mao period, particularly during the Cultural Revolution, and the development of the personality cult of Mao, the religion of Mao and the widely promoted devotion to Mao, coupled with the conflation of patriotism to Party and state (Madsen 2011: 257-259). At a superficial level such strategies seemed to work, though this cult of Mao did not fundamentally replace the traditional Chinese diffused religious ritual, which may have been put aside, but was never forgotten. The immediate return to faith and religious practice after the death of Mao (1976) and defeat of hard-liners by Deng and his open policy (1978) demonstrate that the religious undercurrent had never actually been overcome, nor had religious fervour been secularised out of the sociological or cultural level. Indeed, it was the death of Mao and the ending of Maoism that led to the ideological vacuum that allowed the instrumentalisation of patriotism and nationalism to establish a new China, marked by the period of reform and opening, and this allowed the space for

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* *Huijiao* is still the preferred term for Islam in non-PRC countries such as Hong Kong, Taiwan, Malaysia and Singapore.

religious consciousness to flourish.

The 'reform and opening up' period started in 1979, and under Deng Xiaoping's economic liberalization programme freedoms gradually were released to the people. The Hui fared better than other minority groups such as Uyghur or Tibetan, since they already had a patriotic reputation owing to their famed participation in the anti-Japanese war, but economic development was slow, and religious expansion likewise. Not until the 1990s and early twenty-first century did accelerated growth of Islamic identity begin to be possible, largely as the people grew wealthier and able to rebuild the temporary mosques simply and humbly constructed in the early 1980s.

The complex relationship between the hegemonic Party-State centre and the Hui on the periphery continues to this day. The relationship is complicated by the diversity of Islamic belief and practice, and the on-going sectarian struggles in the northwest in particular. A rising ethnic consciousness has been coupled with a rising Islamic identity, which could be seen to be in conflict with the Party-State driven identity politics presaging the *Zhonghua minzu* national identity. The importance of this unequal dialectical exchange and the resulting identity struggle is of significant importance in Chinese politics. The central ideological message of Xi Jinping's early leadership is promoting the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation (*da fuxing zhonghua minzu*), known as the Chinese dream (*Zhongguomeng*). Maintaining national unity and social stability are critical for continuing the economic development of the Chinese nation, and the incorporation and good governance of China's Muslims are also an important demonstration of China's liberal policies towards Muslims which, in turn, help in international diplomacy.

3.5   The Hui ethnic identity

At the last published census (2010) 10.59 million citizens of the People's Republic of China indicated their ethnicity as *Huizu*, representing a 46% population increase since 1982 (Erie 2016: 9). The Party ethnic categorization programme of the 1950s officially decided the ethnic groups that made up China, and an ethnic identification drive, coupled with social incentives, encouraged people to self-

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identify as belonging to these ethnic groups (Mullaney 2011). It is indisputable today that:

> "The Hui regard themselves as an ethnic group…and the Chinese state registers them as an official nationality" (Gladney 1991: 65).

The Party-State identify ten distinct Muslim groups, and the largest group was called Hui (see page 72). The origin of this term, its transformation from simply meaning 'Muslim' to becoming an official designated ethnic identity of one of the fifty-six *minzu* that comprises the great Chinese nation (*Zhonghua minzu*), and the content of this ethnic identity is a critical consideration for a study in political identity struggle. This section reviews the origin, etymology and construction of the Hui ethnic identity, and does so in the light of social identity theory expounded in chapter two.

3.5.1   The origin of the identity 'Hui'

There is considerable discussion in the literature of the ethnogenesis of the Hui, and significant divergence generally speaking between western[*] and PRC scholars. Dru Gladney, a pioneering western scholar of the Hui, states:

> "Before their identification by the state in the 1950s the Hui were not a united ethnic group in the modern sense of the term" (Gladney 2004: 160).

His work challenges the presuppositions of Chinese state policy, and claims that the state identified those Muslim peoples not identified by language or locality in a catch-all residual group known as *Huimin*, and effectively constructed that ethnic category (Gladney 2004: 162). This assumption that Hui ethnicity was invented, or constructed, is criticised by one mainland Chinese scholar as likely being founded on Gladney's "*weak field investigations and pre-established theoretical assumptions*" (Zhou Chuanbin 2005: 97-106), and by others as being influenced by a default suspicion of the West towards anything Communist (Wan 2012: 22). Chinese scholars generally defend the essential essence of being ethnically Hui, and predicate it on historical connections and cultural distinctions, usually in the

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[*] Wan Lei considers Dillon, Pillsbury, and Luckert as the exceptions to the rule - foreign researchers who share Chinese opinion on Hui origins (Wan 2012: 23).

common descent from foreign Muslims of the Tang to Yuan dynastic periods. The official Party position is stated as "*an ethnic group associated with, but not defined by, the Islamic religion*" (Wan 2012: 18), and attempts have been made to apply Stalin's 'four commons' to establish the ethnic identity of the Hui[*]. However, before the modern period the word Hui was coterminous with Muslim, and Islam was called the 'teaching of the Hui' (*Huijiao*). Before the potential historical origin of this ethnicity can be assessed, or its modern invention, it is necessary to examine the origin of the word.

Etymology of the term 'Hui'

The word 'Hui' has the meaning 'return' or 'go back'. It is used as the designation of the Hui ethnic group, '*Huizu*', and the Hui people, '*Huimin*'. The word has a long and complex etymology, which largely emerged in the Yuan dynasty. One view is that its origin is found in a clearly defined geographical entity. The earliest record of the word Hui is found in a Liao dynasty history that records the founder of the Western Liao writing to the King of the *Huihu* requesting passage through his lands. After the crossing, the record states that they defeated their enemies, and the King of the Huihui kingdom (*Huihui wangguo)* surrendered. This surrender took place at Samarkand, and some scholars therefore suggest the Huihui Kingdom is therefore identifiable as Khwarazm, which is in modern day Turkmenistan (Dillon 1999: 13). So one strand of opinion centres on a specific geographical origin for Huihui – a country from which they, or at least the term, emerged, possibly Khwarazm, or others suggest a place belonging to Persia, possibly today's Azerbaijan (Wan 2012: 42), or even North Mongolia is mentioned in earlier works as an origin for this Hui kingdom (Broomhall 1910: 169).

The more common, and it should be noted not necessarily contradictory, position is that the word Hui was only used consistently from the Yuan dynasty as a general catch-all term for those immigrated (now settled) Arabs, Persians and Central/Western Asians arriving in China from the Tang to the Yuan period (potentially including those from so-called Huihui country).

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[*] Stalin's four criteria for defining a *minzu* are: "*A nation is...formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture.*" (Stalin 1954: 304-307)

The confusion of Huihui and Uyghur in the earliest sources probably derives from the theory that conjectured that the two terms used for the earliest Uyghurs – *Huihu* and *Huihe* – were simplified to Huihui, since Huihui was easier to say than *Huihu* and *Huihe*, and it was certainly easer to write (Yang Zhijiu, quoted in Wan 2012). But the ancestors of the Uyghurs (*Weiwu'er*) and the Huihui began to be distinguished in the early Yuan sources, although not very strictly, according to Bai Shouyi. The *Weiwu'er* referred to here are the not-yet-Islamized Xinjiang Turkic people; but the Huihui were believers in Islam from west of the *Congling* (Pamir) mountains. Bai Shouyi says that the original residents of Arabs in Tang and Song were already called Huihui by the Yuan period (Bai 1992: 81-82). It is ideologically very important to Chinese Hui historians from the People's Republic to demonstrate that the Hui were always a distinct and clear ethnic group in history, and separate from the Uyghur from the earliest times, as this mitigates against the commonly held western position that the Hui are effectively an artificial construct. Wan Lei believes this shows the people known as Huihui to have been an ethnic name and an independent group of people from the earliest times. In this way he refutes the western idea of a 'derived people', or an invented ethnic group, or even a group predicated solely on religious belief (Wan 2012: 6-10, 33-71).

This last complication stems from the fact that until mid-twentieth century the word for Islam in China was 'Hui religion' (*Huijiao*). All Muslims could be legitimately described as followers of the Hui religion (*Huijiaotu*). In China, Bai Shouyi is credited with the move to abandon this confusing and somewhat misguided practice. He proposed the currently widely-used term *Yisilanjiao*, since the Hui religion is a world religion (Islam), not an ethnic religion (the religion of the Hui). The move from all Muslims in China being known as followers of the Hui faith '*Huijiaotu*', to being referred to as '*Musilin'* (Muslim) has been an important step in the development of a Hui ethnic identity.

These theories of unique origin may indeed give some legitimacy to the feeling of common ancestry on which the modern day Hui *minzu* is partly based, but I think it improbable that we can trace the Huihui ancestry exclusively to such a small area as the Khwarazm Huihui Kingdom. Utilizing the name Huihui to describe these and other Central and West Asian immigrants, including Arabians and Persians and

investing this term with new meaning is the more likely scenario, and one I believe can be demonstrated as a clear ethnogenesis especially during the Ming period.

3.5.2 Construction of Hui identity

Having identified a number of potential sources for the origin of Hui as a name, and accepting the commonly asserted view that the ancestors of the people known as Hui today largely arrived during the Yuan, and settled in China during the Ming, understanding the ethnogenesis of this people in modern terms is also very important.

The period from the Ming Yongle Emperor (1402-24) until the conquest by the Manchu heralding the Qing dynasty (1644) was a time of relative political isolation for China. Ming policy strictly regulated trade and overseas trips were rare. The rise of Portugal as a trading nation meant the Arab navies gave way on the key sea trade routes, and the overland route to Central Asia was unstable, and so the people known as *Huihui* were isolated for several centuries. In the far northwest, *Huihui* who had migrated from Tang China were distinguished as 'Han Hui', or Hui that wore Chinese clothes i.e. those that had been assimilated. This period of history very nearly saw the end of the people we now know as Hui, as they were almost totally assimilated into the Chinese Confucian culture. Without the development of an acceptable expression of Islam (Islam with Chinese characteristics) to preserve cultural distinctives, the Hui may have taken the same route as the Jews of Kaifeng, and been fully assimilated. As it is, under the Qing and religious revivalism, the Hui emerged as a strong and dominant presence in China's northwest frontier. They were clearly distinguished from Uyghurs (sometimes called 'turbanned-Hui'), from Salars ('Salar-Hui') and even from Jews ('blue-capped Hui'). They were represented at highest government level, and occupied military commissions, especially in the northwest.

Under the Party's anthropologist Fei Xiaotong's categorization program in the early years of the People's Republic, the fifty-six peoples of China were assessed and categorised. It was clear from numerous assessments that several (many) of the finally described fifty-six groups do not fit neatly into the Stalinist four

commons scheme – even the majority people, the Han, are stretching these criteria.* The Hui exhibit even more diversity than can be found within these other nine. They are widely scattered, closely concentrated, and are found in almost every county in China. They speak nearly all the dialects of China, which are often as distinct from each other as separate languages. There is little in the way of common economic life, and the only psychological commonality is shaped by some level of Islamic influence, though even this varies across the communities from the stricter believing Muslims of the northwest, to Hui pig farmers in the southwest who have no understanding of Islam whatsoever. It seems that the very idea of a collective Hui identity, although having some historical basis, is now largely an ascribed identity, one that has been accepted by the Hui who now self-identify in this way. Such wide acceptance of this ascribed identity has been a success in China's unity of the nationalities programme.

The debate then centres today on whether Islam is the sole defining characteristic of Hui identity. Generally speaking, western scholars are united in believing that the defining characteristic of the Hui ethnicity is its adherence to Islam. For example, Gladney holds that:

> "It is Islam, or the memory of it, that is the only thing that all Hui have in common, and they are the sole minority in China to share only a religious identity" (Gladney 2004: 287).

> "The Hui…are the only nationality for whom a religion (Islam) is the only unifying category of identity, even though many members of the Hui nationality may not actively practice Islam" (Gladney 1999: 155).

Colin Mackerras likewise believes that :

> "The major difference between the Hui and the Han is the adherence of the former to Islam" (Mackerras 1994: 39).

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* The Hui historian Bai Shouyi, followed by modern writers such as Wan Lei, make a case for the four commons for the Hui - a common psychology (shared folklore), a common economic life (reputation as entrepreneurs), a common territory (the vicinity of mosque, where most Hui communities are centred), and a common language ('Huihua' – the specific Hui set of Arabic and Persian influenced vocabulary.) They establish that the four commons are applicable to the Hui, importantly excluding a dependence on a belief in Islam.

Morris Rossabi argues that:

> "The Hui [are] a religious group composed of Chinese Muslims who speak
> Chinese and are ethnically no different from the Han" (Rossabi 2004: 7).

It should be remembered that Chiang Kai-shek likewise believed that the so-called *Huizu* were merely Han who practised Islam (Leibold 2007: 153). Han Chinese friends in Xining would commonly refer to Hui as "*Han with hats on*" (since wearing the white cap was a common and religiously motivated expression of belonging to the Hui ethnic group). Wan Lei, together with other Chinese scholars, insists that there is something much more cultural, historical and pre-Communist that binds together the people known as Hui. Communist policy likewise insists that Islam is not a defining characteristics of the Hui ethnic identity. Yet, as we shall see in the interviews that follow, to be Hui for many is to be Muslim, and the reverse is also largely held to be true; that should you cease to believe Islam, you would cease to be Hui.

Conclusion

The historical record of the origin and development of the Hui ethnic group is inextricably linked to the process of the localization of Islam in China. Throughout China's Hui/Islamic history, multiple international influences have served to shape Chinese Islam, and the people today known as Hui have had different experiences of relating to the various hegemonic centres to have ruled China over that period. The locus of Islamic influence has varied depending on the ruling centres' approach to international relations. During the more open periods of history, such as the Tang, Yuan and Qing dynasties, Islam arrived from different parts of the Islamic world, including the Arabian peninsula, the Persian empire, the Indian Mughal empire and from Central Asia through traders, diplomatic envoys, demobilised soldiers, exiled artisans and through Muslim missionaries, teachers and returning pilgrims. During periods of isolation, particularly during the Ming dynasty, Islam largely developed indigenously, absorbing significant Confucian influence, and becoming established as a religion in China. Today, the different teaching schools (*jiaopai*) in northwest China reflect this multi-centred Islamic influence, and the persistence of what I continually refer to as 'sectarian identity'

demonstrates the continued importance of different expressions of Islam for those known as Hui[*].

The very identity of the Hui as an authentic, historical ethnicity is still a point of contention. As a socio-political entity, Hui ethnicity or nationality is certainly established in modern China, a strongly ascribed identity, yet questions of what distinguishes the Hui from the majority Han are debated, especially when compared to the distinctiveness of other linguistically different ethnicities such as the Uyghur, or the Tibetans. This question of ethnic integrity overlaps with the question of assimilation, since the Hui are seen by many to have either completely assimilated to the Han (thus losing their ethnic distinctiveness), or acculturated to the Han to varying degrees. These views can be represented by a spectrum of terms, referring to the Hui either as 'Muslims in China' (some acculturation, but retaining a strong ethnic identity akin to the Uyghur), or as 'Chinese Muslims' (strong acculturation and a weakened ethnic identity), or even as 'Han who believe in Islam' (an extreme assimilationist position). This question of identity integrity is shaped by the various influences of the hegemonic centre, especially during the last century, where extreme assimilationist policies attempted to create a homogenous national identity. The degree to which the Hui accept or resist this project of identification is influenced by sectarian allegiance. Exploring the way in which the Hui in Xining interact with the Chinese Party-State and the Islamic-centre on questions of identity formation will demonstrate the inter-relationship of these two influences on shaping Hui identity today.

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[*] Strictly speaking the word 'sect' is inaccurate. The common belief of all Muslim groups involved in this study means that their commonality in terms of belief is far closer than sectarian differences would usually imply. Commonly they refer to each other as *jiaopai*, for which 'denomination' may be a better translation – I will continue to use sect as an accepted colloquial term for the phenomenon.

Chapter Four: The Twin Centres of Influence

This study of Hui Muslims in their real world setting demands a multi-disciplinary approach, ranging across the social sciences, incorporating political science, sociology, anthropology in the ethnographic tradition, as well as drawing on some aspects of Islamic studies. It is fundamentally geared towards gaining an understanding of how the Chinese State (hereafter referred to as the Party-State, since the Chinese Communist Party and government structures are interconnected at all levels, local and national) (Charlton 1997: 187), in pursuing its purpose of national integration through its current ethnic policy, interacts with the individuals and collectivities belonging to the State-ascribed ethnic category '*Huizu*'. China promotes itself as a multi-ethnic unitary nation (*tongyi de duo minzu guojia*), but has only achieved debatable success in pursuing ethnic integration (what is termed the national project). The organs of the Party-State loudly proclaim the success of its ethnic unity policy (*minzu tuanjie*), and point to unprecedented stability and consequent economic development as tangible and desirable outcomes of that ethnic policy (State Council 2009). However, continued tension and violence among certain ethnic groups, most notably Tibetans and Uyghurs (Kaup 2012: 300), though such contested identity is not limited to these restive groups alone, cause some, in the Party even, to question this narrative of success (He 2005: 75, 78).

This chapter sets out the broad theoretical framework for this study in identity politics. It builds on a foundation drawn from Stevan Harrell's 1995 book, "*Cultural Encounters on China's Ethnic Frontiers*" (Harrell 1995), where he conceptualises 'civilising projects' as the attempts by a hegemonic centre (which he terms 'the civilising centre') to transform and thus incorporate the various minority peoples (whom he calls 'the peripheral peoples'). For Harrell, a civilising project is an interaction between peoples in which:

> "The inequality between the civilizing center and the peripheral peoples has its ideological basis in the center's claim to a superior degree of civilization, along with a commitment to raise the peripheral peoples' civilization to the level of the center, or at least closer to that level" (Harrell 1995: 4).

Unlike a conquest, in which the subjugated people are dominated, a civilising project operates on the belief of the centre that it is helping the periphery attain or at least approach the superior cultural, religious or moral quality of the centre itself. This dialectical exchange should not be understood as only one-way however. Through the process of interaction the people of the centre are also affected by their contact with the periphery - unequally, perhaps, since this is an asymmetric dialogue - but there is change in both the peripheral peoples and those at the centre. Often this can simply be the sharpening of the realisation of being different, usually superior. In Harrell's study of three civilising projects, the Confucian, the Christian and the Communist, one can see such centre change in the strengthening of Christian identity when confronted by the 'heathen', or the strengthening of belief in superior Confucian culture the closer in contact with the backward barbarian one comes.

The civilising project can be analysed into two core elements – the ideological discourse of the centre, and the ethnic discourse of the periphery. The present study, however, presents a more complex situation than a single asymmetric dialogue between the Party-State centre of influence and the Hui ethnic periphery. As I introduced in chapter three, the Hui people's ethnic identity is so deeply integrated with their Islamic religious identity that the global religion of Islam is clearly also a strong ideological centre of influence. It is necessary therefore to consider competing ideological dialogues of two centre-periphery dialectical exchanges. First, the two-way influence that the discourse of the Party-State centre has with the Hui people on the periphery, and second, the two-way influence that a conceptualised 'Islamic centre' has with the Hui people on the periphery.

In recent Chinese studies there have been a number of ways an unequal dialectical exchange between centre and periphery have been conceptualised. David Tobin, in his paper exploring Uyghur – Han relations in Xinjiang, uses the difference between 'imaginings from above' and 'experiences from below' to explore the nature of the dialogue between the ideologically driven Party-State centre with its policy goals for a unified, stable Chinese nation (an 'imagining from above') and the grass-roots, day-to-day lived experience of ethnic discrimination and disadvantage that Uyghur people on the periphery 'experience from below' (Tobin 2011: 8). In

Donald Leslie's influential 1998 work, "*The Integration of Religious Minorities in China: The Case of Chinese Muslims*" (Leslie 1998) he makes use of a 'push-pull' metaphor to describe how, in the late nineteenth century especially, the dominant anti-Muslim sentiment of the hegemonic centre resulted in Hui being 'pushed' into enclaves which led to segregation and separation from society. Simultaneously, a further centre of influence, that of Islamic teaching on the 'special Muslim needs and customs', exerted a 'pull' on these Hui Muslims to maintain their ritual purity and thus contributed to the separation. In this case, the push and pull of the Islamic centre and the hegemonic dynastic centre contributed to the same outcome – increased segregation of certain sections of Muslim society. This resulted in the strong ethno-religious tension that existed in the late Qing being maintained between the Hui and the Qing hegemony.

This study of twin centre-periphery unequal dialectical exchanges can similarly be viewed as an exchange between, on the one hand, the 'imaginings from above' of both the Party-State centre and the Islamic centre, and on the other the 'experiences from below' of the Hui people in the periphery of Xining, Qinghai. One can also conceptualise the Party-State project of national integration as the 'push' of the Party-State towards accepting a Chinese national identity, and the various Islamic conceptions of being a true Muslim can be seen as the 'pull' of the Islamic centre, perhaps with some transnational allegiance and identity. Although such a dialogue could be viewed as necessarily antagonistic, since both centres are drawing from ideologically very different foundations, the one a Marxist-Leninist materialistic worldview, and the other a religious, moral worldview, these competing voices from twin centres could theoretically desire the same outcome, as with Leslie's example from the late Qing. This study does not begin with the assumption that since the message from these twin centres is paradigmatically in opposition, therefore the resulting influence on the periphery must also be in opposition. For example, both centres may agree that promoting harmony and unity between ethnic groups is the best way to secure the future of China as an integrated nation, and the freedom of Muslims to practise and develop their faith. However, what will become clear is that even if the message from the conceptualised centre is directed towards similar goals, the experience from below, that is, the way in which this influence is internalised and acted on by the

peripheral people, is diverse, and leads to widely differing interpretations.

The primary hypothesis that this thesis explores concerns the relative influence of these twin centre-periphery civilising projects, and posits that the dominant influence remains the Islamic influence:

> "The identity of the Hui community of Qinghai has always been shaped by its location between the Islamic community (*ummah*) and the political condition (and problems) of Chinese statehood. In contemporary Qinghai, despite intensive efforts of the Chinese state to control and shape the Hui identity, perceived or actual inter-relations with the Islamic world remain the dominant influence."

This chapter will both describe the categories of Chinese state and Islamic community, conceptualised as centres of civilisational influence, and will also describe and analyse the ideological discourse of both centres as it relates to the question of ethnic and national identity.

4.1   The Party-State centre of influence

The theory holds that the conceptualised civilising centre assumes a superior degree of 'civilisation', and also has a commitment to raising the civilisation level of the people it considers on the periphery of its influence. One significant aspect of this civilisation in the context of the Chinese Party-State is its own strongly-held belief about the nature of Chinese national identity. In considering the Chinese Party-State as a civilising centre, I want to focus my discussion on the ideology of the nation-state building project that in the post-Qing became the critical 'national question (*minzu wenti*)' (Leibold 2007: 3). The national project requires the establishment of a common national identity to which all the people of China can commonly belong, requiring a considerable propaganda effort to ascribe this primary identity as the prior loyalty of a diverse people. As such, the civilising centre promotes its construction of Chinese national identity to the peripheral peoples, and seeks to ascribe the common national identity in replacement of the existing, and often long-established, identities of the peripheral peoples, be they familial, ethnic or religious identities.

The question of the development of China's national identity has generated a substantial corpus of literature (Dittmer and Kim 1993; Guo 2004; Hughes 2006; Leibold 2007; Leifer 2000; Liew and Wang 2004; Tønnesson and Antlöv 1996; Zhao 2004). Chapter two explained the importance of a strong national identity as essential for encouraging and maintaining national unity, and in generating the patriotic feeling essential for the defence of the nation. The particular concern of the Chinese hegemonic centre, certainly since the collapse of the Qing dynasty in 1911, is in constructing a common national identity that will bring cohesion and social stability to the diverse people that existed in the Qing geobody as it transitioned to a modern nation-state (Duara 2008: 46). For a stable nation to emerge, a national identity is essential (Calhoun 1994: 304-308). The basis of this identity may be ethnic and cultural ties, which Smith sees as a pre-requisite on which to base claims of nationhood (Smith 2000: 7), or may be based on a bureaucratic integration into a civic nation. The great majority of the world's nations have formed by one or other of these routes – an ethnic-genealogical route or a civic-territorial route (Smith 2000: 16). This dichotomy between ethnic and civic nationalism is more of a continuum; different rulers in China's history have attempted national projects at one or other end of the continuum. The problem of national identity in China has a long history.

4.1.1   The problem of national identity

James Leibold, in his thorough study of the transition from Qing empire to Chinese nation, discusses the varying policies employed by Republican, Nationalist and Communist parties in attempting to establish such a common national identity among all the people of China, or:

> "The efforts of Chinese male elites to fold the fluid ethnic diversity of the empire into the homogeneity of a new national imaginary" (Leibold 2007: 2).

The historical background to the discussion of national identity has its roots in the fall of the Qing empire, which can be considered to have arisen as the culmination of national and elite dissatisfaction with the defence of the national sovereignty and border integrity. The active exploitation of China by the foreign imperial

powers and the defeat by the Japanese in the first Sino-Japan war in 1896 brought China face to face with her inherent weakness, particularly the pitiful lack of modernisation in the late Qing period. To many this was seen as the failure of Chinese tradition in the face of the western, modern world. This urgent threat to national survival was a prime driver for promoting reform, and a key factor in both the Xinhai Revolution of 1911 that overthrew the Qing dynasty, and the 1919 May Fourth movement that reacted against the unfair treatment of China by the foreign powers at Versailles. Dr Sun Yat-sen was an advocate for a national reawakening movement (*zhenxing Zhonghua*) that emphasised the critical need for the people inhabiting the former Qing geographic boundaries to unite against foreign incursion and exploitation. The establishment of the Republic of China in 1912 reconstituted the collapsed empire as a free and equal "Republic of Five Races" (*wuzu gonghe*), incorporating Han, Manchu, Mongol, Tibetan and Hui[*].

In order to defend the national interest, a series of national salvation programmes and national regeneration projects proliferated in the early twentieth century. One major threat to a united people was the multi-ethnic nature of the Chinese political community, and a more active strategy aimed at their incorporation into the national identity was deemed essential, resulting in an assimilation process called Sinification (*Hanhua*). Prior to the end of the Qing, ethnic differentiation had a very low, perhaps non-existent profile (Crossley 1990: 8), but now the potential fragmentation of the old empire along regional or ethnic lines was a distinct possibility. Promoting national unity was essential for establishing the nation, and was the chief concern of the hegemonic centre throughout the post-Qing period, a concern that persists into the modern era.

4.1.2   The problem of the minority 'other'

A second, closely-related problem was termed the 'frontiers problem' (*bianjiang wenti*). Despite the numerical weakness of China's national minorities (comprising as they do a mere 8% of the total population), they occupied strategic frontier locations, actually 64% of the territory, predominantly the sensitive frontier

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[*] 'Hui' here is accepted today as having referred to all Muslims, including Uyghur, and not exclusively to those known today as *Huizu*.

regions in the north and west (Kaup 2012: 303; Ma Rong 2014: 237). Sun Yat-sen quickly realised the geopolitical significance of the frontier, primarily ethnic minority peoples, thus he later spoke of transcending ethnic identities to create a national people (*guomin*). The importance not only of winning political allegiance of the periphery to the centre, but also constructing a new sense of national belonging was the civilising goal of the centre. This national construction project proved to be the common concern regardless of the ideological basis of the centre, be they Republicans, Nationalists or Communists. The defence of the nations' frontiers was dependent on the defence of these ethnicities as an integral part of the Chinese nation. Ensuring that these frontier peoples were defended either from foreign aggression promoting secession, or by transnational movements leading to irredentism promoted by other neighbours was necessary, even essential, for the maintenance and development of the territorial nation-state. The frontiers question and the national question together combined to produce a strong political desire for national unity, founded upon a common identity, a critical component of nation-state construction.

How the unitary Chinese state would treat other nationalities, or ethnicities, was a strategic question, one with a diversity of answers reflecting the different government ideologies. Would the Chinese state follow a liberal model of inclusivism, respecting and incorporating those ethnic groups that differed from the majority, and allow, even encourage, them to maintain and promote their own uniqueness? Or would it follow a conservative, perhaps traditional, exclusivism, that maintained the formerly accepted and normative categorization of civilised (*Xia*) versus barbarian (*Yi*) - insisting that in order to belong to the nation one needed to be civilised, thus promoting an assimilation to the national culture defined by the hegemonic centre, and rejecting the ethnic cultures of the periphery. Different strategies of incorporating the minority ethnicities can be discerned in a historical examination of Republican, Nationalist and Communist policies. These can be briefly summarised as follows:

a. Forced assimilation
Leibold has argued that, "*assimilation…was the ultimate goal of both the CCP and the GMD* [Guomindang]" (Leibold 2007: 13), though it certainly was a long-term

goal, and expected to be a fairly organic process. The common way of portraying the Nationalist approach to the national identity question is to accuse them of heavy-handed assimilation policies, which Leibold regards as polemic (Leibold 2007: 53). Thus, Sun Yat-sen initially accepted reformers' conception of the republic of the five races, which claimed that Han, Mongol, Manchu, Hui and Tibetan were the five races that made up the Chinese nation. Liang Qichao first coined the term *Zhonghua minzu* to ascribe a racial category to the Chinese 'race-state', although still with a Sinic community at the core (Tobin 2011: 10). Later, Chiang Kai-shek refined this to claim that all the peoples of China had the same progenitor, were branches of the same tree, and were thus closely related. Communist party dogma continues to assert this simplified stereotype, whereas Leibold has convincingly shown that GMD and CCP policy were actually very closely related, the main difference being the way in which the myth of national belonging was constructed (Leibold 2007: 51).

This construction of the *Zhonghua minzu* as the unified people belonging to the Chinese community, including non-Sinic peoples, required justification, and for the Nationalist this was accomplished through a reappraisal of history, and the invention of a new imagined community, based on the theory of common descent from a single ancestor. The national *minzu* needed a common unifier, some myth of common origin. The centre thus focused on *Sima Qian's* historical records to claim that "*the Yellow Emperor is our minzu's progenitor*" thus establishing bonds of fictive kinship (Leibold 2007: 120-123). However, there was significant dissent from some May Fourth intellectuals (Duara 2008: 53)[*], who objected to the rewriting of history to support a thesis lacking in historical evidence, and conversely saw that promoting a myth of the former harmonious relationship between Han and ethnic others actually undermined the goal of a melding of sentiments and cultural practices. The CCP on the other hand advocated a multi-ancestral origin as truer to reality, though the fusion of these distinct primordial races (Peking Man, Ordos Man and Javan Man) and indeed all other ethnicities into one great Chinese people, with Han at the cultural core was the preferred myth.

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[*] May Fourth Movement spanned the years 1917-1921 and is regarded as China's Enlightenment.

The Nationalists did indeed seek to incorporate all the people under one *minzu* category, but it is perhaps best to see this more as a re-categorization programme, rather than a forced assimilation, with ethnic practices banned and a strong sinicization programme, though this happened in places. The more aggressive assimilation tactics are best illustrated in the modern period of the Communists, specifically the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (1966-76), with its emphasis on 'smashing the four olds' (*pohuai sijiu*), which included old cultures, old customs, old habits and old ideas, and the construction of a new socialist society (Heberer 1989: 17, 23-25). It was during this period that ethnic symbols and practices that traditionally marked the boundaries between the minorities were most aggressively assaulted, and ethnic consciousness suppressed. The reform and opening-up (*gaige kaifang*) period that emerged after Mao's death has resulted in the heavy-handed assimilation policies largely being abandoned, although recent years have seen cases of ethnic suppression, particularly focused on the restive frontiers peoples with suspicions of separatist agenda, such as Uyghurs and Tibetans.

b. National Self-determination

The Wilsonian doctrine of national self-determination articulated during the First World War, which formed a significant element in the Treaty of Versailles that marked the end of the war (Whelan 1994: 99), was an expression of the liberal agenda for the equality of each individual, and the respect for the ways of life of others. That all distinct minorities should be given the right to determine their political status was a key tenet not only of liberalism, but also of Marxism. Sun Yat-sen is said to have been inspired by national self-determination (*minzu zijue*), yet what he meant by the term continues to be debated, particularly his usage of the term towards the end of his life in responding to Leninism during the First United Front of GMD and CCP in 1924. Was it a departure from his original commitment to 'national unity'? Was it a pragmatic concession to the pressure from the Soviet Comintern representative? Or did it already imply a subtle re-ordering of his approach to what was meant by *minzu*? Basically, preserving the nation-state and the incorporation of the *minzu* was needed, and so Sun pragmatically believed in both the right to independence of the Chinese nation, and the right to self-rule of, and equality between, all China's *minzu*. This held that self-rule could only be

achieved within the context of the Chinese nation-state – leading to a promotion of the federal model. However, the federal model idea floundered with the realisation that the disparity in ethnic populations (four hundred million Han and only ten million other ethnicities at that time) would lead to significant overrepresentation of the minorities. As a system the federal model would have resulted in large areas of Chinese territory governed, for example, by a federation of Uyghurs, or the federation of Tibetans, that would be significantly disproportionate to their total population. Emphasising the relatively small population of ethnic minorities became an important political trope, which continues to this day with the emphasis of the qualifier 'minority' (*shaoshu*) in the official formulation.

Although the GMD formally guaranteed the right of self-determination for all domestic *minzus* in 1921, this was significantly and progressively diluted to remove any possibility of political secession. For Sun Yat-sen self-determination was really only an option for the Han people, since the minority *minzus* "*no longer possessed the ability to defend themselves, and thus depended on the Hanzu*" (speech by Sun Yat-sen in 1921, quoted by (Leibold 2007: 57)). By 1929 the pledge of self-determination was removed from the GMD manifesto.

The changing commitment of the CCP to Leninist national self-determination has been presented as duplicitous, since they initially supported and promoted national self-determination, and then, once liberation had been achieved, backtracked on their promises, and resorted to a much weaker promotion of national autonomy within the Chinese nation-state (Connor 1984: 87). The caricature of the CCP policy is that they instrumentally used Wilson's national self-determination principle to initially win favour with the minorities, before somehow reneging on the deal and offering a much diluted regional autonomy as the alternative (Zhao 2004: 173). Leibold sees this as an unhelpful distortion of history, and suggested that in actual fact at such a time of national catastrophe and the likely extinction of the Chinese people at the hands of the Japanese aggressors, national self-determination was low down the priority list of the new prospective leadership (Leibold 2007: 81-82). As with the GMD, the crisis of national unity and the threat of a loss of sovereignty and the destruction of the nation shaped early theory regarding the minorities. National unity was the central tenet of the CCP

manifesto, as it was the GMD's. It is true that the CCP initially advocated a federal system and the right to self-determination, but the national situation required that the national survival was much more important than a looser federal approach (He 2005: 62). Foreign aggression and exploitation, threats to China's geopolitical integrity, the rise of localism, warlordism and the effective control of parts of China's sovereign territory by others was the primary threat to national unity.

CCP frontier policy owed much to Lenin's United Front tactic. In fact, the Comintern emphasis on self-determination played a significant role in disconnecting Mao from the Soviet influence, since disagreements about the risk to and the importance of Chinese state territory abounded. The breakdown of the First United Front and the strength of the Nationalists in the north sent Comintern policy into disarray, and separating the CCP physically and geographically from the USSR allowed the CCP to independently reassess the appropriateness of national self-determination as a political doctrine applicable to the Chinese context, and in doing so develop its own indigenous nationality policy. With the contextualization of Marxism to Chinese characteristics, Mao instrumentally made use of an accepted tenet of Marxism – national self-determination – to achieve something different from orthodox Marxism's intent. The question was turned into a purely domestic matter – how could the former Qing geo-body be ethnically and territorially integrated into the new Chinese People's Republic? By 1934 self-determination had been omitted from the CCP manifesto in favour of terms such as national liberation, self-sufficiency and struggle.

> "Although publically the right of Chinese minority nationals to determine their political destiny without interference was stated, the Party basically emphasised the joint struggle of all Chinese *minzu* nationalities to carry out collective liberation from foreign independence" (Leibold 2007: 92).

National self-determination has gone, to be replaced by a commitment to manage their own affairs; regional autonomy preferred to independence.

A study of the impact of the Northwest Work Committee reveals the implications of this for the Hui nationality in northwest China. The accepted backward status of the minorities in terms of civilisation meant that the burden of impelling them

towards their own liberation fell on the Han *minzu*, "*the destiny of the Hui nationality is the same as the entire Zhonghua minzu*" (Leibold 2007: 100), a further demonstration of a centre-periphery civilisation project.

c. Inducement

A third approach to the national question was that of inducement; this is the policy pursued today, and hence can be seen as the civilising influence that the centre seeks to have on the peripheral Hui. To be a national minority belonging to the Chinese nation is promoted as being of benefit to both China and to the ethnic minority. Preferential policies were introduced to promote participation of minorities in society, to take affirmative action to include minorities in government posts, to relax controls on private expressions of religion and of ethnic markers such as festivals and practices. This more liberal approach took the ascendancy with the abject failure of the forced assimilation policies of the Cultural Revolution, and emerged following the period of reform and opening up after Deng Xiaoping's relaxation of control. As the national consciousness increasingly was promoted as *Zhonghua minzu*, with a strong Han ethnic core, and the policy of forced assimilation was deemed a failure, so the pragmatic approach to the *minzu* question became one of inducement – an approach controversial within the Party, not only because it is unpopular with the Han majority as unfair (Brady 2012a: 4), but also as it is seen by some as actually fostering *minzu* identity and consciousness to the detriment of national unity (Ma Rong 2007: 214-216; McCarthy 2009: 163).

4.1.3 The ideology of Sino-Marxism

The Party-State centre since 1949 has engaged in a state-building project that sought to rationalise the diversity of China's peoples and sought to incorporate all the people – especially the peripheral frontier people – into the national identity. The great challenge of incorporating the 'Other' into the 'Us', or the '*Yi*' into the '*Xia*', to use earlier Confucian categories of belonging, was made more urgent by the strategic location of these minority people, often adjoining other states in which other members of the same ethnic background people inhabited.

As a civilising project of Communist origin, what in their view were the qualities identified by the civilising centre that the less civilised peripheral peoples were so in need of receiving? Chinese Communist social theory drew heavily[*] from Marx and Engels' use of Lewis Henry Morgan's social evolution theory, which classified three main stages in the development of primitive societies – savagery, barbarism and civilisation. The use of this theory in association with ethnic classification enabled the Party-State to assign each minority to a particular stage in evolutionary theory, and almost always these minorities were assigned a category that considered them as backward relative to the Han. This confirmed the Confucian perception of the ethnic 'Other' as being in need of civilising by the Han. Incorporating this theory with Marx's historical materialism enabled the Party to further classify the various *minzu* society as on a scale from primitive communism, feudalism, semi-feudalism, capitalism to socialist. Thus, the civilising project could be seen not only as educating the backward minorities in their modern national identity, but also in promoting a greater conformity to Sino-socialism. However, the *minzu* categorization project was an important first step in the identification project for the CCP once they had consolidated their power.

a. Ethnic Classification

A process of ethnic classification was implemented in the early 1950s under a team of anthropologists, seeking to make sense of an initial survey of people who had not been given a list of acceptable categories of identity to choose from, but instead relied entirely on self-ascription. The result of this preliminary categorization step in the census of 1953 was confusion, with over four hundred collective identities assumed, some containing fewer than one hundred people (Mullaney 2011: 2-3). A program of consolidation was implemented, called the Ethnic Classification Project (*minzu shibie*), led by Fei Xiaotong, and under serious time pressure to report, since the Communists had offered full representation of the minorities in the National Congress of 1954, and they could not accommodate representatives of the large number of self-ascribed *minzu.* Six months of fieldwork, helpfully described by Thomas Mullaney (Mullaney 2011) resulted in fifty-four *minzu* (including the Han – two more have since been added) that fitted within the model based loosely around Stalin's four commons, but also giving

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[*] and inaccurately, according to some (Stalin 1954).

weight to people's ethnic consciousness, and considering traditional categories. Determining where each *minzu* fit on the social evolutionary scale was important to plan the details of the civilising project – how to move the backward minorities forward towards full socialism, and incorporation in the Chinese national identity. This work, described as *minzu gongzuo*, or 'ethnic work', is the 'imagining from above' of the Party-State centre, and the ideology that underpins this goal is the content of this influence.

b. Final assimilation as the goal

However, the fundamental goal of the Communist model was the eradication of all differences of class, ethnicity and gender, so a final goal of full assimilation to the Han was the natural endpoint. The entire progression of Party-State policy must be viewed with this end-goal clearly in mind. There is a tendency to read back into the Communist model with the eyes of liberal western values, and see a genuine desire to respect minority culture, and preserve ethnic diversity. Although there is evidence for this desire in the varying ethnic policies of the State, the final goal of all being one indivisible nation is centred around the concept of the Great Chinese People, the *Zhonghua minzu.* All the people of China are seen as an integral part of the *Zhonghua minzu*; this is the common national identity being promoted by the Party-State. One further emphasis is the tendency of the Party-State to equate loyalty to the nation with loyalty to the state and by extension to the Party. This amalgamation of nation-state-Party serves the CCP well, since the successful promotion of an active patriotism among China's people can easily be interpreted as support, even a political mandate, for the Party's ongoing rule.

Summary

The core ideological discourse of the Party-State centre is one of belonging to the national *Zhonghua minzu* identity, with a commitment to ethnic unity (*minzu tuanjie*), and a recognition of ethnic diversity. Emphasis on China's policy on freedom of religion (*zongjiao ziyou*) is coupled with a deliberate downplaying of religious identity, particularly as it pertains to a characteristic of being ethnically Hui. The dissemination of the ethnic unification message (*minzu tuanjie*); the absolute unquestioning and unqualified construction of fifty-six ethnic groups making up the historical peoples of China; the celebration and exoticisation of

these minorities, all contribute to an overwhelming 'imagining from above'; that all China's people, including the peripheral Hui, absolutely and undeniably belong to the *Zhonghua minzu*, and as such the primary influence of the Party-State centre is communicating and strengthening this national identity above all others. The indivisibility of the unitary, multi-ethnic nation's peoples is summed up in the slogan of *sange libukai* ('three can't leaves')*, which reflects the imagined indivisible national community of Han and minorities, and is prominent throughout the minority dominant districts of Xining:

> "The Han cannot leave the minorities, the minorities cannot leave the Han, and the minorities cannot leave each other" (see Figure 7.2 photo 4).

4.2   The Islamic centre of influence

Whereas the influence centre of an autocratic one-party State is obvious, discerning the changing location of an Islamic centre is more difficult. As Eickelman and Piscatori say, "*the notion of a uniform central focus in Islam appears to be questionable*" (Eickelman and Piscatori 2004: 149), and the leadership of the Islamic World has proved historically to be polycentric, so determining what constitutes an Islamic centre of influence is more contestable. Although the content of the Party-State discourse experienced ideological changes, the political location remained the same, the hegemonic centre of governance of the country/empire/nation-state. In conceptualizing an Islamic centre there are several competing candidates for the centre of influence of the Islamic world, particularly as this influence relates to the Muslims of China. Additionally, it is important to be sensitive to accusations of essentialist interpretations of Islam primarily as civilisation, rather than as a religion and a code of ethics affected by multiple cultural and geographic milieus (Ayoob 2008: 23). This section seeks to outline the various cultural and geographic influences on Chinese Islam, before looking at the prevailing ideologies that perhaps define the 'civilising influence' of Islam in China.

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* This *sange libukai* concept was first introduced prior to the Cultural Revolution, but re-introduced by Jiang Zemin in the 1990s (Tobin 2011: 10).

4.2.1   Early development of the Chinese Islamic centre

The concept of an Islamic centre of influence needs to be considered from the perspective of those global centres of Islamic learning that have spread their influence to China, as well as those centres of Islam that developed in China herself. Chapter three showed that the historical connections between China and the Islamic heartlands fluctuated over the centuries since Islam entered China through traders, diplomats and soldiers. Relationships of tribute between the dynastic courts and newly Muslim Arab trading centres were superseded by the relationships between new Muslim settlers and the majority indigenous people. During the earliest period of Islam in China, according to currently circulating traditions (Li 1994: 237-247), several key Muslim notables visited China, the most famous being Sayyid Abu Waqqas, described as Muhammad's maternal uncle. One could postulate an early stage direct influence here from the earliest source of Islam – the family of the Prophet Muhammad – which is certainly the role the legend plays in the identity construction of Muslims in China.

As section 3.2.1 described, Muslims settled and inter-married, and with a significant increase in Muslim population during the Yuan dynasty, a time of political and cultural isolation during the Ming led to the indigenisation or sinification of Islam, a development that saw a synthesis of Islam expressed through Confucian terminology (Ben-Dor Benite 2005; Frankel 2011b; Murata et al. 2000). This centre of influence we may consider as indigenous, and was located in the east of China, particularly the then capital, Nanjing. This east China centre of influence continues to play a significant role in influencing Chinese Islam, particularly the Qadim and Sufi traditions, both of which are also experiencing significant revival in contemporary northwest China. This indigenising movement can be regarded as a reaction to the extremely unequal ideological discourses of the Ming political centre and the Islamic religious centre. Muslims were thus enabled:

> "To preserve the faith and practice of Islam while simultaneously living in harmony with Chinese ideals and ritual observances. In effect they considered themselves fully Muslim and fully Chinese" (Murata 2011: 20).

With the collapse of the Ming and the beginning of a more open period of Qing diplomacy, coupled with the annexation of parts of Central Asia, the influence of mendicant missionaries introduced the new influence of Sufism, in part from the Indian Moghul empire (Jin 1984: 35), and in part from the Arabian and Persian heartlands (Fletcher 1995a: 4). This transnational centre of influence of Sufi *tariqa* developed along the Sufi networks, led by strong charismatic leaders, one key member of whom, Khoja Afaq (known in China as Hidayat Allah, *Hedaye Tonglaxi*), visited the northwest in the seventeenth century and was key in establishing both the Naqshbandiyya and Qadiriyya *tariqa* as significant influences in Chinese Islam (Li Xinghua 2008: 95). The establishment of modern day Linxia as a centre of Sufi influence exerted a powerful Sufi influence throughout northwestern China, in contrast to the east of China, which largely retained its Qadim character (Lipman 1996: 103).

4.2.2   The influence of Islamic modernism and reformism

The late nineteenth century crisis in the Islamic world, the collapse of colonialism and particularly the collapse of the last caliphate in 1924, coupled with the rise of the modern nation-state, generated new ways of thinking about concepts such as nation, state and nationalism, and whether or not these were compatible with Islam. Much of these deliberations were focused on Muslims living under Muslim rule, and broadly the consensus was a fundamental incompatibility of Islam with nationalism. Ataman describes two broad groups thinking about this question in the modern world – he terms them rejectionists and conformists (Ataman 2003: 98). The former group absolutely reject nationalism in all cases as being counter to Islamic teaching. The latter see some form of 'positive' or 'social' nationalism that celebrates the diversity of culture as permissible, but never when that nationalism threatens the prior loyalty to the transnational *ummah*.

Although this discussion was theoretical, it developed in the milieu of anti-colonial movements in nations such as Egypt, Turkey and India, and resulted in a further strong locus of influence for Islam in China. The rise of a number of Islamic reform movements originating in the Arabian peninsula affected Muslims all over the world (Gunaratna et al. 2010: 99). Islamic modernism, as a general movement,

certainly spread as an influence to post-dynastic China, both through the return of *hajji* from studies on the Arabian peninsula, such as Ma Wanfu (founder of the Chinese *Ikhwan*) and Ma Debao (founder of China's Salafiyya), as well as the significant presence of Hui scholars at Egypt's al-Azhar university during this early twentieth century period (Chen 2014: 24-25; Mao 2011: 373-375; Masumi 2006: 122-123). This period is referred to by Chinese scholars as the "*new cultural renaissance among Chinese Muslims*" (Yang 1996: 16), and Hui Azharites influenced by the *Nahda*, the Awakening (Allès, Chérif-Chebbi and Halfon 2003: 9), a reformist, modernising Muslim movement, epitomised by the writings of Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (one of the founders of Islamic modernism), and his disciple Muhammad Abduh, were introducing new Islamic ideas to China. Many of these ideas being discussed in Egypt were being translated and returned to China through the journal of the Chengda Normal School*, *Yuehua,* which in content was strongly linked to *al-Manar,* which propagated the writings of Rashid Rida, a disciple of Muhammad Abduh (Masumi 2006: 127-133). The influence of the four big imams of Republican China was likewise a significant contribution to this trend of Islamic modernism (Aubin 2006: 252; Chérif-Chebbi 1999: 590). The origin of Islamic support for nationalism is found here, a development that was extremely important for establishing a patriotic Islam in modern China, as the interviews in chapter eight reveal. This Egyptian reformist influence on Chinese Islam represents a major civilising influence of the Islamic centre to the Islamic periphery.

Such patriotic reformism in the Islamic world has given way to a literalist reformism manifested in the revival of the Salafi mode of thought, which has been a growing influence in northwest China (Chérif-Chebbi 2014). The perceived failure of Islam, and the political weakness of Muslim countries in the twentieth century has given rise to a growing reform movement that looks back to the Islam of the earliest golden age, and seeks a return to these days through reforming Islam on the basis of a literal obedience only to the Qur'an and the *Sunna*. Such a movement looks back to the pious predecessors, the *al-salaf al-salih*, and is thus termed Salafiyya. It is heavily influenced by the Wahhabi thought of the Saudi

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* The Chengda school, founded in Jinan in 1925, is an example of the priority given to a reformed Islamic education in the reforms of the Hui in the early nationalist period.

peninsula, and by the reformist thought of Muhammad Abduh, Hassan al-Banna and Sayyid Qutb of Egypt, representing a further and current centre of influence for Islam in China.

The influence of various Islamic countries persist to the present day, with continued increase in the number of imams studying overseas. In my own interviews for this fieldwork four of the imams interviewed had studied overseas, in Pakistan, Syria, Egypt and Saudi Arabia[*]. All of the imams interviewed had performed the *hajj* at least once, and consequently all Xining imams in this study had experienced the influence of the Islamic centre first-hand.

4.2.3 The growth and influence of 'cyber-Islam'

External influence on Islam in China may have varied between different geographic centres through history, but today access to new Islamic trends emanating from the Islamic World created by the advent of the digital age is unprecedented. The rapid growth of digital technology and access to the internet in China[†] means that even with the protection of the Great Chinese Firewall and the scrutiny given to on-line activity by the State[‡], the propagation of diverse opinion on Islam is widely circulated in China. The availability of a virtual public sphere seems to some to come close to a Habermasian notion of an ideal speech situation, where rational public discourse and debate can take place (Herold and Marolt 2011: 10; Ho 2010: 74), though this interpretation of the Internet as a public sphere is argued against by Habermas himself (Habermas 2006: 423). However, it is imperative that this study considers the civilising influence of what Gary Bunt introduced as 'cyber-Islamic environments' (Bunt 2003), particularly given its potential for transnational connectivity between Muslim communities (Ho 2012: 140).

Wai-yip Ho conducted a survey of Chinese Islamic websites in 2011, and provided a good overview of the more popular sites, and their origin and purpose (Ho 2012: 147-149). He points out the relative freedom that Muslims had to create websites,

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[*] Preserving anonymity does not allow me to identify the imams referred to.
[†] from 620,000 netizens in 1997 (Ho 2011) to 720 million in 2016 (Internet Live Stats 2017).
[‡] some 30,000 online police allegedly supervise the Internet (pers. comm.)

which grew from ten to more than fifty in a few short years, and included sites such as *Green China* (www.xaislam.com), a site dedicated to the spreading of the faith among Han Chinese, set up by the controversial figure Wu Huaguo (无花果) (Baike 2017). In Xining, during my research, the most popular national website cited was *Chinese Muslim Net*, or *Zhongmuwang* (www.2muslim.com), with the commonly accessed Xining website *Muslim Online* (www.muslimwww.com) also very popular, giving news with a Muslim interest, and frequently giving basic introductions to Islam, as well as regular teaching from famous local imams. It is noteworthy that this previous perceived relative freedom for Muslims online has come to an end, as the national sites *Chinese Muslim Net* and *Green China* were taken down in late 2016 amid accusations of foreign interference and a determination to crack down hard on domestic extremist forces (Wenxue City 2016). Reuters reports it as a response to *Chinese Muslim Net* publishing an article critical of President Xi Jinping (Reuters 2016). Indicative of local sensitivities is the fact that the local *Muslim Online* site (muslimwww) remains fully accessible, as does the official China Islamic Association site (chinaislam.net.cn).

Despite the continued blocking of western social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Youtube, the development of local alternatives (Weibo, Weixin and Youku) have proved popular, and on-line message boards including forums for discussion have been significant[*], given the anonymity believed by the netizens. This media connect the Hui, both young and old, in a virtual Chinese Muslim community, Chinese since it is bound by the use of Chinese as the main language. This existence of a virtual Chinese Muslim community through a social network presents political potential in a highly regulated and controlled public sphere, particularly when it comes to mobilising responses to national and local events. For example, the response locally to the bombing of Gaza by the Israelis in July 2014: almost all my local Xining Muslim contacts on *Weixin* rapidly changed their avatar to the Palestinian flag – an expression of solidarity with their Muslim brothers. Of course, *Weixin* is strictly monitored, as all social networks are, and during times of national protest and the risk of unrest will be taken off-line for a period (as experienced in late spring 2012 when a mosque in Ningxia was

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[*] In 2017 at the time of writing many of these forum were likewise taken down by the Chinese internet police.

destroyed (BBC 2012)). Any controversial comments or suspicious sites will be rapidly disabled, but there is always a period where controversial comments are surprisingly accessible.

The rise of cyber-Islamic environments was a concern to the imams interviewed in my field work, and giving two examples of their responses is helpful in illustrating the rising importance of this global Islamic influence. For example, the relatively young imam #22 said:

> "I don't really approve of WeChat (*weixin*); it is good of course for promoting some understanding of social trends, but there is a lot of falsehood and its content can be quite complex, whereas our Islam is quite simple…we don't like to use the Internet."

A student noted the difference between the young and the old, with older people having a loyalty to their imam, whereas the younger people are more willing to explore new ideas:

> "Old people's idea is of following – I like my ahong, he speaks well, so whichever ahong I approve of I follow. But today's youth and middle aged are not the same – the way they receive information is not the same, because now China has the internet and that increases interest, there are all sorts of resources and people's eyes are opened." [#24]

4.2.4 The ideology of the Islamic centre

The polycentric Islamic centre of influence is extremely diverse, and the breadth of Islamic ideology difficult to summarise. The bidirectional influence of the centre with the periphery is notable in the case of Islam, as the Chinese influence on Islam has been profound, particularly as it relates to the Islam taught in China. This sinification of Islam goes beyond the already considered Confucian contextualization of Liu Zhi and his contemporaries. The Azharite promotion of the modernist views of Muhammad Abduh and his followers were translated and disseminated in China. Concepts of nation and nationalism, and the introduction to China of the idea that patriotism is compatible with Islam, have had a significant influence on the political treatment of Islam in China. An influential imam, Wang

Kuan, was important in this, since though he "*failed to discover a concrete basis for patriotism in the Qur'an and hadith*" (Masumi 2006: 123), yet, through his Azhari teacher's interpretation of the following verse:

> "Why cannot we fight along with the way of Allah? Weren't we driven out from our home and separated from our children?" (Surah 2:246)

Wang went on to claim that all Muslims are given responsibility to protect their parent's country, and in that regard introduced the important and prominent idea of 'love of the fatherland being a tenet of faith' (Ar. *hubb al-watan min al-iman*) to China in the early Republican period. The importance of this phrase in promoting a patriotic Chinese Islam will be explored in the evidence chapters, particularly chapter eight.

Islam in China has always had a strong reformist trend, and as previous reforms were succeeded by new reforms they gave shape to the peculiarly sectarian nature of Islam in northwest China. It is how the different sects interpret key questions regarding how Muslims should live under non-Muslim rule, the validity of patriotism, nationalism and *ummah* identity for Muslims, and the balance between an ethnic and a religious identity that delineate the key ideological influence of the various Islamic centres. In this thesis these will largely be examined by stratifying Muslim interviews along sectarian lines. Though recognising that there is unlikely to be a direct correlation between a given teaching school and a single geographically located Islamic influence, yet by examining the influences and teachers of the leading imams, and the beliefs and behaviours of the members of various teaching schools, ideological diversity becomes evident, and the negotiation of identity influenced by the Islamic centres.

Summary and Conclusion to Part One

In exploring the way in which Hui identity is constructed relative to the Islamic community and the Chinese state it has been important first to set out the historical and theoretical foundations on which this research builds. Social theory insists that identities are constructed, and need to be made to matter, and I have shown how primordial identity is a significant, yet widely held, misconception of

ethnic and national identity. The majority of identities are socially constructed, and are contextual in their creation, ascription, assumption and therefore in their politicization. There is a fluidity in identity that means that the salience of a given identity changes depending on the dialogic interaction between the hegemonic centre and the people on the periphery, and identity, particularly primary identity, continues to be shaped by this interaction today. The hegemonic centre has been presented as complex, not only in terms of the changing governance of China through the dynastic period into the past century of changing ideological bases for government, but also in the competing influence of a polycentric Islamic world, and in the space permitted by the various governments for Islamic influence. The influence of various Muslim nations on Chinese Islam over time has been demonstrated, with a particular recognition of the importance of the Saudi Arabian Islamic heartland, as well as the role of Al Azhar university in Egypt, with relatively large numbers of pilgrims and scholars visiting each.

I have shown how the Party-State at an ideological level has engaged in the process of national identity construction, establishing a common national origin, and negotiating the emphasis on a *Zhonghua minzu* identity that incorporates all the fifty-six ethnic groups classified by the Party, through linking all to a putative theory of common ancestry. Maintaining social stability through fostering ethnic unity, preventing separatist movements, guarding against extremism and terrorism are the primary concerns of the Party-State, and under the rubric of belonging to a national identity, form the key message conveyed to the Hui, as well as to other minority groups. The religious identity question has proved vexing to the Party-State. Denying that Islamic identity is the defining characteristic of the Hui ethnicity is important to the Party given its underlying Marxist ideology, yet the persistence of a strong Islamic faith, and the revival of Islam as a religion since reform and opening continue to foster and encourage Muslim religious identity. The Islamic centre emphasises the commonality of all the people who believe in Islam as members of one transnational *ummah* community, sharing common faith, and existing as some form of supra-national brotherhood, potentially generating a loyalty to something other than the nation-state.

The different historically generated teaching schools arising from the different

tides of Islamic influence arriving in China interact with the Party-State and with different Islamic centres in different ways. Examining how the people in one particular traditional, conservative Muslim community in a city in northwest China negotiate their identity between the competing influences of State and *ummah* will reveal the relative dominance of these two influences, and how the concept of Hui identity changes due to this relative influence. The next part of the thesis will explore this question through detailed analysis of fieldwork.

PART TWO: THE HUI BETWEEN STATE AND UMMAH TODAY

In twenty-first century China the relationship between the State and ethno-religious minorities is changing. There is significant internal debate on the value of the ethnic policy pursued by the Party-State, with detractors arguing that the persistent ethno-religious difficulties exemplified by the ongoing tensions, in Tibet and Xinjiang especially, have actually been fostered by a less than successful ethnic policy (Hu and Hu 2011: 11; Ma Rong 2007: 211; Ma Rong 2014: 239; Tobin 2015: 66). In addition, recent developments in religious policy and law, especially in 2005 and 2016, and in the implementation of such policies may reflect a shifting in the centre's approach towards managing its ethnic minorities (Hong 2011: 444-447; Yang 2012: 75).

As an ethno-religious minority the Hui have always negotiated their identity between the influence of two great civilisation centres, the Chinese hegemonic centre and the global Islamic community. This study hypothesises that the inter-relations with the Islamic world remain the dominant influence on shaping Hui identity, and therefore examining the relative influence of the two centres in contemporary Hui identity politics will test this hypothesis. This second part to the thesis thus first examines the way in which the Party-State influence ascribes to the Hui an official national and ethnic identity, particularly through the control and shaping of the teaching of an official Islam. Secondly, this part of the thesis will consider how the different Islamic influences on the Hui affect their assumption of identity, and how that may differ from the ascribed category. The evidence is presented in four chapters, two looking at the Party-State influence on identity construction through the production and content of official Islam, and two looking at the interpretation and internalization of this teaching through the understanding of identity by members of the various Islamic sects.

Chapter Five: Party-State Genesis of "Correct" Islam

The 'civilising centre - civilised periphery' paradigm theorises that hegemonic centres seek to exert an influence on peripheral peoples that conforms them to the notions of 'civilisation' or 'correct behaviour' that are held by the centre. In the

case of Chinese-Hui relations, this thesis proposes a twin-centre of influence. On the one hand the Party-State centre seeks to conform the Hui periphery to the political goals of the Party-State, and on the other hand the notional global Islamic centre seeks to exert an influence conforming the Hui periphery to Islamic ideals. Both of these centres of influence demonstrate an attempted civilising project, with specific political messaging aimed at exerting influence on the identities of the peripheral Hui people. The specific components of this attempted civilising influence from both notional centres were described in chapter four, specifically the interplay between national, ethnic and religious identity, and the question of primary allegiance or loyalty.

In this chapter I will describe the ways in which the Party-State promotes its own ideological priorities to the Hui periphery regarding identity specifically through the instrument of Islam. The Party-State seeks to exert control over the content of Islam as officially taught, and attempts to ascribe an identity to the Hui people that conforms with Party-State ideals. The Party-State's goal is to incorporate and maintain the Hui within the national identity; that they are, first and foremost, members of the *Zhonghua minzu,* Chinese of the ethnic group Hui, whose ethnic habits and customs (*fengsu xiguan*) include, but are not defined by, the practice of the global Islamic faith (Veselic 2013: 101).

The challenge of defining the influence of the changing hegemonic centre throughout Islam's history in China was introduced in chapter three. The definition of what constitutes Islamic religious orthodoxy has often been claimed by the centre, and the changing centres of influence have led to a variety of Islamic influences claiming orthodoxy. In modern China, the implementation and adaptation of the Constitution article on religious freedom* led to the introduction by Jiang Zemin in 1993 of the concept of religion mutually adapted to China's national socialist situation (*zongjiao yu shehui zhuyi shehui xiangshiying*), specifically defined as adapting religion to a socialist society (Goossaert and Palmer 2011: 325; Potter 2003: 322). Classic Marxism taught that class struggle would result in the liberation of the proletariat from all forms of imperialism,

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* Article 36 of the 1982 Constitution, adopted at the fifth National People's Congress: "Citizens of the People's Republic of China enjoy freedom of religious belief" (NPC 2004).

feudalism and superstition, and time would see the eradication of religious belief from the socialist State (Hong 2011: 435). In China this remains the official ideology of the Party (Leung 2005: 903). The Party desires control, and controlling diffused religious practice proved to be far easier than controlling the institutional structures that accompany other global faiths (Poon 2011: 68). The international dimension of Islam (like the imperialistic connection of Christianity) presented serious problems ideologically for religious policy makers, and the breaking of international influence was a primary aim of early Party policy. The key fear was that western anti-China forces would use religion in much the same way as they feared they would use ethnicity to westernise and split China.

For the Party, religious affairs certainly proved more difficult to control than had been expected, and so utilizing the United Front strategy, which sought to unite secondary enemies to defeat the primary enemy[*], led the Party to establish 'patriotic' religious associations in the 1950s (Leung 2005: 896-897) to manage (i.e. control) religious activity. The Religious Affairs Bureau, established in 1954 (renamed the State Administration for Religious Affairs (SARA) in 1998) has responsibility for managing all aspects of religion – that is, the five permitted faiths, Buddhism, Daoism, Islam, Catholicism and Protestantism, and it does this in the case of Islam through the China Islamic Association (hereafter IAC). In common with a number of Islamic countries (Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Egypt) where the State seeks to control the primary message delivered in the nation's mosques (Hidji 2016), so too China has engaged in an adaptation of Islam's primary message so that it conforms with China's political goals, using the IAC as a "*tool of political control for the government*" (Cieciura 2014: 17).

With the rehabilitation of religion during the reform and opening period under Deng Xiaoping, followed by a further change in the Party's view under Jiang Zemin in the 1990s, the positive role that religion could play in China's socialist development was accommodated, a change indicated by Goossaert:

> "At a meeting of the United Front in November 1993, Jiang explained that
> the concept of adaptation to socialism meant that religious believers were

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[*] such as that employed during the United Front with Guomindang in 1937 to combat the Japanese invasion.

free to keep their theism and their religious faith, but politically they should love the motherland and defend the socialist system and the leadership of the CCP" (Goossaert and Palmer 2011: 325).

Islam, in the view of the Party, needed to be adapted to conform with China's national situation, which meant that the mutual adaptation of religion to a socialist society was continuously emphasised by the Party. As Erie observes:

"The Party-State, backed by its monopoly on force, mobilizes considerable institutional and discursive resources to make Islam conform to Chinese socialism and nationalism" (Erie 2016: 5).

All teachings and institutions not compatible with that socialist situation were to be abandoned or changed. However, though respecting the right to believe in Islam, indeed in the freedom of religious belief enshrined in the Constitution, the Party-State sought to utilise Islam to accomplish its state and nation building goals. Although mutual adaptation is the purported goal, the primary focus is on developing an expression of religion that is at once compatible with Party-State goals, and acceptable to the broad majority of Muslim religious believers. Reshaping the expression of Islam in China to the point where influential Muslims at home, and particularly abroad, would reject it would be counterproductive, affecting both internal stability and international relations.

Since the official summary of Party policy on religion was issued in 1982, the so-called Document 19, respect for and protection of the freedom of religious belief has been official policy, pending such future time when religion itself will disappear[*]. Document 19 stated that the Cultural Revolution had made mistakes in the area of governing religion, and the Party exonerated itself by blaming the Gang of Four (Hong 2011: 436). Pitman Potter stated that:

"Party policy on religion in the past twenty years has reflected a marked departure from the repressive policies of the Maoist period" (Potter 2003: 319).

Jiang Zemin acknowledged the legitimacy of religion beyond existence of class and

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[*] A good translation of Document 19 is provided by MacInnes (1989).

state, recognising that banning religion would lead to a challenge to Party legitimacy and also recognising that religion would exist objectively for the long term, all leading to a correction of Party principles in religious policy. The goal became consolidating patriotic political alliance in each ethnic religious group, training the religious professionals who work with religious believers, and restoring the places of worship. Thus, the primary way that the Party-State centre seeks to shape and control the content of Islamic instruction in Xining, and thus exert its influence, is through the IAC, as Erie says:

> "A centerpiece of the Party-State's definition of Islam and of its experiments to interpret Islamic law in accordance with Party principles is the China Islamic Association" (Erie 2016: 81).

In seeking then to understand how the Chinese State interacts with the Hui in the area of identity construction, I will first introduce and explain the function and role of the IAC as the primary interface between the Party-State and the Hui, then determine the specific emphases of the IAC as it seeks to influence Hui identity through an analysis of IAC publications, before focusing particularly on the work of its Chinese Islamic Affairs Guidance Committee, who are responsible for the official content of Islamic teaching in China. How the Hui respond to the IAC is shaped by the Association's reputation, and is important in considering the strength of its influence, and so the chapter will end with an exploration of the attitudes of the Hui to the IAC at a local level.

5.1   The China Islamic Association: Establishment, Structure and Purpose

The IAC was inaugurated in May 1953, by a group of politicians working with three imams who all trained at the famous al-Azhar university in Egypt: Ma Jian (1906-78), Pang Shiqian (1902-58) and Da Pusheng (1874-1965) (Allès, Chérif-Chebbi and Halfon 2003: 10, Wan 2012: 216). The last of these was one of the four great imams of Republican China[*] (Aubin 2006: 246), who each played significant roles in the development of a reformist Islam heavily influenced by al-Azhar teaching, hence they (and the several dozen Hui students sent to study at al-Azhar between

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[*] Wang Jingzhai (1879-1949), Ha Decheng (1888-1943) and Ma Songting (1895-1992) were the other three.

1931-47) are referred to in Hui studies as the Chinese Azharites (Chen 2014: 25). These men were significant in the shaping of the early direction of modernist Islam in China, and particularly how it was compatible with nationalism, and then after Liberation, in negotiating where Islam could be adapted to socialist ideals. After the curtailing of religious activity in the late 1950s (including the denouncement and persecution of several prominent members of the IAC, Pang Shiqian among them), the IAC was rehabilitated in the 1980s during the reform and opening period (Dreyer 1982: 51).

5.1.1 Structure of IAC

The IAC is a Patriotic Religious Association (PRA), an example of a government organised non-governmental organisation (GONGO), that is, an NGO set up at the initiative of the authorities and highly responsive to government direction (Lieberthal 2004: 300). The IAC is administered by the State Administration for Religious Affairs (SARA), and the United Front, which is a directly-governed organ of the State Council. Despite the moniker of 'non-governmental', the reality is that PRAs function as an extension and delegation of the State Religious Affairs Bureau (Yang 2012: 81). The IAC is the interface between the Hui elites and SARA, who are responsible for implementing the policy on religious freedom, which since Jiang Zemin's landmark speech of 1993 is still referred to as "*religion mutually adapting with socialist society*" (Jiang 1995: 253).

The current President of the IAC is Chen Guangyuan, who was appointed at the seventh session in 2001. There are also a number of Vice-Presidents, the most significant for the present study being the Qinghai imam Ma Changqing, the current head imam of the Dongguan mosque in Xining, who is the grandson of Ma Wanfu, the founder of the Ikhwan.

The IAC has a provincial branch network, with Associations at national, provincial, prefectural, city and county level, in parts of the country where Muslims are in sufficient number to warrant such a structure. In Qinghai, there is a progressive hierarchical structure of national-provincial-capital-county Associations. The Qinghai provincial IAC is headed by national IAC Vice-President Ma Changqing,

with Jin Biao (imam of Nanguan mosque) and Ma Yuexiang (imam of Shuichengmen mosque) as two of the more prominent provincial IAC Vice-Presidents, both significant imams in Xining City.

5.1.2 Purpose of the IAC

The purpose of the IAC, according to its Constitution, is:

> "To unite and lead all national Muslim ethnic groups to support the leadership and socialist system of the Communist Party of China, abide by national laws and regulations, and follow the path of Islam and socialist society mutual adaptation. To promote the fine tradition of "love country and love Islam" (*aiguo aijiao*), to practice "respect Allah, love the people" (*zunzhu aimin*), advocate the "fortune in two worlds" (*liangshi jixiang*), hold to "peaceful middle way ideology" (*heping zhongzheng sixiang*), adhere to the principle of independence, safeguarding religious harmony, "ethnic unity" (*minzu tuanjie*), "social stability" (*shehui wending*), "national unity" (*zuguo tongyi yuanze*) and world peace, to promote economic and social development, and contribute to building a harmonious society" (Article 3, 2011 IAC Constitution).

This purpose statement contains a number of highly significant core phrases that introduce what we can consider are the main tenets of the adapted, 'correct' Islam. The core political elements of national unity, ethnic unity and patriotism represent the ideological goals that the Party-State aims to reinforce through its adaptation of Islam to suit these political priorities. The sociological priorities can be seen in the emphasis on social stability, religious harmony, building harmonious society through adhering to a peaceful middle way ideology. The way in which the IAC seeks to exert its national-level influence over Chinese Muslims is explained in the Constitution thus:

(1) Under the guidance of Deng Xiaoping Theory and the important thinking of the 'Three Represents' (*sange daibiao*) carry out and implement the scientific concept of development, lead and promote the active participation

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of all ethnic Muslims in the construction of socialist material civilisation, political civilisation, spiritual civilisation and ecological civilisation.

(2) To assist the government to publicise and implement the policy of religious freedom in China, to represent the legitimate rights and interests of the Muslims of all ethnic groups in the country, and to act as a bridge and tie.

(3) To organise various Islamic undertakings within the limits prescribed by the Constitution, laws, regulations and policies to carry out Islamic educational activities.

(4) Carry out exegesis work well, to continue ideological construction of Islamic education, addressing religious issues of concern to Muslims, and explaining in accord with the basic spirit of Islam with socialist development and contemporary progress.

(5) Conduct Islamic education and foster Islamic teaching of the clergy and other personnel.

(6) Explore and organise the fine historical and cultural heritage of Islam, carry out research on Islamic academic culture, compile and publish Islamic books and periodicals.

(7) To guide the work of Islamic associations in various places.

(8) Responsible for the organisation of all Muslim ethnicities for pilgrimage to Mecca.

(9) To carry out friendly exchanges with Muslim and Islamic organisations in various countries to promote exchange and cooperation.

(Article 6 of IAC Constitution)

5.2 Functions of the IAC

In line with the above purpose statement, the IAC has responsibility for setting up and running several departments, each handling different areas of Islamic administration work, particularly including education, international affairs, managing the annual pilgrimage (*hajj)*, research and (since 2001) exegesis work. Each of these departments represents a significant Party-State influence on the management of religious practice, and the content of Islamic belief, and thus on the Hui people. Each department conforms to the Party-State political and sociological message introduced above, and will be examined in turn.

5.2.1 Education

Religions were expressly banned from interfering with the educational system of the state under the terms of the Constitution of China, Article 36 (Yang 2006: 102). Yet Document 19, issued in 1982, the "*Basic Viewpoint and Policy on the Religious Affairs during our Country's Socialist Period*" was an expression of greater religious tolerance than the previous post-Liberation period (Yang 2012: 75). Notable in China's religious law is the prohibition on religious education of minors (defined as those under age 18). However, in the poorer areas of Muslim northwest China, education has historically always been provided by Muslim religious schools (Leung 2005: 912), and the current reality is that a large number of people, from official clergy and laity, young adult students and young children, continue to receive a basic Islamic education in mosques and official *madrassas* across northwest China. Wang Jianping suggests that currently as many as a quarter of a million Muslim students are studying Islam at thousands of Islamic schools across China (Wang 2016: 570). Official statistics are clearly not provided by the State, and yet although there is only one official Islamic institute in Xining (that contained within the Dongguan mosque), figure 5.1 below shows the wide provision of Islamic education in Xining, with student (*manla*) populations of each mosque willing to provide a figure in my survey during interviews in 2011/12:

Figure 5.1: Student (*manla*) numbers at mosques in Xining 2011/12

Name of Mosque	Date visited	No. of *manla*
Nanguan	May 2012	70
Dongguan	June 2011	125
Beimo'eryuan	April 2012	23
Beiguan	October 2011	53
Xiadudajie	May 2012	75
Yudaiqiao	April 2012	166
Yangjiazhuang	September 2011	60
Wangjiazhuang	October 2011	40
Baiyuxiang	October 2011	20
Nanshanlu	June 2012	4
Shuichengmen	May 2012	27
Fenghuangshan tomb	June 2012	5[*]

In addition to these regular students, who are normally aged between 18 and 25 and are gathered primarily from Qinghai and the northwest of China, these mosques also have regular Qur'an classes after school and especially during summer and winter vacations that are attended by many children, as well as older people. During Ramadan 2014, I personally observed more than one hundred and fifty students under the age of eighteen in one of the well-known mosques, and imams of several others boasted of the numbers of children that attend their classes[†]. Interference in education thus is certainly tolerated in Xining, a further example of what Yang refers to as the 'grey market' of religion, which manifests itself in the unequal enforcement and interpretation of religious policy (Yang 2006: 104).

The Party-State in China has founded its own educational institutions to train a Muslim elite who support state-sponsored Islam. The IAC has established and is responsible for the development of Islamic Institutes (*jingxueyuan)*, particularly in

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[*] At Fenghuangshan the students were trainee monks, not strictly *manla.*
[†] The imam of one mosque, for example, claimed they had more than 1000 child students in the school holidays, and several hundred adults in after-hours classes [interview #22].

the production of the standard curriculum, which has been carefully edited to ensure that the content of official Islam is acceptable to Muslim scholars as well as to China's ideologues. The curriculum makes use of such popular Chinese constructions as *liangshi jiqing* (fortune in two worlds), treated in detail in the following chapter (Cong and Sha 2009: 11)[*], as well as emphasising Islam's peaceful nature, love of unity and advocating middle way thinking (*zhongzheng sixiang*). This curriculum is followed in all official Islamic Institutes, and consists of a series of basic textbooks each covering concisely an introduction to different aspects of Islam, for example: "*The Basics of the Qur'an*", "*The Basics of the Hadith*", as well as books on Arabic and Persian language and grammar (Erie 2016: 200). Though there is some divergence from this official curriculum in the mosque education of students evidenced in Xining, the existence and promotion of these texts demonstrate a key way in which the Party-State seeks to promote their correct Islam in the training of imams.

The training of imams at official Islamic Institutes however is limited[†], and relatively few graduate each year, and not all of these become imams, since a far more lucrative profession exists in the field of translation and interpreting (Allès, Chérif-Chebbi and Halfon 2003: 11). The main Institute in Beijing only enrolled thirty students on its undergraduate program in 2015 (China Islamic Association 2015a) and sought twenty-five for each of 2016 and 2017. In the training of clergy the importance of teaching an approved, controlled, mutually-adapted curriculum is paramount, and yet the level of control on mosque-directed education is lower than in official institutes.

In Xining nearly every mosque has a significant number of students (*manla*), many of whom remain for several years full-time study before 'putting on the robes' (*chuanyi*), a colloquial term meaning 'graduate' (see Figure 5.1). Though the official curriculum is notionally incorporated, each *madrassa* also retains a significant emphasis on selected other texts, which relate to their sectarian influence and

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[*] though see note in section 6.1.2 regarding the actual origin of this phrase being al-Afghani.

[†] In the current enrolment published on the IAC website, only 95 students were registered for 2016, distributed between northwest China Institutes as follows: Qinghai (8), Henan (11), Yunnan (3), Shaanxi (4), Ningxia (12), Gansu (4), Xinjiang (36), and 17 in other non-western provinces such as Hebei and Shandong.

allegiance, and demonstrate the significant impact of the various Islamic centres in countering the hegemonic imposition of the Party-State. Thus, the illusion of control by the Party-State is countered in some measure by the strength of persistent sectarianism in Xining, which in turn reflects a variety of Islamic influences, an illustration of the polycentric nature of Islam (Gladney 2003: 461). It was common in my interviews to discover variety between different mosque's curriculum that was shaped by sectarian allegiance, which in turn was shaped by external Islamic influence[*]. Control of education by the Party-State certainly exists at an institutional level, but the private teaching and widespread unofficial education classes in mosques, not to mention the 'grey market' of small Islamic study groups[†] across the sectarian spectrum (Stewart 2014: 326) clearly demonstrates that significant divergence from Party-State control is the reality.

5.2.2 International relations

The IAC plays an important role in the representation of China to the Muslim World, and representatives of the IAC were involved in diplomacy from the earliest period of the People's Republic, with the presence of Muslim representatives at international meetings giving China a democratic image and facilitating its developing relations with Arab states (Allès, Chérif-Chebbi and Halfon 2003: 9), together with other Islamic countries (Gladney 1991: 327), including North African nations (Shinn and Eisenman 2012: 90-92). From 1958 religious activities were increasingly restricted, and during the Cultural Revolution the IAC was closed down, and its activities curtailed, but by 1973 the diplomatic role of the IAC was being revived, even prior to reform and opening. The published list of major events on the IAC website demonstrates the role that the IAC has played in diplomacy with Muslim nations over the years (China Islamic Association 2016). The importance of a national association representing Muslims in China in

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[*] For instance, Persian texts such as Imam Ranbani's Maktubati , the letters of a famous *mujaddid* (reviver) of Islam revered by certain Sufi groups, forms part of the curriculum in Old Teaching mosques. Remnants of the Han Kitab likewise are still taught in Old Teaching mosques, and respected in hard-line Ikhwan mosques, yet ignored and rejected by moderate Ikhwan and Salafi schools respectively.
[†] Evidence of Tablighi Jam'aat groups meeting in a hotel in East District; International Village having several private study groups; interviewee #4 recounted joining several.

international relations, especially with majority Muslim states, is clearly recognised by the Party-State.

The role of the IAC's international department is to foster good relations with the Islamic nations with whom China wants to do business, through promoting China's fair treatment of its Muslim minorities. Although strained relations with the restive Uyghur Muslim minority have been widely reported, the Hui are publically and internationally promoted as a model, patriotic, Muslim *minzu*, and a clear example to the Muslim World of how Chinese religious policy allows Muslims to practise their religion freely, without fear of overt government interference. This enables the State to continue to emphasise that the Uyghur problem is in no way a religious question, but one of separatism and terrorism. Having a reputation that emphasises promoting religious freedom, and allowing the celebration of a Chinese Islamic identity is increasingly important when one considers the economic and diplomatic importance of Xi Jinping's ambitious Eurasian development project, the Silk Road Economic Belt and the twenty-first century Maritime Silk Road, known as 'One Belt One Road' (OBOR), now simply called the Belt and Road Initiative. This high-profile development strategy seeks increased connectivity and communication between Eurasian countries and China, and focuses on six international economic corridors, passing through many primarily Muslim areas of the world, including Central Asia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Iran and Turkey (Ge, Christie and Astle 2016). An estimated total of six trillion dollars is to be invested in constructing infrastructure in more than sixty countries in Eurasia and parts of East Africa and Oceania (Wan 2016). Significant emphasis has been given to this initiative in China's press, and this is reflected in the high profile it has been given in the IAC controlled magazines and journals, specifically in issue six of the 2015 edition of China's Muslims (China Islamic Association 2015b). High profile events that are portrayed in the international press as mistreating or persecuting Muslim minorities, such as arrests of Uyghurs in Xinjiang (Reuters 2013), the arrest and imprisonment of Ilham Tohti (Gracie 2014), and the rising Islamophobia increasingly demonstrated among China's Han majority (Leibold 2016; Ma Chunshan 2016), all potentially impact negatively on international Sino-Muslim relations. It remains imperative to China's foreign relations to portray a positive image in its treatment of Muslims.

The IAC thus has an important role in representing government policy, and especially its treatment of Muslims, to the wider world. It is notable that in all diplomatic visits by members of Muslim nations the IAC President, or his Vice-Presidents, will be in the vanguard of the welcoming committee. Recent examples include: a conference in Dubai on religious tolerance; Yang Zhibo hosting and chairing an international symposium on cross-cultural exchange and dialogue in Beijing in September 2016; a Pakistan tribal leader visiting IAC (China Islamic Association 2015b). The importance of promoting China's continuance of its fine Islamic tradition, while ensuring that the perceived threat from separatists, extremists and terrorists is negated by strictly controlling religion is a balancing act that the IAC has responsibility for.

5.2.3   Hajj Department

Historically, the transnational connections made by Chinese Muslims participating in the annual pilgrimage to Saudi Arabia have had a significant influence on the development of Islam in China (Gladney 2004; Israeli 2002; Mao 2011). Chinese pilgrims (*hajji*) are exposed to new ideas on Islam popular in the Middle East, and experience Islam as practised in the Islamic heartland of the Hijaz, leading them to a comparison with Chinese Islam that has often led to a desire to reform Chinese Islam to be more like the Islam practised in the holy sites. In addition, the *hajj* has been described as "*the best showcase of supranational Muslim identity*" (Lai and Mu 2016: 529), giving Chinese pilgrims a sense of belonging to a faith community, the *ummah*, that transcends the various national identities of the pilgrims. The *hajj* also provides the opportunity for China to improve its reputation for its good treatment of its Muslim minorities, and thus the importance of the *hajj* as a diplomatic event certainly shaped the approach of the IAC to pilgrimage in the reform period (Cong 2016: 68).

Chapter three demonstrated the influence of the *hajj* on key northwest China Hui imams such as Ma Wanfu (founder of China's Ikhwan), Ma Debao (founder of China's Salafiyya) and Hu Songshan (an influential patriotic Ikhwani imam) among others. The former two returned with a strong sense that Chinese Islam needed to

be reformed, that it had become too syncretised and needed to be purified of its Chinese innovations. As Erie says:

> "The hajj has historically been the primary vehicle for the entry of reformist strains of Islam into the Northwest" (Erie 2016: 168).

In the case of Hu Songshan (1880-1956), the prejudice that he suffered on his pilgrimage because he was Chinese led him to a strong nationalist position, recognising that only a strong China could guarantee the Hui the freedom and safety to practise their religion outside China's borders (Lipman 1997: 209-210). This nationalist influence was confirmed in his strong patriotic response to the Japanese invasion of China in 1937.

From the perspective of the IAC, however, the most important goal of the *hajj* lies in its potential as a diplomatic tool for international relations. In the early years of the PRC, and following establishment of diplomatic relations with Saudi Arabia in 1955, the quota received for the pilgrimage was largely used as an opportunity to send delegations to further diplomatic goals. Chinese authorities have always been wary of cultural and religious influences from the Middle East, and especially from Saudi Arabia. In 1990 and again in 1996 official complaints that Uyghur pilgrims had been subject to subversive forces, and returned to China dressed like Arabs resulted in a significant backlash (Friedrichs 2017: 61). Further fears were raised that the vast number of pilgrims were unofficial and unauthorised, and ran the risk of damaging China's image abroad. Private *hajj* groups began in the mid-1980s and continue today, though it is difficult to access official statistics. Hence, from 1995, careful supervision of the process of applying and travelling to Saudi Arabia was introduced (Allès, Chérif-Chebbi and Halfon 2003: 19).

> "In 1998 the State Administration of Religious Affairs held a special meeting on pilgrimage, reiterating its policy of organized and planned pilgrimage, and placing it on a course of regulated administration" (Mi and You 2004: 203).

Every year a delegation is sent to negotiate a national quota for pilgrims (*hajji*) with Saudi counterparts, though it would seem to be the case that it is the PRC government and not the Saudi government that limits the number of *hajjis* (Erie

2016: 169). The State Bureau for Religious Affairs established the Office of Pilgrimage in 2004, under the management of the IAC (Wang 2016: 575). The strict control of numbers visiting Saudi Arabia is a responsibility that the IAC holds, together with responsibility to give a pre-visit briefing to *hajj* tour leaders, a significant event in which much practical detail is given, but also an opportunity to warn pilgrims of their responsibilities and potential ideological dangers (SEAC 2017). Under the recent policy of 'safety first', this briefing is compulsory for *hajj* leaders, during which the role of Chinese *hajji* as representatives of China, and the need to demonstrate the improvement in Chinese Muslims' economic situation, as well as the success of China's religious freedom policy are all emphasised (Ma Yunfu 2008: 16, 18). The administration of official *hajj* groups, the arranging of travel permits and managing the interaction with Saudi Arabia as the guardian of the holy sites is managed locally. Numbers attending the *hajj* are controlled, but still on official tours the numbers rise every year, to 14,500 in 2015. The number of *hajji* originating in northwest China is disproportionately high; in 2017 for example, 2,230 *hajji* from Qinghai were trained for pilgrimage (SEAC 2017).

5.2.4   Research and periodicals

In accordance with the goals and purpose of the IAC, research and publishing come under its purview. In 1957, the IAC established the editorial board of the periodical *China Muslim*, the first magazine created in the People's Republic of China to deal exclusively with Islamic affairs in and outside of China[*]. The very first edition situated the editorial direction of the magazine as being between the Party-State and the Muslim people, with Bao Erhan (first President of the IAC) writing in his foreword:

> "What nation-wide Muslims want to say, this is what this publication will say. The desires for which nation-wide Muslims strive, these are the guidelines for editing this publication" (Bao Erhan 1957).

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[*] Many widely circulated Muslim-focused periodical were registered in the Republican period – Aubin numbers 133 between 1904 and 1949, including the influential Yuehua publication referred to in chapter three above (Aubin 2006: 241-271).

A particular emphasis of the first edition is the important diplomatic role that China's Muslims play in the international affairs of the nation, a theme frequently repeated since. This magazine was developed as the main mouthpiece of the Party-State communicating and cooperating with the Muslims of China (Glasserman 2013: 95). It is widely read by urban Hui across the country (Gladney 1991: 224). In seeking to understand the way in which Islam is shaped by the Party-State for political ends, *China Muslim* is a key resource. The official website of the IAC (chinaislam.cn) reproduces the articles in the periodical, and also reports key events in the operation of the IAC, and gives a very nuanced slant to international and national news of interest to Muslims. This section examines the political themes and emphases emerging from *China Muslim* during 2014 and 2015. It begins with an overview of content, followed by analysis of the prominent socio-political themes that emerge throughout.

a. Overview of Content of China Muslim

The structure of the magazine is fairly consistent, with articles divided between subsections as follows[*]:

i.   ***Headlines*** (*benkan yaowen*): reporting on recent meetings or official visits by IAC or government departments. Recent examples include: "*IAC president Chen Guangyuan speech at the opening of the China Malaysia Islamic Culture Expo 2014*" (2014.4), "*Turkish President meets with Chinese Islamic delegation*" (2015.4), "*2015 National Religious Work Conference*" (2015.1), "*Islamic Association of China holds 2015 Eid al-Adha reception in Beijing*" (2015.5) and "*Chinese Islam serving the One Belt One Road symposium opens in Beijing*" (2015.6). These articles respectively situate Chinese Muslims at the heart of China's international diplomacy, remind Chinese Muslims of the religious freedom that is enshrined in the Constitution, emphasise the approval and sanction of the State for Islamic activities, and include Chinese Muslims in the primary economic development strategy of the State.

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[*] All references are to editions of China Muslim (*Zhongguo Musilin*) published in Beijing by the Chinese Islamic Association, year and edition number are given.

ii. **Special Features** (*benkan teji*): these can be political reports, such as *"Broad Vision of Muslim members in Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) and National People's Congress (NPC)"* (2015.2), or particular articles emphasising different aspects of correct Islam, such as *"Interpret the essence of Qur'an, hold fast to the Middle Way"* (2015.4), *"Hold fast to the Middle Way to fight against extremism"* (2014.3) – both examples of articles which again promote 'middle-way thinking' (*zhongdao sixiang*), a particular Chinese Islamic emphasis that emerges in all IAC publications. One entire magazine edition (2015.6) was focused on the special feature of the 'One Belt One Road', and included articles on *"Islamic culture and One Belt One Road"*, *"How can today's imams serve the construction of the One Belt One Road?"*, *"The Islamic factor of One Belt One Road and the new national security strategy"* among others. These all continue the theme of Chinese Muslims' important role in diplomacy, international relations, and the approval and sanction of correct Islam that allows China to present herself as encouraging the practice of Islam among her people.

iii. **Academic Culture** (*xueshu wenhua*)

The next two sections fulfil the IAC responsibility in its Constitution for conducting research in what is termed 'Islam's fine tradition' (*yisilanjiao youliangde chuantong*), and consists of academic articles looking at aspects of Islamic life and culture. Articles cover Islamic practice, such as *"Basic connotations and characteristics of Islamic hygiene"* (2015.4), *"Understanding 'Halal' and its use in everyday life"* (2015.5), and *"Islamic views of social relief and aid"* (2014.1); culture development, such as *"Inheritance and Development of Salar Culture* (2015.1), *"Islamic Culture and Northwest China Folk Songs"* (2014.6), and historical articles exploring contributions of Muslim scholars from the past, such as *"Wang Daiyu's interpretation of Islamic Thought"* (2015.1), *"Survey of Ma Dexin's Origin of Arabic Calendar"* (2015.5) and *"Grand Imam Ma Liangjun Home-country Thought"* (2014.4). These articles once again stress the compatibility of Islam with Chinese culture, celebrate the historical development of Chinese Muslim identity and advocate moderation and mutual tolerance.

iv.   **Research Forum** *(yantao luntan)*

This section is more focused on China's Islamic situation, and the development of Islam in China, with articles such as "*Historical Evidences of Localization of Islam in China*" (2015.1), "*Exploration of Trials of Popularizing Core Values in Mosques*" (2015.2), *"Tolerance is the Basic Spirit of Islam"* (2015.3), "*Ruling the Country according to Law, and Promoting the Positive Impact of Islam"* (2015.5), "*Correctly understanding and handling relationship between national law and religious rules*" (2015.6). This section is particularly relevant to the Party-State centre's use of Islam to achieve its political objectives, and emphasises patriotism, ethnic unity and mutual adaptability as firmly grounded in Islam.

v.   **Study Communication** *(xuexi jiaoliu)*

Articles relating to the transmission of Islamic knowledge sometimes also include articles that reveal socio-political emphases incorporated into Chinese Islam, such as "*Construction of the Hui Muslim Culture and harmonious development of society and economy in Yunnan*" (2015.1) which includes fourteen separate references to patriotism, and "*For the blooming of ethnic unity flower*" (2014.5) which mentions ethnic unity five times.

vi.   **Teaching the Classics** *(jingxun jiaofa)*

This section selects various Islamic topics from the Qur'an and *hadith* and explores them, sometimes with a particular Chinese emphasis, such as "*How to understand Shariah and National Laws"* (2015.2), and *"Islam promotes and practises peace"* (2014.2).

vii.   **New Sermons** *(xin wo'erzi)*

Each magazine edition includes one or two newly produced official sermons, in addition to the recently published "*Collection of Official Sermons*", introduced in section 5.2.5 below. Recent sermons include, "*Be Muslims pursuing the true, virtuous and beautiful"* (2015.1), *"Respecting Parents: the principal Muslim morality"* (2015.2), "*Go with love and gratitude"* (2015.3), *"Be a Muslim of charity and kindness*" (2015.4), "*How to*

be a competent imam" (2015.6), and "*Harmonious coexistence is based on care and affection*" (2014.2).

viii. **Remembering the war of resistance** *(jinian kangzhan)*
The seventieth anniversary of the war of resistance ending led to a series of special articles in the 2015 edition remembering Hui participation in the anti-Japanese war, and the demonstration of Hui patriotism by notable Hui characters. Articles such as *"The Hui Muslims' patriotism and efforts for Islamic cause during war of resistance"* (2015.4), *"Ma Benzhai, an immortal ethnic hero"* (2015.5), and "*Ma Shengfu, the first imam in Yan'an mosque*" (2015.1).

Other commonly recurring sections cover everyday life, the Muslim world, famous ahongs, famous mosques and book reviews.

b. Analysis of themes in China Muslim
In a content analysis of the 2014 and 2015 editions, the following broad Party-State political themes were most prominent in the magazine articles:

i.   Diplomacy is a major emphasis of the magazine, how the IAC represents China's Muslims to the wider Muslim world, demonstrating the improving economic conditions of the Muslims of China, parading the national policy on religious freedom, and strengthening trade links, particularly with regard to the launch of the One Belt One Road economic initiative. Delegations of the IAC were reported as visiting Iran (2014.3), India and Bangladesh (2015.1) and Romania and Bulgaria (2015.3). Turkish President Erdogan met with senior Chinese Islamic figures (2015.4), the Russian Mufti delegation were invited to China (2015.6) and senior Islamic leaders from Egypt, Kuwait, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq also visited China in 2015 for meetings regarding the One Belt One Road initiative (2015.6).

ii.   Islam is moderate, pursues the middle way (*zhongdao*), values peace and is tolerant of other faiths and none. The promotion of middle way ideology (*zhongdao sixiang*) is a particular emphasis of Chinese-adapted Islam, and

features frequently in the magazine. It is a euphemism for moderation, and the themes of tolerance, moderate behaviour and the high value that Islam places on peace are regularly emphasised. For example, "*Strengthen religious dialogue, assemble religious wisdom*" (2015.6) contains fourteen separate references to 'middle way thinking', and "*Recite Scripture well, interpret Scripture well, teach Scripture well, hold fast to the middle way keeping pace with the times*" (2015.4) contains twenty-six separate references to the middle way.

iii.   Islam has always adapted to its local context throughout history, and Chinese Islam has been and continues to adapt to the current national situation (*yu shehui zhuyide shehui xiang shiying*), which is a socialist society. This mutual compatibility is often iterated in terms of 'fortune in two worlds' (*liangshi jiqing*), an encouragement that Islam promotes an investment in the real world with the hope of reward in the next. For instance, "*Interpretation of classic essentials, looking forward to true faith, true way*" (2015.4) refers six times to Islam's mutual adaptability, and "*A probe into ideological construction of Qur'an study*" (2015.2) had seven references to mutual adaptability and seven references to fortune in two worlds.

iv.   Islam values ethnic and religious unity, and is patriotic, serving the needs of the nation and pursuing harmony and social stability. The theme of patriotism recurs frequently, in the form usually of the common saying 'love of country and love of faith' (*aiguo aijiao*), or through quoting the well known saying, often wrongly attributed as a *hadith*, 'patriotism is a tenet of faith' (*aiguo shi xinyangde yibufen*). For instance, "*Exploration and Trials of Popularizing Core Values in Mosques - using Litong in Wuzhong, Ningxia as an example*" (2015.2) contains seventeen references to patriotism, and "*Construction of the Hui Muslim Culture and Harmonious Development of Society and Economy in Yunnan Province*" (2015.1) has fourteen references to patriotism.

These themes of patriotism, ethnic and national unity, stability, adaptability, moderation, tolerance and the role of Islam in the diplomacy of China are clear and dominant in the official publications. As I will show in the next section, these themes continue to become clear in the way in which the exegesis committee re-interpreted the Qur'an for China's national situation.

5.2.5 Exegesis Work and Official Sermons

This aspect of the IAC's role provides the most overt example of how the Party-State seeks to exert influence over the Muslim Hui. In response to President Jiang Zemin's call for Patriotic Religious Associations to elaborate and interpret the contents of religion to ensure that they mutually adapt to socialist society, and particularly in reaction to the trouble in Xinjiang in the 1990s (Jiang 2005), in 2001 the IAC established the China Islamic Affairs Guidance Committee (*Zhongguo yisilanjiao jiaowu zhidao weiyuanhui*). This national-level committee, under the leadership of the IAC, consists of fifteen to twenty trusted patriotic Muslims, led by Chen Guangyuan. Ma Changqing, lead imam of the Dongguan mosque in Xining, is one of the committee members. The Work Regulations stipulate that the tasks of this committee are:

i.   Protect the People's interests

ii.   Protect the sanctity of law

iii.   Protect ethnic unity (*minzu tuanjie*)

iv.   Protect the principle of a unified nation (*zuguo tongyi yuanze*)

v.   Assist the government in implementing the policy on freedom of religion (*zongjiao ziyou*)

vi.   To propagate among the Muslim masses, based on Islamic scriptures and their content, and linked to the China's actual situation, Islam's correct way (*zhengdao*)

vii.   Oppose using Islam to promote extremism

viii.   Protect Islam's purity

ix.   Support internal unity and independence

x.   Promote our country's mutual adaptation of Islam and socialist society (IAC Guidance Committee 2001: 14)

As with the purpose statement set out in section 5.1.2 above, this list of responsibilities again demonstrates the primary aims and ideologies of the IAC Guidance Committee as the interpreter and guardian of Islam's 'correct way'. Once again, protecting national unity through emphasising ethnic unity feature highly in the goals of an Islam adapted to China's national situation.

The formation of the Guidance Committee is a response to the religious policy that emerged from the chaotic 1990s, and to the unrest in the northwest. The aims of the Committee were pursued strategically through developing activities that provide a forum for disseminating correct Islam, such as Qur'an recitation contests, *wa'z* (Islamic sermon) preaching contests, and carrying out exegetical work that adapts Islam to the real situation of China. In 1993, the then IAC President, An Shiwei, took the first steps in addressing what was seen to be a primary problem of the low level of 'cultural knowledge' held by the imams, and began to introduce a large scale imam education and training program, that focused on the sermon as a primary means of shaping the Islamic message, and ensuring it was in accord with socialist principles. Initially in 1994, the IAC instigated the first Qur'an reciting competition, followed in 1995 by the inaugural national *wa'z* contests. This gave the chance to assess the current *wa'z*, and to begin to develop and promote those that were seen as superior in their relevance to the country's situation. This official exegesis work (*jiejing gongzuo*) finally resulted in the first of a number of volumes of published official sermons, entitled "*A Collection of Newly Edited Wa'z Speeches*" (*xinbian wo'erzi yanjiangji*), with volume 1 published in 2001, volume 2 in 2004, volume 3 in 2006, volume 4 in 2010 and finally volume 5 in 2014.

The stated desire of the China Islamic Affairs Guidance Committee (the Committee) is that:

> "This book [the Collection] be used in all mosques to ensure that the Islam taught is high quality and conforms to the national situation" (IAC Guidance Committee 2013: 5).

The Committee takes pains to both present itself as the protector of Islamic orthodoxy, and as the institutional expression of Muslim unity in China. The

justification for such a revision of Islam, a rectification to the correct way, is given in several articles that equates what is seen as a tradition of Islam adapting to local circumstances with the Committee's current exegesis work. Beginning with the presumption that Muhammad and the *hadith* show Islam as adapted to the changing situation historically, and stretching through to the work of the Han Kitab authors, Liu Zhi, Wang Daiyu and Ma Zhu in the late Ming/early Qing period, this 'fine tradition' of Islam is portrayed historically as always adapting to local circumstances (Ma Wenxue 2012: 38).

Chapter six will conduct a detailed analysis of the correct Islam as revealed in these official sermons.

5.3   The IAC and Relations with the Hui

Although the IAC is a national level organisation, the wide branch network means that the true interface between the IAC and the Muslim masses happen at a local level, through county, city, prefectural and provincial China Islamic Associations. The control of Islamic religious practice, and attempts to influence Islamic belief through the functions assigned to the IAC by the Party-State are significant in the politicization of identity. The Party-State's promotion of correct Islam demands a conformity to the national identity, and a willingness to engage in the State-expected functions of diplomacy, international relations, and maintaining the integrity of the national identity.

Dru Gladney found that there was a wide diversity in recognising the authority of the IAC in their role governing Muslim relations with the State (Gladney 2004: 318). How the Hui on the periphery respond to this centre-driven civilising influence may in part be shaped by the reputation of the IAC, and how the organisation and its representatives are viewed by the Hui. This section looks at the attitudes of Hui respondents from across the Islamic sectarian spectrum in Xining.

5.3.1 Hui understanding of the status and role of the IAC

The respondents were divided in their understanding of the status of the IAC, although this division did not seem to be on sectarian grounds, rather on what appeared to be educational level. Interestingly, the vast majority of respondents emphasised the official non-governmental nature of the IAC, and preferred to see it as a *minjian jigou,* a popular organisation. Such a detachment of the IAC from association with the Party-State governance could be seen as an important strategy for increasing the likelihood of acceptance in the eyes of the Muslim Hui.

Interviewee #14, a Vice-President of a county-level IAC, described the IAC thus:
> "The Islamic Association is a religious organisation, it should not be seen as a government department, but as an organisation, a religious organisation. This group is organised by religious people, such as these imams…and they have responsibility for religious affairs in a given area. At the same time they function as a connecting bridge between we Muslims and the government."

This positive description of the IAC clearly detaches the organisation from the government, and associates the IAC with 'we Muslims', rather than the government. A primary rationale for identifying the non-governmental nature of the IAC was its non-salaried voluntary nature, whereas working for a government department came with a salary:
> "There is no salary; government departments have a salary since they are national organisations, but these are popular organisations (*minjian zuzhi*) so there is no income, it is voluntary, charitable work." [#14]

A further imam respondent also separated the IAC from the government, when he said:
> "…they [IAC] don't represent government, they are a private non-governmental organisation." [#12]

An imam from a different sect's mosque agreed:

> "The IAC is a popular organisation, not a government organisation...they also have a role in managing Muslim affairs." [#32]

The role of the IAC as a bridge between Muslims and the government is commonly held:

> "Their role is representative...they can reflect some Muslims' thoughts and views to the government - they are the link between the government and the people." [imam #16]

Popular opinion thus demonstrates that a distinction between the government and the IAC has clearly been accepted at a structural level. This serves the purposes of the Party-State well, since historically any Party interference in defining or dictating the practice of Islam was resisted, and generated an antagonistic relationship that inevitably led to social instability. Distancing the IAC from the official mechanisms of the State is tactically astute.

However, one or two less well informed or more poorly-educated imams held a different view, for example imam #21 believed:

> "The IAC actually is a kind of body of government and local people, a government body that manages the Muslim minorities to help the country be a really united country."

In terms of the actual function of the IAC however, he echoes the earlier respondents:

> "The IAC sits between the Muslim people and their government, they are the senior party...it is a way of managing religion." [#21]

Seeking to establish how well the various sects of Qinghai Islam are represented in the provincial or national IAC, several interviewees were directly asked about the sectarian make-up of the IAC and how people were selected to serve on the IAC. The IAC is purportedly fully representative, and believed to contain representatives of all the sects:

> "...every sect has a representative, Qadim, Salafi, Ikhwan, Sufi – all of them." [#21]

Yet in terms of how representatives are selected, imam #21 went on to say that they were actually:

> "…chosen by government – though you can say that the mosque proposes and government ratifies."

Imam #14 reported that the committee members were:

> "…all recommended by the local religious affairs department, for example in each small county of Qinghai, like Ping'an, according to the Muslim population they can have proportionally two or three elected. Where the Muslim population is relatively large they may chose eight or ten…the local religious affairs department recommends people of high knowledge who are very patriotic."

Although full representation is believed by most respondents, actually the Party State mechanism of government ensures the selection of the right sort of Muslim on the IAC, one who subscribes to the patriotic ideology, and is knowledgeable, presumably of correct Islam.

5.3.2 Reputation of the IAC

Despite its aggressive self-promotion as the only representative body of all Chinese Muslims, in fact the IAC in Xining has a poor reputation, regardless of the sectarian allegiance of respondents. Interview responses ranged from thinking them irrelevant, to outright disrespect and derision, to the point of being openly despised.

Most respondents expressed negative views of both individuals and of the organisation as a whole, both in terms of the way the government influence is exerted on the IAC, and the powerlessness of the IAC at a local level. For example, imam #11 said:

> "In the northwest the IAC is comparatively weak and the mosques are strong…here [the northwest, unlike other parts of China] the IAC has nothing, no economic strength, so they are not able to control the mosques."

He was adamant that the IAC has no power or strength to play a significant role in controlling Islam in Xining. Imam #3 was not quite so critical, though he agreed that the mosque committees had the main power in Xining:

> "The IAC has a few problems, the mosque committees have the main functions. Some functions have to be reported to the IAC, and if they are not happy with you then you can't get anything done. Their contribution is not great."

He attributed a certain function and control to the IAC, but was dismissive of the IAC contribution to Islam in Xining. Salafi imam #32 was equally dismissive:

> "The IAC, this is my personal opinion, basically has little function in China's Islamic affairs."

When asked about the comment of interviewee #11 that IAC authority is less in the northwest than in the rest of China, one junior imam responded with:

> "...in all of China the situation is the same! Everywhere is roughly the same." [#13]

He and his friends [#14 and #15] in the mosque, all junior imams, openly derided some members of the IAC:

> "In the Islamic Association in Ramadan they eat and drink – it was reported in the paper, really." [#13]

Their opprobrium for an unnamed IAC Vice-President was passionate:

> "When you are the Vice-President and you do this, you influence all Chinese Muslims. You ought to be a leader, yet he drinks in a bar, clinking glasses, hanging out with girls – it's all been photographed." [#15]

There is a sense of helpless acceptance of the presence of such corrupt practices in the IAC, but a desire for change. The representatives of the Muslim community sitting on the IAC, it is felt, should be model Muslims, and imam #13 felt censure was important:

> "We in the Muslim community are also reacting, trying to expel these worthless people."

The above responses come from Hui Muslims across the sectarian divide. Despite the assertion that the IAC is representative of all Muslim teaching schools, it is difficult to assess relative strengths since sectarian allegiances are rarely mentioned, being somewhat of a taboo subject, given historical sectarian violence. Most scholars of Chinese Islam make the point that the IAC is dominated by the reformist Ikhwan school (Allès, Chérif-Chebbi and Halfon 2003: 11), and it is evident from personal communication with IAC representatives that in Xining it is dominated by the Ikhwan. The sectarian allegiance of provincial IAC President Ma Changqing has been described by some respondents as 'neutral sect' Ikhwan, Vice-President Jin Biao is seen as moderate Ikhwan, as is Vice-President Ma Yuexiang, though both are suspected of holding some non-Ikhwan views. Jin Biao was stabbed in 2011 as he was suspected of holding Wahhabi views (Islamcn 2011); Ma Yuexiang was dismissed from his post as imam of the Beiguan mosque by the government in 2012 because he was suspected by his congregation of being sympathetic to Salafism (interview #22).

Largely the view of those adhering to the moderate Ikhwan sect is that the IAC in Qinghai is relatively weak in terms of power and influence. The Salafi imam's view largely reflects the apolitical approach of Xining Salafism (Yang Guiping 2014: 356) and advocates apolitical quietism, but he was scathing of the official role of the IAC, believing them to be incapable of producing anything worthwhile.

These responses show that among the imams of Xining the IAC at a local level is not greatly respected, nor is the IAC seen as having a strong influence for good or bad on the way in which Islam is conducted. There is a desire that these Islamic leaders should be better examples, but there is a general pride that the mosque management committees had the primary control and management of Islam in Xining, although fully supervised by the State Ethnic Affairs Commission (SEAC). Only when a large festival was being planned, or when there was an official delegation to attend *hajj*, would the IAC be involved. The interviews do reveal a pride in the strength of a united Hui community at festivals and on Fridays, necessitating a heavy police presence, traffic disruption and the closure of the city centre.

Conclusion

In the desire to adapt religion to China's national, socialist situation, the Party-State utilises Patriotic Religious Organisations to effect and communicate that adaptation. This chapter has described the way in which the China Islamic Association (IAC), as a tool of the Party-State, has both adapted the Islamic message to ensure it meets the ideological priorities of the Party, and has also established educational structures to ensure that this correct Islam is taught to all religious personnel, and indeed that it is the only Islam taught to Muslims. The IAC can thus be seen as a primary means of interaction between the Party-State and the Hui, communicating the tenets of a correct Islam, adapted to conform to China's political goals. This adaptation of Islam to China's national situation is justified through appealing to the fact that Islam has historically always adapted to local contexts.

The China Islamic Association is tasked with managing the entire official system that supports Islam as one of China's official religions. All Islam-related matters come under its purview, including Islam-related news, all Muslim-directed publications, the education of religious personnel, and the official exegesis of the core Islamic texts, together with production and control of official sermons. Through examining the content of the main IAC magazine and website, the core themes of official Islam demonstrate the high priority of the Party-State on promoting the national identity of China as a unified *Zhonghua minzu* identity, with all the fifty-six ethnic groups equally included in this identity, and all Muslims exhibiting a patriotism to the Chinese nation-state, and committed to the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. The very purpose of the IAC in its Constitution is reflected in the editorial thrust of the magazine, emphasising national unity, patriotism, ethnic unity, social harmony and social stability. A peaceful, tolerant and moderate 'middle-way' Islam is promoted, one that is presented as a fully localised Chinese Islam, and thus appropriate to the national situation. In addition, the importance of the diplomatic role that China's Muslims have and their role in facilitating strong international relations is a strong theme in these publications. Frequent involvement with visiting heads of Muslim states, official Chinese state visits to Muslim nations, and the importance of the pilgrimage in strengthening

China's reputation with the Muslim world is strongly emphasised. The instrumentalisation of Islam to pursue Party-State goals is clear, and the political emphases in the official magazine and website of the IAC unsurprisingly in line with the national goals.

What is surprising is the apparent absence of any dissenting voice among the Hui interviewed at the imposition of this adapted Islam, particularly given the general low-regard with which the IAC and their representatives are held in Xining. One possible reason for this can be seen in the understanding held by most Hui that the IAC is in fact a non-governmental body, and one whose role is not as significant as the Party-State apparently believes. However, whatever its reputation, for a Party-State organ such as the IAC to promote itself as the guardian of Islamic orthodoxy and thus be able to carry out such a revision of Islamic teaching required a careful positioning of Islam between the acceptance of the religious scholars, the Chinese *ulema*, and the approval of Party-State ideologues. The absence of dissent among the Hui, however, should not be interpreted as tacit acceptance of this adaptation and control of the Islamic message. What could be considered to be strategies of passive resistance are evident, particularly in response to the attempted control of education, with the widespread 'semi-official' education of students and children throughout the mosques, and the unofficial study groups that proliferate in Xining, both examples of the grey market of religion highlighted by Yang Fenggang (Yang 2006). The illusion of Party-State control is countered by persistent sectarianism in Xining, and the non-conformity of sectarian teaching to the ideals of correct Islam that are discussed in chapters seven and eight reveal a less-than-dominant influence of the Party-State.

The positioning of Islamic teaching between the conceptualised twin centres of Party-State and Islamic influence is dependent on the exegesis work of the IAC Guidance Committee, and their key output is the collection of official Muslim sermons, published in five volumes. How the political message of the Party-State centre is couched in official religious teaching, and how that teaching is received by the Hui in Xining is core evidence for this thesis, and is the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter Six: The Content of 'Correct' Islam

This chapter will further examine the way in which the Chinese Party-State interacts with the Hui through the communication of an adapted Islam. The development of an Islam that has been adapted to suit China's socialist situation is the responsibility of the China Islamic Association Guidance Committee. The political themes that emerged in an analysis of the IAC magazine *China Muslim* and associated website were introduced in chapter five. In this chapter I particularly examine the exegetical work of the IAC Guidance Committee, and look at their primary means of communicating the new correct Islam to the Hui, through the publication of "*A Collection of newly edited wa'z speeches*" (*xinbian wo'erzi yanjiangji*), hereafter referred to as the 'Collection', some 800,000 of which were distributed free of charge to all mosques and religious personnel upon publication in 2011 (Chen 2011: 13).

In the introduction to the Collection, IAC president Chen Guangyuan sets out the reasons for its production and publication:

> "In recent years, because the cultural knowledge (*wenhua zhishi*) level of our ahongs and manla was low, understanding and explanation of the scriptures, and understanding and analysing doctrine were not deep nor thorough enough, when preaching the *wa'z* they were not able to unite with our country's socialist reality" (IAC Guidance Committee 2013: 2).

The shift in emphasis to the new mutual adaptation policy introduced by Jiang Zemin is thus introduced and justified by the IAC: previously Muslims' cultural knowledge was not high enough, that is, that they didn't fully reflect the current religious policy of the Party-State. So now, with further deep reflection, the IAC has produced a series of sermons that suit China's socialist situation, and avoid the extremes deriving from the complex Islamic world, where it is alleged certain places preach a "*violent, hate-filled religion*":

> "They maliciously distort and misrepresent Islam's goal, attempting to create confusion in Muslim thought, create splits; break ethnic unity (*minzu tuanjie*) and create ethnic hatred, plotting to smash national unity; they

continue to illegal activities that influence social stability and tarnish the sacred spirit of Islam" (IAC Guidance Committee 2013: 4).

Instead, the Committee has worked to reflect the Party-State political agenda for adapting Islam to China's socialist society, an agenda clearly laid out in the opening speech given at the Second Conference of the IAC Guidance Committee, where SARA vice-president Jiang Jianyong summed up the goal of the Committee:

> "The exegesis (*jiejing*) work has promoted peace, harmony, cooperation, middle way (*zhongdao*), benevolence, unity, patriotism and the observance of law, 'fortune in the two worlds', respect for knowledge and science, and encouragement of religious morality and cultivation—all these things advocated in exegesis work suit the reality of Chinese Islam" (IAC Guidance Committee 2013: 234).

From this speech we can see the emphasis on a number of political themes that reflect the adaptation of Islam to China's socialist situation, some of which were introduced in the last chapter. The sermons in the Collection have been carefully compiled to seek to make such politicizing of Islam acceptable to the imams who received the Collection from the IAC. The Party-State is seeking to justify this adapted, correct Islam through supporting an IAC-led careful exegesis of the Qur'an and *hadith*, expressing a particular interpretation of the sacred texts that is also in line with Islam, and thus acceptable to the imams and significant influential people among the Hui. Given that the sermon is the primary way in which Islam is intentionally taught to the Muslim masses, an analysis of the content of the Collection will reveal the particular political emphases that the Party-State seeks to convey to the Muslim ethnic groups of China, not only what these primary emphases are, but also how they are supported by the sacred texts. This high view of the role of the sermon is held by the imams interviewed in my fieldwork. For example, imam #11 said:

> "I think the mosque teaching, the *wa'z*, is important, it has the function of giving something to look forward to, because it is traditional since it has been preached since the time of Muhammad…as far as the Muslim masses are concerned, the *wa'z* is most important, most authoritative, and the most trustworthy way. So its influence is very great."

Imam #12 explained the purpose of the *wa'z* in this way:

"The purpose of *wa'z* is comprehensive teaching, getting the Qur'an as the basis, and then the *hadith*, and then some tales of the sages."

The chapter is structured according to my analysis of the Collection, grouping the evidence under various political themes, looking briefly at how each theme emerges in adapted Chinese Islamic thought, and its value and use to the Party-State as a means of interacting with and influencing the Hui specifically in the area of identity construction.

A total of fifty-seven official sermons are produced in the Collection. I have broadly divided them into two groups as a first level analysis – the first I term 'religio-liturgical' and consist of sermons that are relatively non-controversial theologically and which seek to teach, admonish and encourage the Muslim faithful to be better Muslims. The second group are 'socio-political' in their tone, and seem more blatant in their aim to demonstrate the compatibility of Islam with Party-State concerns about the national and ethnic questions, ethnic unity, social stability and patriotism. I will consider each group of sermons in turn.

6.1   Religio-liturgical sermons in the Collection*

Of the fifty-seven officially published sermons in the collection, only twenty-one of them, or 36%, can be considered to be pure religio-liturgical sermons, which I define as those that have religious strictures as the primary content, and/or Qur'an and *hadith* teaching that seek to expand the religious knowledge of the faithful. Examples of such sermons include "*Being a pious and reverent Muslim*" (v1.2) , "*On Islamic Prayer*" (v1.6), "*Islam's hajj*" (v1.7), "*Fasting - one of Islam's five works*" (v2.2), "*Celebrating a happy and united Id al-Fitr*" (v2.10), "*Being a Muslim who knows Allah's grace*" (v3.4) and "*The Meaning of al-Fatiha*" (v4.1) and other such sermons focusing on Muslim religious practice. Comparing the themes of the sermons in the Collection with those of a series of actual sermons taught in one of the primary Ikhwan mosques in Xining demonstrates that this proportion of

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* All references are to "*Collection of newly edited wa'z speeches*" IAC Guidance Committee (2013), giving volume and sermon number.

religio-liturgical sermons is comparatively low. Given that the sermon is the means by which the Muslim faithful receive their primary Islamic teaching, one would assume that religio-liturgical sermons would be dominant. Indeed, an analysis of the sermons that a prominent Xining imam publishes on his blog reveals that one hundred of his one hundred and ten published sermons, or 91%, are religio-liturgical in content, with the remaining ten able to be classed as socio-political (Jin Biao 2016). This reflects the relative priority of the Party-State organ in emphasising the socio-political above the religio-liturgical.

In addition to the relatively low proportion of religio-liturgical sermons in the official Collection, it is also apparent that these religio-liturgical sermons are permeated with Party-State slogans designed to reinforce the compatibility of Islam with the Party line, unlike Jin Biao's publically available sermons[*]. I will illustrate this with the three most prominent examples of political themes from the religio-liturgical sermons in the Collection, each of which will be treated in more detail in the socio-political sermons that follow.

6.1.1. Unity (tuanjie)

The familiar political trope of China's ethnic unity (*minzu tuanjie*) and the unity of the homeland (*zuguo tongyi)* is drawn out in a number of religiously focused sermons. In the liturgical treatise *"On Islamic Prayer"* (v1.6), which largely deals with the conditions for prayer, the rites and times of prayer, and the merits of praying, Muslim people are taught:

> "We advocate firmly abiding by Chinese Muslim's Sunni Hanafi tradition style of prayer."

This reflects the long tradition of Chinese Islam as associated with the Sunni Hanafi school of jurisprudence, which differs from the other orthodox schools in certain small areas regarding preparation for and style of prayer (al-Munawwara 2016). Significantly, the sermon goes on to give the reason for adhering to the Hanafi school as:

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[*] few of Jin Biao's published sermons contain any of the Party-State slogans such as ethnic unity (*minzu tuanjie),* harmonious society *(hexie shehui)* or even accepted Islamic slogans such as love country, love faith (*aiguo aijiao*).

> "We don't praise some people recommending other schools' ways, negating our ways, causing chaos in the thinking of the Muslim masses, and unceasing arguments about side issues **influencing unity** (*yingxiang tuanjie*)" (IAC Guidance Committee 2013: 52, emphasis mine).

The emphasis here is maintaining social stability through unity. The increased exposure to the global Islamic community that the rise of cyber-Islamic environments has facilitated has resulted in advocates of other schools and other ways of praying becoming increasingly accessible to the Hui in Xining. There are numerous cases of conflict emerging due to disagreement in the most minor details of religious praxis (see chapter seven for examples of this in the interviews). Advocating adherence to a traditional school of jurisprudence so as to avoid influencing unity is a particularly Chinese Party-State concern, one that recurs as an underlying theme through the Collection. This can be interpreted on the one hand as an anti-sectarian, pro-Hui ethnic unity drive, but on the other, the ambiguity of the term *tuanjie* continues to reinforce a more general trend of teaching towards other Party-State mandated unity projects, namely ethnic unity under the *Zhonghua minzu* identity.

In sermon v2.2 on "*Fasting*", the religiously-important timing of starting the fast and breaking the fast during Ramadan is expounded, a point of some contention in northwest China since the majority of Chinese Muslims follow the official IAC mandated time, which sometimes differs from the Saudi Arabian determined time for the holy month to start and finish. Thus the sermon admonishes:

> "If, for whatever reason, there are some differences between places in the timing of starting the fast or breaking the fast, everyone should be sure not to mutually criticise, attack or **influence unity** (*tuanjie*)" (IAC Guidance Committee 2013: 118, emphasis mine).

Once again, the importance is emphasised of unity between Muslims to maintain social stability, and the warning against attacking or criticising others for their Islamic practices, clearly pointing towards an inter-Muslim unity.

In sermon v2.3 on "*Being a consummate Muslim*", the emphasis is on how to develop *imani* (faith) through following Hanafi principles, yet the sermon emphasises the importance of not condemning others who either have no faith, are false believers, or are even considered as "*kafir*" (a pejorative word for unbelievers), since:

> "A tolerant attitude increases our inter-Muslim unity, and causes our big family to be increasingly harmonious" (IAC Guidance Committee 2013: 130).

While emphasising inter-Muslim unity (since the sermons are for all China's Muslims, not just the Hui), the bigger goal is to increase the unity and harmony within China's big family (*da jiating*), a common referent for all of China's people. Being tolerant of other views and non-condemnatory of those you disagree with recurs in the religious sermons, a thinly-veiled warning to avoid sectarianism as a means of preserving ethnic unity.

In sermon v2.10, "*Celebrating a united and auspicious Id al-Fitr*", Muslims are exhorted using Surah 2.185 of the Qur'an to abide by the fasting requirements of the holy month of Ramadan. Not only is the public prayer a command of Allah:

> "But at the same time it is a realisation of Muslim unity, friendship and the spirit of mutual help…not only realising Muslim brotherly unity, but also expressing friendly relations with non-Muslims" (IAC Guidance Committee 2013: 191).

The religious focus and Qur'anic emphasis on inter-Muslim unity, this brotherhood of Islam, is then extended by the IAC Guidance Committee in the correct teaching to include friendly relations with non-Muslims, an extension which is only a short step from the fullness of inter-ethnic unity that *minzu tuanjie* mandates. This extrapolation of an Islamic teaching to correspond to a Party-State goal is evidence of how Islam is utilised in its adaptation.

6.1.2   Fortune in two worlds (liangshi jiqing)

This phrase is a recurring slogan in Chinese Islam, and focuses on the responsibility that the Muslim believer has for ensuring blessing (or prosperity) in this world (*jinshi*) as well as blessing in the next world (*houshi*). Although clearly based on the Islamic belief in an afterlife, the phrase 'fortune in two worlds' (which appears in neither the Qur'an nor the *hadith)*, has been suggested to be an exclusively Chinese Islamic construct, a doctrine invented by the IAC (Glasserman 2013: 33). However, the phrase was previously used by Jamaluldin al-Afghani (1838-1897), often referred to as the father of modern Muslim nationalism, who is quoted as saying:

> "Islam is concerned not only with the life to come. Islam is more: it is concerned with its believers' interests in the world here below and with allowing them to realize success in this life as well as peace in the next life. It seeks 'good fortune in two worlds'…a Muslim's ultimate destination in the next world is inextricably linked to his or her life in this one. Eternal paradise awaits those who display their faith through morality, hard work, productivity, citizenship, and the fulfillment of basic liturgical requirements" (Donohue and Esposito 2007: 19).

In v3.4, *"Being a Muslim who knows Allah's grace",* based on Surah 35.4 of the Qur'an, Muslims are encouraged both to recognise the grace of Allah in all that He has given them, particularly "*being blessed to live in this war-free, peaceful land*", and to be thankful to Allah for these things:

> "Persisting in Islam's fortune in two worlds' lifestyle is an expression of thanks to Allah."

The sermon then goes on to detail the lifestyle that is compatible with a this world Muslim lifestyle that results in 'rewards in the next world.' Unsurprisingly, the advocated lifestyle serves the Party-State agenda well:

> "Use your ability to contribute to society, help others, exhort the good, guard against evil, stabilise unity, mutual peace, be a law-abiding, patriotic, concerned-with-two-worlds Muslim" (IAC Guidance Committee 2013: 236).

In v2.6, "*Muslims should earnestly fight selfish desires*", a comment on Surah 6:56, Muslims are taught that the focus of the big Jihad[*] is against selfish desires and struggles with internal sin. The consequence of not overcoming desire:

> "If we Muslims are controlled by our selfish desires, we doubtless will harm our faith and cause us to leave the correct path (*zhengdao*)…in order to pursue Islam's proposed fortune in two worlds, we must always fight against our selfish desires" (IAC Guidance Committee 2013: 149).

Again, the sermon goes on to detail examples of the selfish desires against which Muslims are to struggle, which again reflect the Party-State agenda: not promoting mutual harmony, not encouraging honesty in business dealings, slander and using abusive words that damage unity are all detailed as selfish desires. Preserving social stability is the Muslim's aim for this world, the sermon asserts, and rewards in the next world will result.

The 'fortune in two worlds' slogan is commonly used to reinforce the teaching that Muslims are to be good, law-abiding citizens contributing to China's prosperous growth, and serving the needs of society as responsible citizens, and as a result, they will be rewarded by Allah in the next world. It appears to be an attempt to utilise Islam to coerce behaviour in line with Party-State desires, with religious justification.

6.1.3   Patriotism (aiguo)

During the rise of the modern Chinese nation-state the loyalty of China's Muslims, and the emphasis on a civic nationalism that transcended ethno-nationalism, became prominent. In chapter 4.2.4, I showed the influence of Muslim reformers in the first decades of last century, who sought an ideological transfer of previous Confucian submission to Emperor to a submission to the nation-state, expressed through patriotism. The teachings and writings of al-Azhar educated Muslim Chinese like Wang Jingzhai and Wang Kuan were significant, with Wang Jingzhai a key influence in China in raising patriotism to the level of Islamic obligation,

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[*] Jihad means 'struggle', and standard Muslim teaching is that the big Jihad represents the internal struggle against sin, and the little Jihad the struggle for Islam when suffering oppression.

introducing the idea that 'the love of the fatherland is a tenet of faith' (*aiguo shi xinyangde yibufen*) to China. This saying, believed by many Chinese Muslim scholars erroneously to be a *hadith* (Wang Decai 2015: 12), arose out of the *Nahda* 'Enlightenment' movement centred around al-Azhar, where numerous Hui were studying in the period of reform, and became the foundation of the Hui's participation in the war of resistance against the Japanese – a period in history that firmly established the Hui as patriotic citizens of a new modernising state. The embrace of modernism by Chinese (including Muslims) studying in Japan in late Qing period coincided with the embrace of the Islamic revival begun in Egypt. It is noteworthy that the key word of this movement was patriotism as a priority over faith – or *aiguo aijiao* – love country, love faith. This priority of placing faith below the nation is identified as a necessity for realisation of a political identity for the Hui (Jin Gui 2016: 96). This development in Chinese Islam during the 1930s and 1940s effectively legitimised Muslim loyalty to the nation-state.

As I will show below, patriotism is a dominant theme in the socio-political sermons in the Collection, but 'love country love faith' (*aiguo aijiao*) even finds its way into the religio-liturgical sermons of the Collection. For instance, in sermon v3.4, *"Being a Muslim who knows Allah's grace"*, Muslims are also taught that being Chinese is the will of Allah:

> "We live on this piece of earth because of Allah's will, we are grateful. If we love the country and love the faith, abide by the law, positively contribute to society's development, seeing problems with the country's best interest, thinking of problems with the country's situation as the most important, and never forgetting the motherland that raised you, then that will signify gratitude to Allah" (IAC Guidance Committee 2013: 234).

This sermon teaches that since Allah chooses for you your place of birth, your family and your country, it is thus a religious duty to be grateful. This religious justification for never forgetting your homeland, and that your national identity is the will of Allah, is a strong Chinese Islamic perspective, and is one of the most contentious when it confronts some of the influences of the Islamic centre, as I will show in the following chapter.

It is evident that these religiously-oriented sermons, while teaching the Muslim faithful to be better Muslims, have an obvious political tone through continually emphasising the politically-motivated themes of preserving ethnic and Muslim unity, contributing to the socialist construction of society through focusing on the fortune in two worlds, and emphasising the duty to love the homeland, since Muslims have been given the grace to live in this place. The exegesis committee has made strong attempts to ground the religio-liturgical sermons in Islam's sacred texts, but they are clearly also in full accord with the Party-State's concern for China's socialist situation. This becomes increasingly apparent in the socio-political sermons.

6.2   Socio-political sermons in the Collection

The higher proportion of sermons (64%) in the official collection I have categorised as socio-political in content. Although these sermons are variously supported or illustrated by frequent use of the Qur'an and *hadith*, their primary focus is on addressing social, moral and political aspects of living as a Chinese Muslim in the present national situation, and particularly under the Chinese government. It is in these sermons that a direct promotion of the Party-line is most evident - a clear instrumentalisation of Islam as a tool by which the Party-State centre seeks to exert influence on the peripheral Hui Muslims.

The following analysis of these thirty-six sermons groups them by commonly recurring socio-political themes, introduced in the previous chapter, and redolent with Party policy and propaganda slogans, clearly demonstrating the Party-State's attempted influence on Hui identity construction.

6.2.1   *Unity (tuanjie)*

If unity was a common theme in the religio-liturgical sermons, it is a dominant theme in the socio-political sermons, expressed in the very first sermon (v1.1) in the collection:

> "We Muslims highly value unity, which includes internal Muslim unity and Muslim unity with non-Muslims" (IAC Guidance Committee 2013: 5).

Alternative semantic constructions to unity are often used in the sermons, such as 'harmony with non-Muslims' or 'inter-ethnic harmony'; sometimes the focus becomes the unity between people of different religions or different ethnicities or nations. For instance, in sermon v1.4 "*Muslims must get along in harmony with non-Muslims*":

> "The Qur'an and *hadith* require us to pursue peace, unity and fraternal love. Unity with non-Muslims, striving for non-Muslim support and understanding, for us, is a concrete expression of our Muslim obedience to the teaching" (IAC Guidance Committee 2013: 31).

This focus on unity often makes use of the commonly quoted Qur'anic text, highly favoured by the IAC (Erie 2016: 84), and used five times in the official Collection:

> "And hold fast, all together, by the Rope which (Allah stretches out for you), and be not divided among yourselves." (Surah 3:103)

This quotation is used for example in sermon v3.2 *"Islam is a religion of unity and tolerance"* to portray Islam as a religion of tolerance, one that is supportive of others, a united religion and especially opposed to 'splittism' (*fenlie zhuyi*). However, the ambiguity surrounding what is actually meant by unity (*tuanjie*) is illustrated by the contrast between the Islamic focus on Muslim internal unity, as indeed the Qur'anic verse suggests, with its focus on 'be not divided among yourselves', and the Party-State focus on ethnic unity, that is, a unity between ethnic groups. This is another example of the Party-State extrapolating a clear Islamic teaching to incorporate a Party-State political emphasis.

This type of sermon is most naturally read as an appeal primarily against sectarianism, such as in sermon v2.7:

> "In recent years some people started something new, which as far as our long-standing common Islamic tradition is concerned is wrong…they abandoned Islam's traditional enquiring spirit, and deliberately expanded Muslim differences on small issues, creating chaos among the masses, causing disputes and comprehensively violating the Islamic spirit" (IAC Guidance Committee 2013: 158).

However, from a political perspective, if the sermon focus was only on Muslim internal unity, illustrated by the section heading "*Muslims want internal unity*" (*Musilin neibu yao tuanjie*), from the Party-State political perspective it does not go far enough, and so this sermon goes on to explore "*Getting along in harmony with those outside the faith*" (*yu jiaowairen ying hemu xiangchu*) (IAC Guidance Committee 2013: 161). This idea is grounded in the common humanity that derives from having a common Creator, Allah, and a common ancestor, Adam. The sermon gives detailed exhortation to get along well with, tolerate, respect and be friendly towards non-Muslims. It closes by saying that those who reject, are hostile to or regard non-Muslims as outsiders are wrong.

Sermon v2.9 "*Being a strict, self-purifying, fair, tolerant Muslim*" sums up the State-desired approach:

> "Our country is a multi-ethnic, multi-faith country, therefore it rests with us to get along with others, no matter whether they are Muslim or non-Muslim" (IAC Guidance Committee 2013: 183).

Unity is thus portrayed as an Islamic duty, supported by the Qur'an, the *hadith* and by Muslim tradition, and this unity includes not only intra-Muslim unity, but is also extrapolated to include unity with others, and harmony with all.

6.2.2   *Fortune in two worlds (liangshi jiqing)*

The second trope under which I will examine the socio-political sermons is dominant throughout, occurring in more than half of all the sermons. I already discussed the origin of this in al-Afghani's modernist thought (section 6.1.2), and said above that the phrase 'fortune in two worlds' exhorts Muslims to remember that there is a direct connection between their behaviour in this world (*jinshi*) and their rewards in the next (*houshi*), and as such they should strive to be good Muslims who invest in their behaviour and contribution to the present world. Therefore, being tolerant, peace-loving, economically thrifty, committed to the pursuit of knowledge, obedient to law, loving unity and most other desires of a government can be pretty well included. Thus we see throughout the sermons an emphasis on moral conduct and obedience utilised by the Party-State for its own

purposes. For example, in sermon v1.11 *"Do good and guard against evil"* Muslims are urged to:

> "Strictly obey a good moral standard, obey the law, be a good citizen" (IAC Guidance Committee 2013: 90).

This injunction is grounded, the sermon says, in verses following the popular Surah 3.103, cited above, which say:

> "Let there arise out of you a band of people inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right, and forbidding what is wrong: They are the ones to attain felicity" (Surah 3:104).

And:

> "Ye are the best of peoples, evolved for mankind, enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong, and believing in Allah" (Surah 3:110).

These verses do insist on Muslims maintaining the highest degree of moral rectitude as an investment in this world that will be repaid in the next, and abiding by the law can be seen as an expression of this, yet the idea of being a good citizen of a non-Muslim nation is certainly lacking in these Qur'anic verses. This emphasis is derived from a politically motivated exegesis. This broad interpretation of the Qur'an, seeking to illustrate Chinese socio-political themes as being consistent with Qur'anic teaching, is evidenced by a further example. Sermon v3.7, "*Honest business dealings is a Muslim virtue*", where dealing honestly and fairly in trade is described as:

> "A realisation of Muslims' pursuit of fortune in two worlds" (IAC Guidance Committee 2013: 260).

This emphasis on the need for honesty in business underscores the recent Party drive against corruption (O'Grady 2016).

Throughout the sermons, moral behaviour, good citizenship, obedience to the law, to the Constitution and effectively obedience to the Party-State are characterised as being the embodiment of pursuing fortune in two worlds. From an exegetically justifiable call to moral rectitude and obedience, the Party-State has extrapolated a

call to full submission to the law and the Constitution of the People's Republic of China.

6.2.3 Patriotism (aiguo)

Although this appeared prominently once in the religio-liturgical sermons, it is a significant emphasis in the socio-political sermons, appearing as the subject of the very first sermon in the collection, v1.1 entitled, "*Patriotism is an aspect of faith*". Patriotism, usually expressed in the slogan 'love of country and love of faith' (*aiguo aijiao*), and encouraging patriotic feeling, permeates the sermons, explicitly so in four socio-political sermons, including v1.1 already mentioned.

The difficult exegetical work making patriotism acceptable within Islam has its origins in the work of Wang Kuan and Wang Jingzhai, as I showed in section 4.2.4 above. Patriotism is commonly described in IAC publications as 'belonging to Islam's fine tradition'. Sermon v1.4 entitled "*Muslims ought to live in harmony with non-Muslims*" says:

> "We Muslims ought to closely integrate our love for self, love for others, love for nation (*aiguo*) and love for Islam" (IAC Guidance Committee 2013: 36).

A view repeated verbatim in sermon v4.12 "*Being a Muslim who treasures ethnic unity*".

From a political perspective, the importance of love for the homeland is the rubric under which a national identity is fostered to maintain social stability, and counter one of the three social evils (*sangu shili*), referred to as splittism (*fenlie zhuyi*)[*]. Under this slogan, China's Muslims are urged to protect and defend the concept of the national unity of the homeland (*zuguo tongyixing*), highly value and work towards establishing and defending ethnic unity (*minzu tuanjie*), based on the Islamic values of mutual respect and harmonious coexistence (*huxiang zunzhong, hexie gongchu*).

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[*] The others are extremism (*jiduan zhuyi*) and terrorism (*kongbu zhuyi*).

One logical consequence of patriotism for the Party-State that conflates the love for homeland with a love for the Party is to emphasise that submission to government is one outworking of patriotic behavior (*aiguo jiuyao fucong zhengfu*). Thus Muslims, under the protection and guidance of the State that has a policy of freedom of religious belief, need to both abide by Islam's rules/customs (*guiju*), but also to obey China's laws (*falu*) (see sermons v2.9, v3.1, v3.4, v3.9). Indeed, the Constitution of the People's Republic of China is quoted in more than one of the official sermons (v1.1, v1.9, v4.11).

From the Party-State perspective, establishing that patriotism to the homeland involves submission to government, abiding by her laws and supporting her policies on ethnic unity, social stability, and economic development clearly greatly serves the Party-State interest. Accepting that patriotism is critical to the new China, and arising from the patriotic movements that characterised the struggles against Japanese in the 1930s, Chinese Muslim scholars built a case for patriotism with support from *hadith*, and what I consider to be an eisegesis of the Qur'an. Thus, the model sermon on patriotism (v1.1) develops its case from the perspective of Muhammad's patriotism: "*he loved Mecca, Medina and the Arab peninsula*", supported by four traditions where the Prophet expresses his love of, and desire for, blessing for Mecca and Medina, and 'this land'. Muslims are therefore urged to follow Muhammad's example of loving their homeland. The question of the relationship between the homeland (Ar. *watan*) and the Muslim conception of common community of faith, or *ummah,* will form a significant discussion when we look at the influence of the Islamic centre in chapter eight.

One outworking of this 'love for homeland' is that desire for its prosperous development is compatible with Islamic ideals, so the theme of 'the best for China is the best for Muslims' is closely linked to patriotism in the sermons. Social stability is good for economic growth, and social stability emerges from harmony between the peoples of a nation; for there is no stability without unity. Thus, the sermon Collection also include the themes of peace, harmony and mutual tolerance.

6.2.4 Peace (heping), harmony (hemu) and tolerance (kuanrong)

The historical context of the development of China's policy towards ethnic
minorities and especially those minorities believing Islam is characterised by
conflict, and an antagonistic relationship both with the hegemonic centre, and
between other ethnic groups (Hui and Tibetan relations are particularly sensitive
in Qinghai*), or between sects within the Hui ethnic group. It is therefore
unsurprising that a significant emphasis of the sermons is the nature of Islam as a
peaceful religion, and the promotion of harmony as an ideal within Islam, with
tolerance portrayed as the means by which social harmony may be achieved.

With the increase in 'Islamic' acts of terror culminating in the attack on the World
Trade Centre on 9/11, international reaction has resulted in an increased
discussion of violence in Islam, with popular media portraying Islam as an
inherently violent religion (Lawrence 1998: 5; Milton-Edwards 2006: ix), and
fundamentally opposed to liberal values of modernity, democracy and secularism.
Countering this monolithic treatment of Islam, there has been a corresponding
growth in those emphasising the inherently peaceful nature of Islam. The IAC have
publically subscribed to this latter view, and Islam in the Chinese Party-State
media is presented as a religion of peace. The sermon collection is illustrative of
this, for example in sermon v3.1, entitled "*Islam is a peaceful religion*", peace is
portrayed as the essence of Islam, with the Qur'an reference quoted indicating this:

> "O ye who believe! Enter into Islam wholeheartedly, and follow not the
> footsteps of the evil one, for he is to you an enemy." (Surah 2:208)

A variety of English translations renders the word that Yusuf Ali here translates
'Islam' alternatively as submission, peace or surrender. There is an acknowledged
difficulty in translating the Arabic triconsonantal root sīn-lām-mīm (SLM [س ل م]),
and both Islam (submission) and Salam (peace), are possible (Campo 2009: 372).
Thus, the IAC translates "*enter into Islam*" in the above Surah in Chinese as "*enter
into the peaceful religion*" (*ru zai heping jiaozhong*). Whilst not alone in this

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* The history of Hui/Tibetan conflict stretches has a long history, but was
particularly acute during the warlord period of Ma Bufang (1936-1949). Recent
conflicts between Tibetans and Hui during my time in Xining led to outbreaks of
ethnic violence in neighbouring counties.

equation of Islam as actually meaning peace, it is still an intentional choice of words, since it serves the Party-State interest both in defending Islam from its detractors, and in emphasising a desire of the Party-State. There are several sermons (v3.1 and v4.4 for example) that affirm the social stability created by a people who greet each other daily with 'Salaam' (peace). Sermon v3.1 continues to describe Islam as:

> "...a religion that wants peace, Muslims love peace, pursue peace, preserve peace and oppose anything obstructing peace" (IAC Guidance Committee 2013: 203).

The sermon collection is opposed to a violent 'holy war' interpretation of the term Jihad, in the sermon v1.3 "*What is Jihad and how are we to understand it*", the writer introduces the 'little Jihad' with the phrase:

> "Our Islam is a fervently peaceful religion" (IAC Guidance Committee 2013: 23).

Throughout the sermons, in advocating for social stability, for harmony between Muslims and non-Muslims and for harmony between different sects of Muslims, a strong appeal to peace as the inherent nature of Islam is made. Sermon v1.4 teaches that:

> "The Qur'an and *hadith* require us to pursue, peace, unity, friendship. Unity with non-Muslims, striving for understanding and support of non-Muslims is the Muslims' collective concrete expression of obedience to the Teaching" (IAC Guidance Committee 2013: 31).

Harmony is closely associated with peace, and President Hu Jintao's reintroduction in 2005 of the popular slogan 'building a harmonious society' (*goujian hexie shehui*) is echoed in sermons originating at that time, such as v3.3, v3.6, v3.10, v4.2 and v4.8. The value of seeking harmony between previously opposed groups, both between Muslims and non-Muslims (as sermon v1.4 makes clear above) and between ethnicities is clearly advocated:

> "No matter what race, skin colour or religion, Allah is merciful." (v3.3)

The role of mutual respect and mutual tolerance is key here, and appears throughout the sermons, such as in sermon v3.2 "*Islam is a religion of tolerance and*

unity", as does a stated tolerance towards other religions, such as in sermon v1.4, "*Muslims must get along in harmony with non-Muslims*", and is heavily emphasised in the most recent volume, particularly in v5.1, for example.

6.2.5   Filial piety (xiaojing fumu)

Like the adaptation of Islam to Confucianism in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries discussed in chapter three, so too there is an emphasis in the sermons on the mutual adaptability of Islam to China's socialist society, including an emphasis on Chinese cultural values, now rehabilitated after being attacked during the Cultural Revolution, such as filial piety. For instance, sermon v1.9 is entitled "*Being filially pious to one's parents is a Muslim vocation*" and is based on a translation of the Qur'an, Surah 17:23 as:

> "Thy Lord hath decreed that ye worship none but Him, and that ye be kind to parents. Whether one or both of them attain old age in thy life, say not to them a word of contempt, nor repel them, but address them in terms of honour."

The English translation 'be kind to parents' is translated in Ma Jian's Qur'an as *xiaojing fumu*, or filial piety to parents. This is an example of Islam's fine tradition (*youliang chuantong*), which in the view of the Collection, supports the Chinese Constitution, chapter two, article 49 which states that adult children are responsible to support and help parents (NPC 2004), and that it is forbidden to mistreat the old (IAC Guidance Committee 2013: 78). This is a further case of demonstrating the mutual adaptability of Islam and Chinese culture, with a view to strengthening the legitimacy of the IAC exegesis of Islam.

6.2.6   Middle Way (zhongzheng zhidao or zhongdao)

In traditional Chinese, the concept of the 'middle way' originates in Confucianism, where it is known as the Doctrine of the Mean (*zhongyong*). It first appears in the Analects of Confucius, and is expanded in the Book of Rites, and forms the title of one of the Four Books and Five Classics that make up the Confucian corpus (Gardner 2007). Although unexplained in the Analects, later writers interpret it to

indicate moderation or balance. In Ma Jian's 1981 translation of the Qur'an, this term was employed to translate the Arabic word *wasat*, as in Surah 2:143:

> "Thus, have We made of you an Ummat justly balanced (*Ar. wasat*), that ye might be witnesses over the nations".

Ma Jian translates this:

> "wo zheyang yi nimen wei **zhongzhengde minzu**, yibian nimen zuo zhengshiren" (Ma Jian 1981, emphasis mine).

This Arabic phrase "*ummah wasata*" has been translated in many ways, from 'middle nation' to 'moderate community' to 'community justly balanced' (Browers 2009: 49). Here, in Ma Jian's Chinese version, it is translated as "*zhongzhengde minzu*", meaning an equitable, just ethnicity. It is notable that the word *minzu* is used here to translate *ummah.*

An examination of some notable commentaries (*tafsir*) of the Qur'an reveal a variety of nuanced interpretations of this phrase, not only from the classic *tafsirs* of al-Bagawi and ibn-Kathir, but also more modern *tafsirs,* such as al-Munajjid (2016). Generally speaking, they interpret this verse to refer to the Muslim nation being moderate and the epitome of justice and equity as a witness to the world. The term always refers to Muslim people, the community of faith, and never carries any sense of ethnic identity. The translation of *ummah* as *minzu* here enables its instrumentalisation as a collective term of identity by the Party-State, for the ambiguity of *ummah/minzu* and of *watan* allow the Party-State to infuse both with political meaning that may diverge from the original meaning of the Arabic. Hassan points out that the ambiguity of *ummah* as a term has allowed:

> "Muslim leaders and ideologues to manipulate its meaning and usage in order to conduct their affairs and the affairs of the society according to the appropriate political and social milieu of the time" (Hassan 2006: 312).

The treatment of *ummah* in the official sermons is such an example of manipulation by the Party-State. Developing the idea that Muslims are called to be a moderate ethnic group, pursuing balance and harmony, and justifying this from the Qur'an can be seen as a politicization of the Qur'an to support and promote the

Party-State agenda, and a clear influence of the centre on the periphery. The development of the concept of the 'middle way', and stressing the importance of moderation, pursuing the middle course between extremism and apathy, is a clear (though positive) manipulation of the Islamic meaning of *ummah wasata*. This appears as a strong emphasis in these IAC developed sermons.

Middle way thinking is advocated as Islamic moderation, and the Party-State encourages unity, anti-sectarianism, tolerance, mutual respect, mutual harmony and ethnic unity under this theme in the sermon Collection. For example, sermon v2.1 entitled "*Islam requires we faithfully follow the middle way*", makes a direct connection between the middle way (*zhongdao*) and the straight path (*zhenglu*), which is a key phrase in Islamic theology* representing the entire way of Allah, the faith of Islam (IAC Guidance Committee 2013: 105). In this sermon Muslims are urged to walk in Allah's path, which is the middle way of moderation, opposing extremism, terrorism and the extremes of indulgence and ascetism. This latter focus is further developed in sermon v2.8, "*Muslims should be hardworking, thrifty and opposed to extravagance*", where the middle way life is described as "*not miserly, nor wasteful.*" Sermon v3.1 contains the section "*Preserving the Middle Way*", which says:

> "Those who receive salvation are those who persist as middle way people in their religious life" (IAC Guidance Committee 2013: 206).

Thus the sermons elevate the middle way to a position of great importance in Islam, using a concept familiar to Chinese culture, and promoting the kind of moderate, tolerant, anti-extremist Islam that is desirable to the Party-State.

The magazine *China Muslim* and the IAC website likewise strongly promote middle way thought, with *China Muslim* devoting an entire issue (2014.3) to the subject, wherein it is written:

> "Through the course of history, China's Muslims' 'middle way' (*zhongzheng*) thought and Confucian 'doctrine of the mean' (*zhongyong*) have mutually combined and been put into practice, forming a moderate, rational and

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* "Show us the straight path" appears in the opening Surah (1:6) of the Qur'an, al-Fatiha, and is recited numerous times each day by devout Muslims.

valuable character that always adheres to this fine tradition: demonstrating one's loyalty to this middle way, preventing paranoia and fanaticism, opposing extremism, resisting any use of religion to cause ethnic division and violent acts of terror" (Lü 2014: 28).

In my view, middle way thinking may actually be the critical concept in understanding the Party-State mandated 'correct Islam', and is a clear example of the results of exchange politics, where the IAC have formulated (some may say contrived) a doctrine that enables official Islamic belief to be politically positioned in a way that it is acceptable to Muslims. This is both the case internally, as the means of seeking to hold together the previously fractious and rebellious Muslims in some stable common identity, as well as in the wider international sphere, as the reputation of China's governance of its Muslim minorities continues to be diplomatically important in relations with key Gulf States. I will return to this theme in the closing chapter of this thesis.

Summary: 'Correct' Islam portrayed in the Collection

In the context of a nation reflecting on historic internal conflicts, both between the hegemonic centre and the people, as well as between China's ethnic groups and between different Hui teaching schools, instrumentalising Islam to promote national unity and social harmony through emphasizing mutual tolerance and respect supports the Party-State political agenda. The IAC Religious Affairs Guidance Committee have engaged in a fresh exegesis of Islam's core texts in an effort to demonstrate the mutual adaptability of Islam with China's national situation. The official sermons have been widely distributed, and their political agenda actively supported through means of official magazines and journals, websites and public propaganda. The content of correct Islam represents the pervading influence of politics adapting religion to suit its own purposes, which is essentially the nation-building project. This section summarises the preceding chapter in identifying ways in which Islam has been adapted and instrumentalised to influence the Hui conception of identity.

The foundation of Islamic anthropology lies in the Creation narrative, and the common ancestry of mankind. Thus, the most commonly cited verse in all official sermons, occurring in eight different sermons, is Surah 49:13:

> O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise (each other).

This teaches that Allah intentionally created many nations and tribes for the purpose of knowing each other in harmony. Ma Jian translates the Arabic word for nations as *minzu* (ethnic group) and tribes as *zongzu* (patriarchal clan)*.* On this basis Muslims are encouraged both to have respect for the brotherhood of humanity, and to treasure the ethnic diversity as mandated by Allah. The ambiguity of definition allows for the emphasis in the sermons to support the Party-State formulation of the fifty-six ethnicities making up one big united family. Muslims need to get along with each other and with non-Muslims, in mutual harmony, with mutual respect. Muslims are 'the best of people' (*zui youliangde minzu*) and thus should lead by example (Surah 3:110). All attitudes that repel and treat non-Muslims as enemies negatively affect unity, and thus 'violate the Islamic spirit', which is entirely peaceful.

However, there is some perpetuated ambiguity in the sermons, since although they emphasise the importance and priority of unity, it appears to be inter-Muslim unity that is clearly stressed, and most naturally supported by the key Islamic texts. This principle that Muslims love inter-Muslim unity is then extended to include advocating for unity between ethnic groups, an incorporation of *minzu tuanjie* into Islamic teaching – a clear case of adaptation. This is seen most clearly through the frequent use of Qur'anic reference Surah 3:103, which says:

> "Hold fast, all together, by the rope which Allah (stretches out for you), and be not divided among yourselves."

Islam certainly advocates unity, but it emphasises a unity <u>within Islam,</u> rather than a unity of all peoples. It is in the reinterpretation of this teaching that the Party-State influence on identity construction is seen clearly, for extending the meaning of unity in Islam to unity among all peoples diminishes the priority of religious

identity (*ummah*) by widening the focus to a unity of non-religious collective identities, such as the nation-state. Unity is portrayed as an Islamic duty, and the unity in focus extends beyond an inter-Muslim unity to include all China's people, and supports the conception of the *Zhonghua minzu* national identity.

This is yet more clearly illustrated in the strong emphasis in the sermons on patriotism, and the Islamic justification for a patriotic love for China based on the concept of *watan*, or homeland. The Party-State has effectively garnered Islamic authority to support its own project of fostering patriotism as a core aspect of faith. In this way, the ethnic and religious identity of Muslims, whilst recognised, is minimised in favour of a primary identity as members of China's big family, the *Zhonghua minzu*. This emphasis fits within the currently-pursued assimilation model of *minzu tuanjie,* where ethnic recognition is accepted, but only as a secondary and subsidiary identity to the one national Chinese identity. This national identity is clearly portrayed in the sermons to be the will of Allah for all Chinese Muslims, again giving the highest Islamic authority to a national identity construction. The patriotic duty of Muslims manifests itself in opposition to the three social evils of extremism, terrorism and splittism (secession), and urges a commitment to national unity and national stability, as well as full submission to the rule of national law above the *Shari'a*, and to the Constitution.

As good citizens of China, therefore, Muslims are urged to behave as such, and contribute to the prosperous development of the homeland. The Islamic justification for this is found in the 'fortune in two worlds' doctrine, derived from al-Afghani, but reinterpreted by the Committee to support the Party-State desire for a this-world commitment of Muslims. Such a commitment to moral rectitude, honesty, fairness, obedience to national law are all portrayed as the religious duty of Muslims.

Perhaps the most obvious politicizing (and Sinicizing) of Islam is found in the emphasis of Chinese Islam pursuing a middle way ideology. The virtues of moderation, harmony and balance are demonstrated as Islamic virtues, and equating the middle way with the 'straight path' establishes middle way thinking as the very heart of Islam. Many of my interlocuters referred to middle way

thinking, and some in the Ikhwani equate it with the *wasatiyya* movement championed by Yusuf al-Qaradawi, an influential yet controversial figure in Islam (Graf and Skovgaard-Petersen 2009; Soage 2008). A prominent moderate Ikhwan imam in Xining referred to Qaradawi as his primary influence, and even saw him as a potential 'reviver' in Islam (*Mujaddid*), a figure in Islam believed to be given to humanity each century to bring revival (interview #20, 2015).

These are the socio-political values esteemed by the IAC, and are promoted in the Collection as integral to socialist society and the need to maintain harmony, avoid splittism and avoid ethnic tension. This is fully in line with government policy, and comprises the correct way of Islam that the IAC promotes. However, while the IAC claims to speak for all Muslims of every ethnicity and sectarian division, this correct way has significant differences from the alternative forms of Islam found throughout Xining. Though the IAC purports to contain imams from Ikhwan, Qadim, Sufi and Salafi backgrounds, in actual fact it is one particular branch of the Ikhwan that has been and remains dominant, and the other sects can be seen to diverge both in their practice and in their acceptance of IAC role. The following chapters will examine these divergent voices.

6.3   Attitudes to the Collection among imams in Xining

The IAC distributes the model sermons contained within the "*Collection of newly-edited wa'z speeches*" to all mosques and imams in China, seeking to exert the centre's control over the content of Islam. Additionally, model sermons approved by the IAC Guidance Committee are also published bimonthly in the magazine *China Muslim,* and updated on a regular basis through websites, both the official IAC website (chinaislam.net.cn), as well as the local Xining website, Muslim online (muslimwww.com). In the paradigm of centre-periphery influence, attempts by the centre to influence the periphery may be met with a range of reactions, from active resistance through to a passive acceptance. With the desired government control of religion, any active resistance to the imposition of these 'correct' sermons would potentially be perceived as active resistance to the government. Thus, exploring how the imams of Xining view the sermons, and how they perceive the Party-State centre's influence in this area is both sensitive and challenging, particularly as a

foreign researcher. This section looks at how these sermons are viewed by imams in Xining, across the sectarian spectrum, although responses to the questions on official sermons were limited, most probably due to political sensitivity.

6.3.1   Old Teaching views of the Collection

My primary Old Teaching contact, imam #3, gave no response to questions surrounding the sermon, and exhibited little interest in the official sermons, or in discussing the role of the sermon in his mosque. It is difficult to make any categorical statements regarding Old Teaching views on the Collection.

However, my observation is that the role of the sermon in the religious life of Old Teaching Muslims is significantly less than that of other sects, and religious life is far more participatory and experiential. In observing Friday prayers in this mosque on several occasions, and participating in the celebration of various festivals (Id ul-Fitr, Fatima day and Id ul-Adha), it was clear that although there was a Friday sermon (in local dialect), it largely focused on upcoming festivals and events, and sometimes involved the group recitation of the Qur'an, or of reciting the *Maktubati*, a Sufi poem. In my interview, the imam personally expressed allegiance to Sufism, which has effectively merged with Qadim in modern Xining. He was always keen to invite me to the various activities that they held in the mosque and at the tomb complexes, at which group recitation was far more prevalent than the imam's preaching.

6.3.2   Ikhwan views of the Collection

Almost every imam interviewed in my fieldwork had received the recently published Collection, and all who offered an opinion agreed that its purpose was to provide guidance to imams that were in accord both with Islam and with the real situation of China's socialist society. It proved difficult to get beyond this generally-held, yet insipid, view.

a. Moderate Ikhwan

One of the most prominent and educated Xining imams, adhering to the moderate Ikhwan teaching school, had a fairly positive view of the Collection, even though he didn't make use of it himself. When asked if the teaching was in line with the Qur'an and *hadith* he said:

> "I haven't studied them in a detailed way, but from what I have read I don't see a problem." [#11]

His view regarding their use was interesting:

> "They are just reference material. The government doesn't say you have to use them, they just give them to you as a resource, as a reference. I might look at them, but I write my own." [#11]

He agreed that the sermons were generally targeted at the less-well educated rural imams.

Imam #15, of the moderate Ikhwan school, was actually the only respondent who admitted to using one of the published sermons. He said he was surprised to discover one sermon was so good, and was happy to use it when he was invited to speak at short notice in a rural mosque:

> "The content is good, you know. I went over to Shaanxi province once, and they asked me to speak in the mosque, so I opened the book and found a good one, with clear thinking, and I thought 'oh, this is beautiful', and directly used it." [#15]

His surprise indicates that his expectation was that the official Collection produced by the IAC was unlikely to be good, which reinforces the negative view that he and his cohort expressed earlier regarding the 'Islamic quality' and trustworthiness of the IAC in general (see chapter 5.3.2). This imam was also of the view that imams of all sectarian affiliations make use of the sermons:

> "The Old Teaching also use it…and the *santai*.* " [#15]

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* '*santai*' is a pejorative term used by other Muslims referring to members of the Salafi teaching school. The term means 'three raisers' and refers to their practice of raising their hands three times to initiate prayer, contrary to standard practice in other schools of raising hands only once.

I pressed him on this matter, seeking to discover if they used the official sermons because they must, or because they found it helpful and he insisted:

> "They use it because it is helpful." [#15]

b. Ikhwan hard-line

Hard-line imams were reticent in engaging in discussion with a foreigner about the Collection, with one imam insisting that their teaching school was effectively apolitical:

> "Regarding the government's management, or the country's policies, or the national political power, no one ever gets involved in that." [#22]

His colleague, also an imam, told me that in his view the purpose of the official sermons was:

> "…to treat unity as the most important subject, and not allow ahongs to freely and disorderly preach what they like." [#28]

Contrary to others, this imam implied quite a stringent supervision of the Religious Affairs Bureau in the content of the teaching:

> "Ten years ago you could invite others to speak on the platform, but now that is not allowed. You are not able now to change their [IAC] content…the Religious Affairs Bureau sent down orders, they said that you can't do that, because we manage the ahong's responsibility, if you teach error then we will question you." [#28]

He went on to explain that among the masses listening, if you teach on some sensitive subject:

> "…somebody will call the Religious Affairs Bureau." [#28]

This imam insisted that he writes his own sermons, not using the Collection, but:

> "I don't exceed the range of subjects that they allow, within the range I have freedom to teach. They publish the sermons with the objective of seeing continuity, and not to let you wildly teach other subjects." [#28]

The range of subjects that you are allowed to teach, and not allowed to teach he described as:

> "General subjects that emphasise the general interest [are fine], you are not allowed to teach on those subjects that could cause splittism." [#28]

A senior student in this hard-line mosque revealed that although the mosque had received a copy of the sermons:

> "We do not use it here...the content of the imam's sermon comes through his own study of the Books." [#27]

When pressed on the reason for this he said:

> "...because that collection, some of it, is not the same as our Islamic texts, such as they say, their content says that men and women are equal*, we say they cannot be equal...some places it says that men and women are equal, I have read it." [#27]

I asked why he thought there was this difference between the Islamic texts he was studying and the official sermons he had read, and he said:

> "It is Chinese influence that has entered Islam." [#27]

The hard-line Ikhwan then have a more suspicious view of the Collection, feeling that it is not in conformance with true Islam. They recognise the Party-State desire to control the sermon content, and claim to try and operate within those restrictions, realising that informants were usually within their congregation.

6.3.3   Salafi views of the Collection

Imam #32 in a Salafi mosque was unusual, in that he claimed not to have received a copy of the Collection, even though it was sent to all imams. However, he said:

> "I know about these *wa'z*, this publishing of a new collection, what is the principal reason? They direct it at Xinjiang, at the Uyghurs, the disturbances, the splittists. Some scholars in Xinjiang, when they teach the

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* Gender equality is directly taught in sermon v1.8, under the heading "*Men and Women are equal, stress the division of labour*" (*nannü pingdeng, qiangdiao fengong*) IAC Religious Affairs Guidance Committee (2013:60).

wa'z, use mentions of jihad in the Qur'an to teach this and teach that, but the China Islamic Association believe that using it this way will lead to a big conflict."

He interprets the purpose of the Collection to be one of exerting political control through Islam aimed at countering the three evils, and uses the Xinjiang example as a primary driver of this strategy. I wanted to know if he himself agreed with the exegetical content of the collection, and if he was willing to use them. His answer seemed evasive:

"We can consult them [the official sermons], but we generally consult several books and Arabic Islamic websites." [#32]

The reason for this though is not so much a disagreement with exegesis or attempted political control, but simply because:

"We have a baseline, that in the mosque we do not talk politics." [#32]

Given the socio-political focus of the majority of official sermons, it is unsurprising then that the Salafi do not make use of these sermons, regardless of their view of its exegetical rectitude. Attending the mosque on several occasions when I could listen to the Salafi sermon (which was the only sermon preached in Mandarin in Xining) confirms the apolitical focus of this mosque's teaching.

Conclusion: Party-State development of correct Islam

The above description and discussion of the work of the Guidance Committee for China Islamic Affairs is a clear demonstration of the influence of the Party-State centre on shaping Chinese Islam, an effective guided adaptation of Islam to conform with China's socialist society in accord with Party policy. Through the work of the exegetical committee of the IAC Religious Affairs Guidance Committee, the Party line has been incorporated into Chinese 'correct' Islam, and has been substantiated by a new and often creative exegesis of Islam's sacred texts. Through the IAC, this new adapted Islam has been propagated through curriculum development, education of religious personnel, official magazines, websites, and particularly through the publishing and distribution of the newly edited official

sermon collection. In these Islamic teaching has been restated in a way that follows the Party-State emphasis on the priority of subscribing to a national *Zhonghua minzu* identity, and the importance of ethnic unity, the Islamic value of patriotism and consequent submission to serving the homeland, and to pursuing a moderate, tolerant, harmonious, 'middle-way' Islam that is opposed to extremism, terrorism and splittism. These new emphases are presented by the Party-State as fully in line with orthodox Islam, and in line with the history of localization of Islam to a given context. It is a clear utilization of Islam to encourage the incorporation of Muslims into the national identity, and to strengthen the commitment of Muslims to serving the Party-State's national interests. It also serves to weaken the prominence of a religious identity, and to seek to guard against the perceived negative, foreign forces aimed at destabilising China. It is a powerful example of identity politics, and demonstrates a clear attempt to influence the Hui identity.

It is important to see, however, that there has been a bidirectional, mutual influence here. Not only has Chinese Islam been affected by adaptation to socialist society, but the ideology of the Party-State has likewise apparently adapted, certainly in terms of the vocabulary used. Though officially having freedom of religious belief, the Party-State persists in an ideology that believes in the eventual eradication of religion as a social force, yet it has adapted its policy to allow and even promote theistic teaching, such as humanity's common descent from one created ancestor; the importance of belief in the afterlife to shape your conduct in this life; even the priority of submitting to Allah as your one Lord, all of which could be seen to be in conflict with official Party ideology. The Party-State has also adapted how policy is implemented in different ethnoreligious contexts, being generally more lenient in enforcing the rule of law among the Hui than among other Muslim minorities, particularly the Uyghur. Clearly, adaptation is a bidirectional phenomenon.

Although the Party-State influence on the content of official Islam is clear, it remains the case that significant Hui religious leaders in Xining continue to look to the various centres of perceived Islamic orthodoxy for their primary sources of education, with students from all over China increasing at various international Islamic universities in Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Pakistan and Malaysia. The teaching of

Islam in China certainly seems to continue to be strongly influenced by a notional Islamic centre. When examining whether rising Islamic identity is more generated as a reaction to the external pressure of the Party-State, or as an endogenously produced phenomenon influenced by an Islamic centre, we do need to consider what is meant by an endogenous phenomenon. Endogenous in this study means intrinsic to an Islamic community, and external means extrinsic to an Islamic community. The shaping of the internal Islamic community we can see is heavily influenced by the Party-State through the agency of the IAC, but in addition there is the external pressure of wanting to conform to the orthodox standard promoted by various segments of the Islamic World. I will show in the next chapter that the differing responses of imams, students and everyday Hui to the officially promoted correct Islam are shaped significantly by their allegiance to a particular sect, which result from a concurrent external pressure exerted by the Islamic centre.

Chapter Seven: The Islamic Centre of Influence – National and Ethnic Identity

The Party-State centre of influence promotes a national *Zhonghua minzu* identity, seeking to bind the Chinese people together as one nation-state under the leadership of the Party (Tsang 2015: 12-14). Affirming the full inclusion of all China's people in this one great family is the dominant Party discourse, and represents a particular conception of state-nationalism, one which defines the nation as a territorial-political unit that gathers citizens of a given territory (Zhao 2004: 26). One challenge that the Party-State faces is to resist a potential growing ethnic-nationalism by ensuring that the common national identity is a stronger unifying force than either ethnic identification as Hui, or religious identification as Muslim. Either of these alternatives, which we may consider as ethnic nationalism in the first case, and religious *ummah* identity in the second, would be antithetical to the Party-State's ideological position, and viewed as influenced by one of the 'three evil forces' (*sangu shili*) warned against by former President Hu Jintao in 2004 (Yuan 2010: 856), namely separatism, extremism and terrorism (Davis 2008: 18).

If the Party-State, through the adapted Islam described in the previous two chapters, seeks to influence the Hui in their conception of national identity, what is the concomitant influence that the theorised 'glocal'[*] Islamic centre has on shaping questions of identity and loyalty? The Hui have always been located between the Chinese state and the international Islamic community. The central question of this thesis seeks to understand the relative influence of the conceptualised twin centres – on the one hand the Party-State, and on the other the global Islamic community. In order to explore what I hypothesise to be the dominant influence, the influence of Islam on the understanding of identity by Hui people needs to be assessed. In order to understand Islamic influence, interviewees were selected that represent each of the main teaching schools or sects of Xining Islam: Qadim, Sufi, Ikhwan and Salafi. Chapter three explained the different origins and development of these sectarian expressions of Islam, and demonstrated the various international Islamic influences on these sects, together with discussion of the

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[*] This neologism was coined to represent the influence of globalization on a local context (Visser 2011).

indigenous influence of a sinicised Islam. What influence does polycentric Islam have on shaping the Hui understanding of their identity? This section examines the attitudes to identity that the Hui reflect back in the interviews, and seeks to describe how in their interaction with the Party-State message, their particular sectarian understanding of Islam shapes their understanding of identity.

I showed in chapter four that the strengthening of a national identity was seen as essential to counter the much-feared tendency towards secession. Through constructing and seeking to enforce a *Zhonghua minzu* national identity, and then encouraging Hui to see this national identity as their own primary identity, the feared fragmentation or schism of China's strategically placed minorities would be avoided. It is also ideologically necessary from a Party-State perspective to ensure that the Muslim religious identity of the Hui does not become the dominant identity category; that is, that their belonging to a global community of faith (often referred to as the *ummah*), is not their primary identity. Wang Jianping claims that:

> "The sentiment of *umma* links otherwise disparate Muslim communities
> together as they all strive to survive in a non-Muslim society" (Wang 2015:
> 154).

Such a unifying sentiment generates fears in the Party of pan-national Islamic movements, religious extremism, Islamic terrorism, and separatist movements influenced by co-religionists in neighbouring countries, and are seen as a potential threat to the integrity of the Chinese nation. For the Party-State, ethnic unity must not be understood in any way as meaning religious unity. It is thus highly important to the Party-State that a national loyalty to the Chinese nation needs to take precedence over any religious loyalty to the people of Islam, either at a regional, national or transnational level.

In the next two chapters I will move from a focus on defining the influence exerted by the Party-State centre to examining how the various Islamic centres of influence, manifested through the sectarian diversity of Xining Islam, interact with this State-directed and politically-focused correct Islam. I will especially focus on how grass-roots Islamic teaching and belief both influences and shapes the Hui people's sense of identity. In this chapter I will look at the question of national and

ethnic identity, and how grass-roots Hui negotiate that identity, situated as they are between the twin influences of the Islamic centre and the Party-State. Chapter eight will consider how the question of national loyalty and patriotism are negotiated, relative to an Islamically-prior religious Muslim identity.

The evidence below is presented tiered according to sectarian allegiance, since in every interview it was apparent that identification along sectarian lines is still dominant within the Hui community. This sectarian identification is so strong and, as I contend in this thesis, so significant in influencing how the Hui construct their identity relative to Party-State influence, that these two chapters on glocal Islamic centre influence need to be examined on sectarian lines. The way in which the different sects interact with the question of ethnic identity is shaped by the content of the teaching of that group, which represents different, though not necessarily opposing, Islamic centres of influence.

7.1   National Identity: *Zhonghua minzu* versus *Huizu* identities

The education of the Chinese public on ethnic affairs and ethnic policy is the core theme of the CCP's Central Propaganda (or Publicity) Department (*Zhongxuanbu*) (Brady 2012b: 161). Propaganda themes aim to be largely proactive, seeking to educate the populace and shape society, so the promotion of the 'one family of the Chinese nation', the *Zhonghua minzu,* aims to define the primary identity of all the people of China. The integrity and historicity of the ethnic identity of the Hui has also been likewise promoted since the identification campaigns of the 1950s (Mullaney 2011), and this ethnic identity has been strengthened by the favourable policies (*youhui zhengce*) extended towards Hui in the current ethnic policy of the People's Republic of China (Sautman 2012: 154-158).

In the analysis of the ethnic question in chapter six, I stated that the most common Qur'anic verse referenced in the official sermons, occurring eight times, was Surah 49:13.

> "O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations (*minzu*) and tribes (*zongzu*), that ye may know each other, (not that ye may despise each other)."

It was also quoted in several of the key grass-roots interviews (#2 and #30 for example). But, as I discussed in chapter two, the relative ambivalence of the Qur'an on ethnic, racial and tribal identity leaves room for interpretation and some identity-negotiation. The rise of Islamic reformism in the nineteenth century allowed for a new compatibility of Islam with modern ideas and institutions (Esposito 1998: 34), such as the concurrent emergence of the nation-state (Belkeziz 2009: 9-10). This development allowed for a new emphasis on national identity for Muslims living in both Muslim-majority states and, to a degree, in non-Muslim majority states (Chen 2014: 43). However, since any given social identity has to be made to matter (chapter two), and it is the case that from a Party-State perspective national identity trumps all others, what then is to be made of a Hui ethnic identity? May we suspect that the Hui have the same attitude as Wali Khan, the doyen of Pashtun nationalism (Parekh 2008: 58), and say that they have only been Hui for 60 years (since the ethnic identification campaigns), Chinese for 110 years (since the Xinhai revolution) and Muslim for 1,400 years (since the Hui trace their ancestral lineage back to Arabian traders in the earliest Islamic period).

This section examines how the various Islamic sects in Xining generate and influence attitudes and beliefs to the question of national identity, particularly looking at the national *Zhonghua minzu* identity, and examining if and when it is preferred to the ethnic *Huizu* identity.

7.1.1 Old Teaching (Qadim and Sufi)

Qadim is the retrospectively used term for the original Islam that entered China more than a thousand years ago. The Qadim emphasise their long history as Muslims living in China, and their legends and folklore demonstrate a strong identification with being Chinese (Li 1994: 237-249). Some of the older interviewees support the official narrative of Hui ethnogenesis, identifying the formation of their ethnicity at the point their Arabian and Persian forefathers intermarried, as family head #6 said:

> "Chinese Hui themselves were descended from Arabian people who
> intermarried with Chinese, and after marrying there arose a new *minzu*."

Chinese Sufi groups, in Xining now largely incorporated in an Old Teaching identity with the Qadim, likewise trace their lineage back more than three hundred years, and have so assimilated to Chinese Confucian culture as to comfortably identify as Chinese. Thus, the Old Teaching has reinforced a contextualised Islam with a strong Chinese Confucian cultural identity, and so respondents from this group may be expected to demonstrate minimal equivocation on the question of primary identity, fully embracing a Chinese identity. The interviews do indeed demonstrate a strong Chinese identity, but it is usually expressed as a dual identity, both Muslim and Chinese, a bicultural identity without seeming to preference, or even distinguish either.

No respondent directly identified as *Zhonghua minzu*, nor raised that as a national identity, but there was a strong identification with being Chinese (*Zhongguoren)*, often expressed as a bicultural identity as Chinese Hui, as respondent #6 said above. A further example of bicultural identity was given by student #4, who said:

> "I am a Muslim, but I am also a Chinese person, there is no contradiction…in China there are many people who are descendants of old Muslim immigrants, their ancestors were Muslims; but there are also a lot who after believing in Islam in China became Muslims."

It is noteworthy that he did not identify himself as Hui, but simply said there was no contradiction in his dual identity as Muslim and Chinese. He was able to see that although there are many who had a strong link with the past migratory community, this did not affect their Chinese identity. Equally, he says, there are many who had became Muslims in China, and could thus trace their ancestry to some Chinese line. Neither of these two ancestral origins, Muslim immigrant or ancient Chinese lineage, seemed to cause an identity bias in favour either of Muslim or Hui over a national Chinese identity.

Imam #3 had a slightly different nuance to his self-identification, and identified as both Hui and Muslim:

> "I am Hui…my father was a fervent Muslim, so we are Hui, Muslims and followers of Islam…although I was a Muslim Hui my contact with Islam was very little."

It is clear that Hui and Muslim are both core identities for this imam, but significantly, being "*Muslim Hui*" for him was not an identity that necessarily required contact with Islam, it was more like an inherited identity, not a personal faith-based identity.

This traditional understanding of identity as Chinese and simultaneously Muslim or Hui (Muslim and Hui being terms often used interchangeably by Old Teaching respondents) seems to mark the more traditional Old Teaching groups. The strength of Chinese identity was further demonstrated in the comment by respondent #6:

> "As far as we are concerned we are common citizens, we 'old hundred names' *(lao bai xing)."*

"*Old hundred names*" is an idiomatic Chinese expression that refers to the ordinary, common people; it takes its meaning from the fact that a large percentage of the population share the same most common surnames. Such an identification demonstrates the core identity of this respondent as fully belonging to the Chinese people. Old Teaching respondents in particular seem to express a strongly-held, shared historical identification with the people of China, and consider Chinese history (at least since the Song dynasty) as their own history, as imam #3 explained:

> "It's like the Chinese Great Wall…this gives our country and her later people valuable treasure."

He not only refers to 'our' country, but claims the cultural symbols of a Chinese identity as his own.

So although the evidence is somewhat limited, a tentative summary is that Old Teaching respondents demonstrate a clear identification as Chinese, expressed as belonging to the country and in sharing its history, even though *Zhonghua minzu* was not an assumed identity. There was no expressed sense of contradiction in their conception of bicultural identity as Muslims and Chinese, and although there was some conflation between the term Hui and Muslim for one of the interviewees, the ethnic category Hui was a stated component of that bicultural identity. They

adopt a bicultural Chinese Hui or Chinese Muslim identity which in their view belongs very much to China's historical heritage.

7.1.2 Moderate Ikhwan

The Ikhwan are seen to be favoured by the Party-State in the literature, with many references to their patriotism, to their dominance in the China Islamic Association, and to the fact that their initial reforms of Islam were tailored down to incorporate a degree of nationalism entirely consistent with the development of the nation-state (Chérif-Chebbi 2004: 68-70). This perception of State approval of the dual identity of the Ikhwan as Muslim and Chinese is common and typical in the literature, but my research revealed a major fracture within the Ikhwan between those known as hard-line Ikhwan (*qiangyingpai*), who are dedicated to retaining the original reformism that Ma Wanfu brought back in 1898 and established in Xining in the warlord period, and those known as moderate Ikwhan (*wenhepai*) who are accused by hard-liners of embracing aspects of Wahhabi reformism. As Old Teaching family head #6 said:

> "Ikhwan hard-liners are those that advocate Ikhwan, following Ma Wanfu...the moderates advocate Ikhwan evolving from Wahhabism – they say that there is no Ikhwan sect in the world, but there is Wahhabism which has been around for over two hundred years."

The evidence in these two chapters is divided between these two sub-sects of Ikhwan, as the Islamic influence between them is remarkably different. This section considers the moderate Ikhwan.

Imam #16, when asked about his primary identity answered:

> "Although we are a minority people, yet everyone is part of one family, a member of the *Zhonghua minzu*...we have the feeling of belonging to a family. Although our faith is not the same, yet because you are Han and your population is the largest, you take these small ethnic groups all with a broad way of thinking and say we are all one family, we are many brothers...this is a kind of ethnic progress – tolerance is progress isn't it? So yes, everyone can come, you believe in your faith, but we all identify as *Zhonghua*

minzu…we seek common ground on major issues while reserving differences on minor ones."

He was one of only two respondents to refer to the *Zhonghua minzu* identity, and it was noteworthy that his expression was almost identical to official government policy: one family, many ethnic groups, but one overriding national identity as *Zhonghua minzu*. Although this imam did not hold senior office in the China Islamic Association, nor in the Religious Affairs Bureau, yet he easily used the Party-State formulation of official national identity.

However, as I conducted several interviews with different moderate Ikhwan imams and students, what became apparent was that he was an exception. Other respondents used neither *Zhonghua minzu* nor *Huizu* as a primary category of identification. In fact, moderate Ikhwan respondents rarely used *Huizu* as a category of identity at all, unless referring to identity at an institutional level, such as when talking to junior imam #14 about the ethnic composition of the ethnic affairs department:

> "[The Ethnic Affairs Office Islam Bureau] is not all Hui, though there are Hui, there are also other ethnicities."

University student #17 also referred to *Huizu* at an institutional level, when he talked about the way universities use ethnic identity to accommodate religious differences:

> "In Chinese universities [students] are still divided according to *minzu*. They cannot reckon you as Muslim, but they can reckon you as *Huizu*."

He illustrates here a challenge for the Party-State in preferring an ethnic identity over a religious identity; there is no provision at university for the requirements of faith, but the requirements of ethnic culture can be accommodated. Islam is seen officially as a component of the customs and habits of the Hui, among other minorities. I return to this challenge of religious versus ethnic identity in the next chapter. For unprompted self-identification, respondents from the moderate Ikhwan always seem to prefer the self-referent 'Muslim', whether 'Chinese Muslim'

or 'China Muslim', or 'Xining Muslim'. For example, imam #10 said at our very first meeting:

> "I think, whether as a Muslim or as a Chinese person (*Zhongguoren*), I should be kind to you."

Imam #16's primary way of self-identifying was to say:

> "I say I am a Qinghai person, I am from Xining, I am in East District man, but this must never influence my being a Muslim…we Chinese Muslims, what we are is those Muslims who retain Chinese culture."

So although in #16's initial statement earlier in the section he referred to the national identity of *Zhonghua minzu*, yet his standard identification is bicultural, with 'Chinese Muslim' defined as a "*Muslim who retains Chinese culture.*"

Imam #10 seems to agree regarding biculturality:

> "In my opinion the Chinese Muslim has two identities, he is a Chinese Muslim and I think these two kinds of civilisations…are very close."

Imam #12 self-identified as a citizen of China:

> "We are born in China, we are China's citizens, this is especially the case since the Republic of China days; Mr Sun Zhongshan promoted Han, Man, Meng, Hui and Zang – the unity of the five peoples…afterwards the People's Republic of China expanded it to fifty-six peoples, fifty-six people who are all brothers, are one family."

He incorporates being a citizen of China, some conception of *minzu* difference, and the crucial 'one family' ideology. He went on to describe:

> "When Islam entered China Muslims were few and Han were many…Han and Hui intermarried, Muslims married Han girls." [#12]

It is interesting that the ethnic category Hui is used only once in the above examples, for it would make complete sense if we were to substitute it for Muslim in each case. Why did imams #10 and #16 so frequently use the identity Muslim rather than Hui? Is there a conflation of the two categories of identity, retained

from the time before Liberation when *Huijiao* was the term used for Islam (Gladney 1991: 97; Wan 2012: 41)? Certainly imam #12 seems to use Hui and Muslim in the same sense above – "*Han and Hui intermarried, Muslims married Han girls.*" This perpetuated conflation of ethnic and religious identity may be significant in that it perhaps diminishes the acceptance of ethnic category by the moderate Ikhwan, for they continue to use Hui to mean Muslim. This will be discussed further in chapter eight.

Moderate Ikhwan respondents, unlike the Old Teaching, recognise and occasionally quote the Party-State formulation of belonging to one national identity, the *Zhonghua minzu*. Despite the recognition of belonging to a common homeland, and a use of the word Chinese as part of a bicultural identity, their responses do indicate a stronger preference for Muslim as their primary self-identity. They recognise that the identities Hui and Muslim were different categories of identity historically, but they do not generally self-identify as ethnic Hui, and continue to use Hui to mean Muslim in some cases. This emphasis on a strong Muslim identity characterises the moderate Ikhwan, and reflects the influence of a strong Scriptural literalist Islam, similar to the Salafiyya, and perhaps with similar international influences.

7.1.3   Hard-line Ikhwan

The hard-line Ikhwan are those seen to be committed to continuing the original reforms of Ma Wanfu. They are staunchly resistant to the influence of Wahhabism, and self-identify as substantially different from the moderate Ikhwan, whom they believe to have departed from the Ikwhan teaching, and embraced Wahhabism. In an unguarded moment hard-line student #27 expressed this division as:

> "They [the moderates] also say they are Ikhwan, but they and the Ikhwan sect are incompatible."

In the hard-line interviews, the Party-State official prescription of *Zhonghua minzu* was not mentioned, though there was recognition of belonging to the 'big family' (*da jiating*), for instance, imam #28 said:

> "Xi Jinping's request is for unity among the fifty-six *minzu* – the big family – for the sake of national development."

Similarly, respondent #23 said:

> "Every *minzu* is part of one big family, the fifty-six *minzu* are brothers and sisters."

Yet neither of them identified as Chinese or as *Zhonghua minzu*, but only as Muslim, and interestingly as *Huizu*:

> "But we *Huizu* think that we *Huizu* are OK, and the Salar are OK – on the surface we look united." [#28]

In interviews with hard-line Ikhwan there were few references to a Chinese national identity. One instance was interview #26, who said:

> "When we meet to pray everyone teaches that we Chinese Muslims have taken a heavy burden of responsibility; therefore we say that Islam struggles between the Chinese oriental culture clash and the western culture clash."

His response was one of the rare uses of a bicultural identification among the hard-line Ikhwan, and indicates his understanding of centre-periphery civilisational influence, identifying a Chinese cultural centre, and a western cultural centre as competing centres of influence.

A second instance of hard-line identification with being Chinese was interview #25, an older man who said:

> "Our ancestors were Chinese…as far as we Chinese are concerned…we are Qinghai people, but we Hui people our faith came from Saudi Arabia western countries."

He also asserts a bicultural identity, as historically Chinese, yet also identifies as Hui.

Despite these two exceptions, there is a noticeable increase in the frequency of the use of the identity 'Huizu' as a self-referent among hard-line Ikhwan as compared to that among moderate Ikhwan. There is also a preference for simply identifying as 'Muslim', and a reduction in bicultural identifications, demonstrated in the following interview responses:

> "On the whole, as far as we *Huizu*, that is as far as we Muslims are concerned…we Muslims in China really emphasise national education." [#22]

> "What should we Muslims be concerned about in our life? Our dream is to win Allah's joy – this is our Muslim dream." [#28]

> "Our *Huizu*, our Muslim dream, is to accept the teachings of Islam, which is our faith." [#25]

All of these responses indicate the increase in the use of Hui as a self-referent by hard-line Ikhwan, more often than by any other sectarian group, as well as a strong identification as Muslim. There is also evidence of a belief in the existence of a historical origin for *Huizu* identity in Xining, rather than the belief that it is a more recent construct. For instance:

> "The Hui with more than one thousand years of Chinese culture made mistakes in certain areas…" [#21]

Referring to the late Qing Hehuang rebellion (see chapter 3.3.1), imam #22 recalled:

> "They [government soldiers] forced the *Huizu* to move into the *Beiguan* mosque…when the soldiers saw you were *Huizu* they would stick out pig snouts at you…"

Both responses indicate an acceptance of a historical Hui ethnoreligious identity, rather than believing it to be a post-Liberation Communist Party construct.

Respondent #23 believes Hui ethnic identity is growing in strength:

"This [Hui] identity is getting stronger and stronger. A *minzu*'s strength is reflected in its level of knowledge and culture…after reform and opening relatively many of us Xining Muslims were in business and those studying culture or religious knowledge were quite few…so our ethnic realisation was relatively weak."

But now he says, after they have learned more about Islam:

"Our quality has continuously improved and naturally we are flourishing." [#23]

I highlighted in the previous section some support for the idea that many Muslim people in Xining commonly conflate the identity of being Muslim with Hui, but this is much less common among the hard-line Ikhwan. Imam #22 said:

"There are non-Muslim Hui, but as far as our Xining is concerned, basically if you are *Huizu* you are Muslim, and if a Muslim then a Hui. But in the interior…they say they are *Huizu*, but they are not necessarily Muslim…their ethnicity is Hui, but they have no Islamic faith at all."

This both distinguishes between ethnic and religious categories of identity, as well as allowing for a non-believing Hui identity. The converse is also recognised, that there are other Islamic peoples in China, so that the conflation of Hui and Muslim is less common in this group:

"The Hui are a *minzu*, those that believe in Islam are not all *Huizu*." [#28]

One of the potential identity markers of different Hui communities is the differing styles of architecture employed in mosque construction. One hard-line mosque imam, #22, when talking about mosque architecture for his planned rebuild, said:

"We think we will maintain the Chinese traditional style, because following a very Arabian style is unnecessary, we ought to have our own ancient Chinese style and retain it…if we rebuild, this prayer hall will be retained in its ancient architecture Chinese style."

Dru Gladney believes Chinese-style temple architecture is preferred by the Old Teaching, and newer Arabian-style mosques preferred by the New Teaching

(Gladney 1999: 127; Gladney 2008: 188-189). Others see this difference less as indicative of sectarian differences, but more generally related to the rising Arabization of Chinese Islam (Gillette 2000: 98, 113). However, my observations in Xining in the past decade refute the idea that Old Teaching prefer Chinese style and New Teaching prefer Arabic style. Qadim, moderate Ikhwan and Salafi mosques alike were rebuilt during this period in a more Persian or Arabic style, as Figure 7.1 indicates.

Imam #22 reveals a strong identification with a Chinese form of Islam, strengthening the impression that his identity is significantly different from both the Qadim and the moderate Ikhwan. My suggestion is that the actual situation with regard to the Ikhwan hard-line group's rejection of Arab-style mosques is more likely to be a rejection of Arab influence, associated with Wahhabism, that motivates them to retain their own Chinese style. It is as if they are saying – 'we are Muslim, but we are not Arab, Wahhabi Muslims; indeed, we are Chinese'. As the imam goes on to say:

    "They have their uniqueness and we have ours." [#22]

This implies the common belief among hard-line Ikhwan that there is no need for them to conform to the standards and norms of Saudi Arabian Islam, and they in fact resist this international Islamic influence, preferring a Chinese reformist Islam associated with historical memory of Ma Wanfu.

So in summary it appears that a stronger ethnic Hui identity is readily admitted by hard-line respondents than either Old Teaching Qadim and Sufi (who accept the historical designation, but don't primarily identify this way) or moderate Ikhwan respondents (who largely conflate that Hui identity with Muslim), and the strength and preference for a Muslim identity appears to be equally expressed between both branches of the Ikhwan. This Muslim identity though is strongly Chinese in its influence for the hard-line Ikhwan, and absolutely rejecting of any perceived Wahhabi Arabian influence. This fierce opposition to Wahhabism becomes clearer in the following sections.

Figure 7.1: Changing Mosque Architecture

Photo 1: Yangjiazhuang mosque (Qadim), 2009 – Chinese style

Photo 2: Yangjiazhuang mosque, 2013 – rebuilt in Arabian style

Photo 3: Nanguan mosque (Ikhwan), 2009 – Chinese style

Photo 4: Nanguan mosque, 2014 - rebuilt in Arabian style

Photo 5: Shulinxiang mosque (Salafi), 2010

Photo 6: Shulinxiang mosque, 2015 – rebuilt in Arabian style

7.1.4 Salafi

The Salafiyya are described in the literature as largely apolitical, primarily concerned with calling Muslims back to the early ancestral teaching of their faith, and less interested in matters of state (Gladney 1999: 105). This would suggest that matters regarding the construction of a national identity, and a focus on an ethnic identity would be ignored, or at least overlooked. In Xining the Salafis interviewed indeed do have a much stronger and exclusive identity reference as Muslim, and preference that over any national or ethnic identity. They are also unhappy with any sectarian appellation, and commonly express themselves thus:

"I am 100% Chinese and 100% Muslim." [#31]

They see no contradiction in this statement, since in their view these are two different kinds of identity. They do not use a bicultural identity category, such as Chinese Muslim, when self-identifying, and although they do readily accept a national identity as 'Chinese', they do so with some degree of theological reluctance since they believe:

"The world is not anyone's, the world is Allah's, countries divided into territories are thus divided by men - this is all men's work and of no need. Of course the world is organised this way, but without national divisions mankind would get on better. The Qur'an says, 'O mankind! We created you from a single pair of a male and a female…and made you into different *minzu* and different tribes that you may know each other.'" [#30]

Here the imam interviewed refers to the Qur'anic surah 49:13, popular in IAC publications. However, unlike the exegesis applied by the IAC Guidance Committee looked at in chapter six (page 172) which uses this verse as the foundation of a Qur'anic mandate for unity, the Salafi prefer to firmly separate their national and religious identity:

"We should take our faith and our nation and separate the concepts." [#30]

"At the national level of course I am Chinese, because I live in that part of the world called China and I love this place… I breathe the air here, I eat the fruit here…from an internal perspective I really enjoy it. But this is not faith

– my faith, this is Islam, this is the other aspect and we can say this must not be separated." [#30]

This is the basis for the apolitical approach of the Salafi. All political and identity categorizations are from man, not from Allah. The only two categories of identity they are prepared to accept are the brotherhood of humanity, and the brotherhood of Islam.

> "We can say that all believers in Allah are brothers in a special sense...in a broad sense from a human perspective where all men have the same ancestors in Adam and Eve, from this perspective we are all brothers." [#30]

The pan-nationalism that such a perspective can encourage is a clear concern of the Party-State regarding this Islamic influence. However, among the Salafi, there seems to be a pragmatic acceptance of the political world:

> "In the mosque we do not talk politics, in the mosque we only talk about Muslim Islamic teaching...because we are in China's big family, we *Huizu* are good, and the Uyghurs are good, each is a member of China's big family – we live in this kind of country and we love our country." [#32]

There is also a de-emphasis on ethnic identity:

> "I feel whether you are a *Huizu* or not is not important, the most important is whether you are a Muslim or not." [#30]

I will show in the next chapter that through the prioritising and preferring of the Muslim category of identity over a national or ethnic category, and the possible pan-national sentiment, the Salafi have been seen as suspicious to the Party-State, and perhaps as a threat to the national unity project, despite their apolitical stance. The fact that they were given permission to rebuild their Xining mosque in 2012 to a dominant structure from a humble, hidden building to accommodate a growing Salafi congregation, demonstrates that the government are not actually threatened by rising Salafism (See Figure 7.1 Photos 5 and 6).

Summary of National vs Hui identity

The representatives interviewed from each of the different sects have a nuanced way of thinking about national and ethnic identity. The Old Teaching, with a strong Chinese Islamic influence derived from the contextualisation work of the Han Kitab scholars, see no contradiction between being Chinese and Muslim; in fact they exhibit a fully integrated Chinese Muslim identity, and rarely refer to the ethnic category of *Huizu*. The Ikhwan are not united. The moderate sect expressed some bicultural identity as Muslim and Chinese, but rarely referred to themselves as Hui, preferring a religious identity of Muslim. The hard-line Ikhwan demonstrated a stronger preference for their Chinese heritage, emphasising the continuity with a Chinese past, and strongly resisting anything they perceived as Wahhabi influence, whether architecture, teaching resources, or even being led in the community prayers by anyone other than their own imams. They demonstrate a strong affinity with the ethnic category Hui, a fact related to their acceptance of their Chinese heritage, and have largely rejected much international influence as inextricably bound to international Wahhabism, which they are firmly opposed to. The Salafi expressed the strongest preference for a Muslim religious identity as primary, and largely rejected what they considered to be man-made appellations such as Hui or Chinese, yet clearly wanted to separate these categories of identity from a religious identity that is primary.

What was abundantly clear was that although most Hui respondents identified with some national identity of being Chinese, only two moderate Ikhwan respondents readily identified as *Zhonghua minzu,* and although each group made reference to belonging to the 'big family of ethnicities' this had not translated into an acceptance of *Zhonghua minzu* as a primary identity. Additionally, most respondents would refer to themselves far more readily as Muslim, and only the hard-line group seemed to use the self-appellation *Huizu* with any degree of readiness. The influence of the Islamic centre on national identity formation appears more significant than the promoted Party-State influence.

7.2   Ethnic Unity: inter-ethnic unity

Despite the strong emphasis on ethnic unity (*minzu tuanjie*) in the Party-State propaganda narrative, the ambiguity of the term in Chinese allows it to be understood in two distinctively different ways. Bulag (among others) shows that it can be seen as a 'national unity', or as an 'amity between nationalities' (Bulag 2002: 12). In my fieldwork I experienced what Dru Gladney noted, that the phrase *minzu tuanjie* is often understood as 'nationality unity', that is, a unity within a given ethnic group (intra-ethnic unity), rather than 'united nationalities', a unity between ethnic groups (inter-ethnic unity) (Gladney 1991: 313).

In this and the following section I interrogate the Hui understanding of ethnic unity (*minzu tuanjie)* to discover if the Hui men interviewed in Xining think of unity more as inter-ethnic unity (stronger multi-ethnic unity), or more as intra-ethnic unity (stronger Hui ethnic unity). An understanding of *minzu tuanjie* as inter-ethnic unity demonstrates a congruence with the Party-State intention, perhaps a positive response to the influence of the Party-State, that is, a commitment to the national multi-ethnic *Zhonghua minzu* identity. Understanding unity more as an intra-ethnic unity is somewhat at odds with the current official Party-State line, and could represent one of two alternatives. It could firstly be an example of the growing ethno-nationalism that critics of the current ethnic policy identify as a key weakness of current ethnic policy (see chapter 4.1.2), so that the emphasis becomes a stronger sense of commitment to the Hui ethnicity. Alternatively, it could be that a certain Islamic influence has led to intra-ethnic being reinterpreted as intra-Muslim, and thus a strong Muslim solidarity is promoted by *minzu tuanjie*. The propaganda posters that pervade the main Muslim east district in Xining all reinforce the Party-State influence in reinforcing ethnic unity (see Figure 7.2), strongly promoting China's dream of ethnic unity and harmony with a variety of slogans. The intention of the Party-State is clear, yet the various sects differ in their promotion of ethnic unity, and in their adherents' understanding. This section will consider inter-ethnic unity as it is reflected across the sectarian spectrum, and the following section will look at intra-ethnic unity.

Figure 7.2: Propaganda Posters in East District, Xining, 2014-2015

1. The Party is Good, the People are Happy

2. China's Dream: Unity and Harmony

3. China's Dream: Ethnic Affection

4. With all your strength press on to build Chengdong district ethnic unity advance zone: "Three Can't Leaves" thought

5. Zhonghua minzu unite as one family

6. Earnestly press on to build East district ethnic unity advance zone

7.2.1 Old Teaching

In the courtyard of the Old Teaching mosque (*Yangjiazhuang*), while observing the first Friday prayers of Ramadan 2014, I asked about the ambiguity inherent in the expression *minzu tuanjie*, did it mean inter-ethnic unity, or intra-ethnic unity? My respondents laughed (as if indicating they knew they were simply giving the 'right' answer), and said:

> "It is the unity of the fifty-six ethnicities." [#9]

Despite this reiteration of the Party line, in the remainder of the interviews with Old Teaching respondents, from imams to shaykhs to students and family heads, no support, nor even any mention of what could be seen as inter-ethnic unity was directly made. Occasionally, whenever reference to other ethnic groups was made, it was almost always done positively, and the emphasis was on respect and mutual non-interference, as Sufi leader #2 said:

> "As far as we Qadiriyya are concerned, the Qur'an says 'O people, I made you male and female and made you many tribes and religions, you should mutually respect each other and exist peacefully'. This is the Qur'an's stipulation you know - no matter what ethnicity or what religion, we should respect them."

This further use of Surah 49:13 by a leader to emphasise unity in support of tolerance and respect for other tribes and religions is noteworthy, particularly so since he misquotes the verse, which does not mention mutual respect and peaceful co-existence, but simply that 'ye may know each other'. This extension of meaning to reflect the Party-State position is perhaps evidence of the strength of the influence of correct Islam.

Posters and wall murals proliferate throughout the East district of Xining (Figure 7.2, Photos 1-3), including several posters focused on ethnic unity located inside the courtyards of all mosques (Figure 7.2, photos 4-6). I was concerned to explore the impact that such Party-State propaganda had on the people, and whether they felt it had shaped their understanding of identity.

Regarding how some of this propaganda is viewed, student #4 said:

> "They have an unobtrusive influence...but when you see them from young to old and you keep seeing them, naturally after you grow up you will approve of their viewpoint and won't oppose it...these slogans are not in any contradiction with Islam."

The common disregard for the impact of propaganda was also reflected by respondents of other sects, such as moderate Ikhwan student #17:

> "I don't know if you understand the success of this kind of education, or the size of its influence, but it is not as great as you seem to think...it is a bit of a joke."

It is difficult from this evidence to conclude one way or another what the Party-State influence is through this kind of propaganda; the first respondent would seem to suggest a subconscious influence and shaping of opinion, the second an awareness and resistance to that influence.

The fairly scant evidence suggests that the concern of the Old Teaching is to present themselves as Chinese-influenced Muslims, supportive of official policy and not involved in inter-ethnic criticism or conflict. Although no mention of inter-ethnic unity was made, there was a strong emphasis made on the value of mutual respect between ethnic groups and between religions. It is likely that this emphasis derives from the defensiveness evident among Old Teaching adherents, since they are the recipients of the most frequent sectarian criticism, as their Islamic practice is most aggressively attacked as being heterodox.

7.2.2 Moderate Ikhwan

The Ikhwan was a modernist, reformist movement in Chinese Islam, a movement seeking to overcome the perceived stagnation of Islam in China, through the removal of Chinese cultural accretions from the faith, as well as by introducing concepts and adaptation to the modern age of the nation-state. It is therefore not surprising that the Ikhwan are seemingly much more engaged in the discussion of ethnic unity and the building of a national identity. However, there are evident

differences between the moderate and hard-line Ikhwan views. This section focuses on the moderate Ikhwan's attitude to inter-ethnic unity.

Imam #16 is vocally supportive of ethnic unity in the context of establishing the *Zhonghua minzu* identity, and also considers *minzu tuanjie* to be an inter-ethnic unity, and as essential to establishing national identity:

> "This [*minzu tuanjie*] was promoted as great *minzu* unification – the *Zhonghua minzu* great unity…Previously ethnic difference was between ethnicities and the mutual exclusion was intense. It was, 'you are Han so I am not with you, will not study your culture, and am not even willing to be in contact with you', it was this way. So in modern China with her fifty-six ethnicities, if everyone said they would not talk to each other it would be unacceptable, so they promoted the great unity of the *Zhonghua minzu*, that each *minzu* should unite with each other."

As with his response on the question of national identity in section 7.1.2 above, imam #16 very much quotes the Party-line.

Imam #11 begins his response with a support for the brotherhood of humanity, under which rubric, in his opinion, inter-ethnic unity fits well:

> " [The Muslims'] Islam tells them that all people are one clan, have one ancestry, have one Creator, everyone is Adam's descendant and ought to be brothers and sisters."

When asked about the reason for the recent rising ethnic identity, moderate Ikhwan imam #11 directly related it to ethnic policy:

> "Ethnic policy and economic development are connected. The policy enabled ethnicities to strongly value their own culture and promote their own culture. After economic development peoples' lives are better and…they can value ethnic things…before the Cultural Revolution and Reform and Opening they could not manage to keep warm and well fed, so they considered their culture much less."

He was able to see that all ethnicities were enabled to value their own ethnicity and promote their own culture, and to value ethnic things, no longer being primarily concerned simply with personal survival. This valuing of ethnic culture, and the new space created for ethnic expression, seems to run counter to the ultimate Party goal of assimilation of ethnicities, and possibly reflects some of the weaknesses in China's current multicultural strategy. However, despite the fact of a rising ethnic consciousness, there is disagreement on the validity of the Party-State's ultimate assimilation goal. Some moderate Ikhwan respondents demonstrate support, like student #17:

> "We also hope for the achievement of mutual assimilation."

Whereas others still believe that the current ethnic policy should actually protect the smaller *minzu* from ultimate assimilation, a view held by imam #16:

> "Still another benefit of the ethnic unification project is that large *minzu* can take care of small *minzu*, and not allow them to be totally assimilated."

There is some confusion about the real intention of Party-State in their ethnic policy, whether aiming for full assimilation, or permitting a celebration of ethnic culture. When the official definition of Hui culture is so strongly related to the practice of Islam, this question becomes very concerning to the Hui. This has the effect of undermining the commitment of moderate Ikhwan to inter-ethnic unity, demonstrated by their more common interpretation of *minzu tuanjie* as intra-ethnic unity, as I will show in section 7.3 below.

7.2.3   Hard-line Ikhwan

I stated that there was differentiation between hard-line and moderate Ikhwan attitudes to ethnic unity. This section seeks to provide evidence for this from interviews with hard-line respondents.

Islam's focus on unity is often referred to by Muslims across the sects, and the hard-line Ikhwan student #27 is no exception:

"Our Islam also teaches unity – our China is a multi-ethnic controlled country and we want national unity, like the Arab countries in the time of the Prophet, he encouraged national unity."

Student #27 here cites the example of Muhammad in supporting unity, indeed, an inter-ethnic unity, as he goes on to say:

"This is every *minzu* uniting – people not uniting because of faith reasons is not right, because the Prophet encouraged national unity."

He clearly moves beyond the apparent primary emphasis of the Qur'an on inter-Muslim unity, towards a true national unity which is not based on faith, and justified it by the Prophet's actions. A second strong support for inter-ethnic unity is heard from respondent #23, who believes in the need for all ethnicities to unite:

"If one ethnicity didn't unite it would be a complete disunity, and any country at any time could come and take advantage of us."

While supportive of the policy on ethnic unity, he does recognise that for minority peoples, ethnic unity is a double-edged sword, yet feels the benefits outweigh the disbenefits:

"Ethnic unity as a goal has pros and cons, but on the whole pros outweigh the cons." [#23]

He cites the issue of national defence as a primary reason for such inter-ethnic unity, in common with much of the Party-State propaganda. It seems that as far as these hard-line respondents are concerned, there is a clarity about the meaning of the ethnic unification policy:

"The meaning of *minzu tuanjie* is that the fifty-six ethnicities should unite, and have mutual respect in the religious aspect…in the big Han country you cannot ride roughshod over minority people, you need to respect their customs and habits." [imam #28]

This imam recognises the importance of equality and mutual respect, and particularly in regard to the respect of customs and habits of minority people, and yet he is also aware of the final actual goal of the policy of inter-ethnic unity,

"When they speak about unity their ulterior motive is assimilation." [#28]

He explains how in his view the country proceeds with the assimilation process:

"[Assimilation] is the country's demand for the unification of the fifty-six *minzu*…their goal is not a sinification process through forceful means. The best way is through some sort of cultural destruction – using cultural conflict to achieve this process and get the people to unite. Like for example in Xinjiang rewarding Hui who take Han wives with money. They give you a reward since you are assimilating and slowly advocating the weakening of the faith." [#28]

This perceived pressure to assimilate produces a response, and in the case of imam #28, this is an increased emphasis on the Muslim character, showing that one response to this external Party-State pressure on *minzu tuanjie* is an increased emphasis on the unity of Islamic identity, particularly on their own sectarian identity, and only a lukewarm commitment to inter-ethnic unity.

"So on the surface we Hui look like we are united. When our ahong goes to meetings and lectures our slogan is still *minzu tuanjie*, but our unity has a principle and we are not allowed to exceed that principle. So far as a whole unity is good – without unity our religion would be illegal to practise, but uniting with other *minzu* is not good." [#28]

It appears from the respondents that attitudes to the government policy to assimilate through advocating ethnic unity vary in the hard-line Ikhwan. The imam clearly sees the potential threat to Islam, and advocates focusing on religious unity, which is reflected in an intra-ethnic unity. Respondents #23 and #27 sound supportive of government policy, and support inter-ethnic unity.

7.2.4   Salafi

In considering Salafi attitude to ethnic unity, the challenge is similar to that in considering national identity (section 7.1.4 above), that since they are largely apolitical, they generally regard any national or ethnic allegiance as a man-made imposition to be ideologically resisted. In section 7.1.4 it was evident that Salafi,

although more likely to identify themselves as Chinese than as having an ethnic identity, prefer to be simply identified as Muslim. In many ways they are similar in their attitude to the moderate Ikhwan, and when asked about unity more readily expressed a brotherhood of humanity perspective than any political notion of *minzu tuanjie,* for instance:

> "We should love the world's people, great love is boundless, why would we restrict love to a country?" [#30]

Respondent #33 said:

> "*Minzu tuanjie* is like, you know, not like the *ummah*…for me, I have already broken this *minzu* Hui, as I told you that this Hui maybe only existed for sixty years or so. Before this we didn't have these *minzu*, all were Chinese Muslims. [Ethnic categorisation] was no good, do you know why? Because now we are a minority, and the majority are Han, and why have a minority and a majority?"

In common with all three Salafi respondents, he preferred only to think of the identity category Muslim, and resisted the division on ethnic grounds, and being assigned an ethnic identity.

Summary of inter-ethnic unity

Recognising the meaning of the ambiguous phrase *minzue tuanjie* as the Party-State intended unity of 56 ethnicities would reflect a strong influence of the Party-State centre on identity construction. The Old Teaching respondents rarely referred to ethnic unity, yet were consistent in their promotion of the need for tolerance and mutual respect between ethnic groups and between religions, even interpreting a Qur'anic passage in a way compatible with this Party-State driven goal. This is likely driven by their own persecution experience as the most fiercely opposed of the sects.

Those from the moderate Ikhwan expressed some support for the rising ethnic consciousness permitted or fostered by Party-State policy, though there was equivocation on the impact of the government's goal of mutual assimilation. The

greater concern was the effect of assimilation on the practice of Islam, leading moderate Ikhwan to apparently prefer an interpretation of *minzu tuanjie* as intra-ethnic unity, a unity of Hui Muslims, which was largely regarded as an intra-Muslim unity, as discussed in section 7.3 below.

The hard-line Ikhwan respondents were significantly different from those of the moderate Ikhwan in that they were the most supportive of inter-ethnic unity of any of the groups, based on the Prophet's example and the teaching of Islam. The non-clergy respondents particularly were supportive of Party-State driven calls for ethnic unity to the point of assimilation, yet some imams expressed concern similar to the moderate Ikhwan regarding the impact on the practice of Islam.

The Salafi respondents simply deny the veracity of a Hui ethnic identity, and therefore any ethnic identities, resisting division of humanity on ethnic grounds. The only identity that was significant for Salafi respondents was the religious Muslim identity.

The responses of the various representatives of the sects each demonstrate that *minzu tuanjie* is largely interpreted in a way that is contrary to the Party-State intention, that is an intra-ethnic or intra-Muslim interpretation, which demonstrates a less significant influence of Party-State than the Islamic centre.

7.3   Ethnic Unity: intra-ethnic unity

Turning now to the second interpretation of *minzu tuanjie,* that of intra-ethnic unity, it is apparent that this is a far more common interpretation, and is often viewed as compatible with, and supported by, Islam. Although persistent sectarianism continues to be a major threat to Hui unity, Muslim solidarity and, potentially, to social stability in Qinghai, it is notable that both cleric and non-cleric representatives of all of the sects during the interview process were quick to highlight the importance and reality of Muslim unity, as evidenced in the following comments:

> "We are all basically united because we read one Qur'an, believe in one Allah, believe in the Prophet and pray." [imam #3]

> "They are one Islam, they both believe in Allah, just some of the practices are subtly different." [student #4]

> "Whether they are *menhuan*, Sufi, Salafi or Ikhwan, as far as I am concerned everyone has one common name – Muslim." [imam #10]

> "Every Muslim is your brother, yes, yes, every Muslim is your '*tongbao*', under heaven all Muslims are one family." [student #24]

> "When a person dies and receives the judgement question – what is your faith – you cannot answer 'New Teaching' – everyone will say 'my faith is Islam'. Your sect has no relevance – *Santai*, Old Teaching is all just small talk." [imam #30]

My fieldwork demonstrates that some respondents choose to interpret *minzu tuanjie* as meaning intra-Muslim unity, though whether that is due to a conflation of meaning of Hui and Muslim, or whether it is due to the prominence of the verse in the Qur'an that translates the brotherhood of all Muslims (*ummah*) as *minzu*[*] is a question addressed in the next chapter.

Despite these assertions of Muslim unity, the persistence of the historically deeply divisive sectarian question is a primary threat to intra-ethnic unity, and potentially to the entire project of *minzu tuanjie.* The depth and strength of feeling regarding the sectarian question was summed up by imam #22:

> "The reality is that sectarian arguments are very intense. So the government's greatest concern is this sort of thing...disputes between sects, and fights and even the shedding of blood."

In the interviews it was common for respondents to use their sectarian allegiance as a key identity category, even those least aware of sectarian diversity would identify as either New or Old Teaching. Such categorization of identity, possibly generated by the Islamic centre of influence, has a significant impact on intra-ethnic unity. The evidence is again stratified by sectarian allegiance.

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[*] "Thus have we made of you an *ummah* (*minzu*) justly balanced" (Surah 2:143).

7.3.1   Old Teaching

Among the Old Teaching respondents, there were no expressions of intra-Hui ethnic unity. No respondents sought to identify themselves primarily as 'brothers' with other Hui, and identifying primarily as a member of the Hui ethnic group was the exception rather than the rule. By far the strongest affiliation was expressed in sectarian terms, with a strong affinity with other Qadim or Sufi people. In common with the rising Islamic identity in the northwest, Old Teaching identity is likewise rejuvenating.* Hence, *tuanjie* for the Old Teaching seems primarily to have been practised as intra-sect unity. The interviews in this sub-section demonstrate this.

Whereas once there was extreme conflict between Qadim and Sufi groups in China's northwest (see chapter three), what is now known as the Old Teaching in Xining incorporates both Sufis and Qadim. Evidence for this unity within the Old Teaching schools is not only given by adherents of Old Teaching, for example:

> "You can say they [Qadim and Sufi *menhuan*] have assimilated, yes." [#2]

> "The *Yangjiazhuang* mosque belongs to the Qadim and the four main *menhuan* – they all take part." [#6]

But is also recognised by those from other sects:

> "Old Qadim and New Qadim are both Sufi influenced now, and this merger of Qadim and Sufism is largely complete." [#33]

> "Qadim is an honourific title, just a way of addressing them. Within the Qadim there are many branches, your Qadiri, Jahriyya and Khufiyya are all within." [#22]

Prior to the establishment of the Ikhwan in Qinghai, the Sufi *menhuan* were the dominant group in northwest China. The absence of serious internal Old Teaching conflict in Xining is remarkable; historical differences and allegiances between

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* Evidenced by recent substantial rebuilding of the *Yangjiazhuang* mosque (2011), and refurbishment of three Sufi tomb complexes, *Fenghuangshan* (2016), *Guangdemen* (2015) and *Xian Meizhen* (2015).

tariqa remain*, but in Xining at least, they have amicably joined with Qadim groups into a primary Old Teaching school identity:

> "Our relationship [between *tariqa*] is very good…they invite us and we invite them to read Scripture." [#2]

> "We Old Sect (*laopai*) are the most harmonious in the mind of the government." [imam #3]

> "There is no problem [between the four *menhuan*] – the Qadim all recognise the Sufi practices." [#6]

This intra-sect unity is demonstrated in terms of allegiance to only one mosque in the city, the *Yangjiazhuang*†. This unification of Old Teaching groups seems to have occurred in response to the challenge of rising Ikhwan identity, and particularly the fierce opposition of Ikwhan and Salafi groups to Old Teaching practices. Such opposition is fairly uniform in its focus across the New Teaching, based on the condemnation of their religious practice of worshipping their former *shaykhs* at the tomb complexes‡, for example:

> "They visit the graves of their murshid [teacher], and later burn incense to him – because of the Chinese element they took the wrong evil road." [imam #21]

> "If at these tombs it turns out that the dead are replacing the Lord then we firmly oppose it…if you dig a grave and read the Qur'an this is fine, but if you later worship them or intercede to them this is forbidden and we Muslim Ikhwan firmly oppose it." [#26]

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* The various Sufi *tariqa* are still distinguishable, with each operating one of the three main tomb complexes (*gongbei*) in Xining.
† Although the *Yunjiakou* mosque at the extreme east end of the district also is Old Teaching.
‡ Participant observation of each tomb complex in Xining, as well as several trips to tombs in Linxia and Gansu provinces demonstrate a different style of Islamic practice. People gather around heavily-decorated tombs, housed in a Chinese-style pagoda, and chant, weep, burn incense, kowtow, and offer fruit and drink.

> "We oppose it [the rebuilding of Xining tombs] – bowing at tombs, we must oppose it." [imam #13]

> "We oppose it [tomb veneration], it is worship of people. The first reform of Ma Wanfu was to no longer worship saints and no longer build tombs." [imam #30]

This strong opposition and violent condemnation from New Teaching co-religionists has a deleterious influence on potential intra-Hui unity, and strengthens Old Teaching intra-sect identity, as one of the Sufi leaders expresses:

> "Of course they oppose us – they especially attack us and particularly fiercely – it is not just an average opposition." [#2]

A different tomb complex leader similarly said:

> "We are far apart from them [the Salafiyya]. At the moment we are so far cut off from them – they are closer to the new sect Ikhwan and we argue with each other – they think we are non-Muslims." [#8]

In addition to the common criticism of *shaykh* veneration at tombs, which could be seen to be largely an anti-Sufi feeling, there is also criticism of the cultural assimilation exhibited by the Old Teaching, particularly in assimilating Islam with Confucian thought and practices, as well as with Han customs. For instance, imam #22 said:

> "Now these Sufis have several elements that have become intermixed… through a process of assimilation there have been quite a few un-Islamic things come in, such as the Islam and Confucian mix."

The intensity of the New Teaching Muslim community's opposition to Old Teaching in the past decades has led to a strengthening of intra-sectarian identity, and an assimilation of Sufis and Qadim within the Old Teaching. The over-riding conclusion is that the Old Teaching have consolidated as an identity, and in the contestation and struggle for survival amid sectarian debate, concerns for intra-Hui unity are superseded by the pressing concern for sectarian survival. Intra-sect unity appears to be the primary concern of the Old Teaching.

7.3.2 *Moderate Ikhwan*

When the question of ethnic unity was raised in the Dongguan mosque with moderate Ikhwan respondents, one imam said:

> "The more united we are the better! Muslims really like unity, and a concentration of people – the Qur'an says, "You should hold fast to the rope of Allah, and the Qur'an rope will never break" – so everyone together is good." [#15]

In quoting Surah 3:103 of the Qur'an he is clearly thinking about intra-Muslim unity, which is the most natural interpretation of the Qur'an. For imam #11, despite his previous pronouncements supporting inter-ethnic unity, intra-ethnic unity appears to be a strong focus:

> "For the Hui, in Qinghai the Ikhwan are the main body, a relatively strong cohesive force, relatively united - this is the reality. It is very hard anywhere else in China to find tens of thousands at Juma'h prayer, or 200,000 at the two Ids – you will not find this situation elsewhere in China, symbolising unity, proof of unity."

A proof of unity, yes. But certainly not a proof of inter-ethnic unity, nor perhaps even intra-Hui or intra-Muslim unity, since the body of united Hui he is referring to are the Ikhwan at the Great Mosque on Fridays and at the main festivals, with the Old Teaching and Salafi groups gathering in large numbers elsewhere[*]. This once again raises the question of the impact of sectarianism on intra-Hui unity.

Among the Hui in China, Xining is seen as having the most unified group of Muslims within the Ikhwan movement, as imam #11 says, yet in the past decade the rise of the Salafiyya group has corresponded with a divisive response within the Ikhwan (Ma Zhongyun 2007: 13), that resulted in a fracture of the Ikhwan into two factions, known as hard-line and moderate Ikhwan. The issues at stake are complex and varied, but have their root in accusations by the hard-liners that the moderates are 'pursuing a Wahhabi road', and are overly influenced by

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[*] This is illustrated by the opening story in this thesis of three distinct groups breaking fast at Id ul-Fitr in 2011, given in Chapter 1.

international Salafism. This has resurrected a fierce intra-Hui conflict, a subject which respondents from most sects referred to, but were uncomfortable to speak about:

> "One sect is moderate and the other hard-line – this subject is not easy to talk about." [#26]

> "Most people do not want to talk about this [sectarian split]." [imam #19]

However, a more conciliatory approach is sometimes expressed by the moderate Ikhwan. Since Islamic unity is mandated by the Qur'an, one Islamic influence is to be prepared to overlook the secondary differences of sectarianism and seek common ground for intra-Hui (or intra-Muslim) unity, as the following respondents have:

> "That way of speaking [takfirism] is not acceptable – we need to advocate internal unity – you can have a different view and yet stay in the community." [imam #20]

> "We don't much bother about sects, any are fine, we don't ask that question. Old Qadim is fine, the Sufis are also fine, they can all study at this mosque we don't have restrictions." [imam #12]

> "We seek common ground while accepting difference – one Friday my dad and I went to the *Yangjiazhuang* mosque, but there was no problem – I never thought, 'Oh, the Old Teaching are leading the prayers!' – the enemy or whatever, my father had taught me that Islam is our faith, and this is a mosque." [#17]

So although moderate Ikhwan respondents quote official Party-State policy when asked about identity, and initially seem to be committed to true inter-ethnic unity, the evidence above reveals that Muslim unity is in fact their primary focus, and such Muslim unity may either be conceived as intra-Hui unity, but is more commonly viewed as intra-sect unity, in opposition to the hard-line Ikhwan.

7.3.3 Hard-line Ikhwan

As with moderate Ikhwan respondents, student #24 also quoted Surah 3:103 in his response on ethnic unity, saying:

> "Regarding ethnic unity, Islam says: 'Hold fast to the rope that Allah provides and be not divided among yourselves' - this is definitely important, that is to say your ethnicity needs to be united."

The ambiguity question surrounding identity categories recurs here, for the Qur'an is used apparently to support a position that equates religious unity with ethnic unity. The purported evidence of inter-faith unity seen in the gathering of Hui in prayer at the main festivals and on Fridays hides an under-current of division within the community. Reports that many hard-line Ikhwan are unwilling to be led in the prayers by moderate Ikhwan imams, since they are suspected of being Wahhabis, damage the assertion of intra-Hui unity. There may be many hard-line Ikhwan who look like they are joining in community prayer, but in reality they are not, since they believe their prayers are ineffectual as the leader is a suspected Wahhabi. Imam #28 explains:

> "We Ikhwan, according to our view of contemporary Wahhabi practice, are not able to follow them in the prayers."

Further evidence for this is provided by imam #30, who reported that some hard-liners even break their fast a day early at Id al-Fitr, in line with Saudi Arabia, and so as not to be led by moderate Ikhwan imams:

> "At yesterday's Id the moderate sect were participating, but the hard-line sect had already performed the Id in the village the day before…in the counties there were many places, including in Linxia, where they prayed the day before."

This intra-Hui disunity was influenced by radical Qinghai imam Ma Youde[*], an architect of hard-line Ikhwan, and known for fomenting a radical return to the principles of the original Ikhwan, and opposing all other sects of Islam. In 2001 he

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[*] who died in 2011.

distributed his 'ten points' publication around Xining mosques which included such radical points as:

> "Apart from the Ikhwan sect, all other sects such as Old Sect (*Tariqa*), four *menhuan*, and *santai*, are completely *kafir*…in order to abide by national law we cannot kill them, but we must not intermarry with them and we must not pray behind them…This generation would be better not going to Saudi Arabia on *hajj*, and are not able to pray in the Masjid al-Haram with the imams in the al-Haram, since it is negated and so has to be made up, because all of Saudi Arabia is Wahhabi sect, and they are all *kafir*" (Muslim Online 2011b).

While Ma Youde is extreme, and many of his views not supported by mainstream hard-line Ikhwan, this Islamic influence on hard-line teaching has had some effect. For example, the practice of hard-liners refusing to pray behind suspected Wahhabis when they go on the *hajj* is confirmed by imam #30:

> "These hard-line Ikhwan say that when they go to Mecca, they cannot pray in the mosque…they say all the imams in Mecca are Salafi Wahhabis, and they want to oppose them. They say that Wahhabis are not Muslims."

Intra-Hui unity itself is condemned in Ma Youde's ten points, and it is evident that the strength of opposing views within the Ikhwan are themselves the cause of intra-ethnic tension, and conflict, even to the point of bloodshed:

> "They [the hard-liners] thought that [a certain moderate imam] was a *Santai* and a Wahhabi and they are on the battlefield so decreed [that imam] must die." [#30]

This was said while reflecting on the tragic incident in 2011 outside the Nanguan mosque when there was an attempt on an imam's life, an incident widely considered to be connected to the power struggles between the 'orthodox' Ikhwan and 'Wahhabi-influenced' Ikhwan in that mosque, what my respondents call hard-line and moderate Ikhwan respectively (Olive Branch 2011). Social media at the time recorded many incidents of conflict in that mosque, and in the compound where I lived adjacent to the mosque there was a serious incident where two Hui died, and many were injured, reported by police as 'a struggle between ruffians',

but widely discussed in the community as a conflict between Muslims on how to worship.[*]

The strength of this disunity within the Ikhwan is widely known:

> "They [moderates] also say they are Ikhwan, but they and the Ikhwan sect are incompatible." [#27]

> "Previously we [hard-line and moderate] had the relationship of friends we really like, but now on the surface we seem friends, but deep down we are a little estranged…the hard-line have been cut-off, we are called *kafir*." [#28]

But conversely, imam #30 reports that:

> "The hard-line want to regard the Ikhwan, the moderates, as totally Wahhabi, and in their thinking Wahhabis are all *kafir*."

This equivalence of moderate Ikhwan and Salafism is confirmed both by hard-liners, as when imam #22 referred to his moderate Ikhwan predecessor as

> "…occasionally leaking Salafi thought."

and by an Old Teaching family head who said:

> "As far as Qinghai is concerned the moderate sect are the same as Salafis, their propagation is relatively strong, and they call this '*da'wa*.'" [#6]

The intra-Hui unity celebrated at Friday prayers at the Dongguan mosque, and especially at the impressive gathering of Muslims at Id, may be seen to be somewhat illusory, masking the sectarian challenges within the Ikhwan that occasionally spill over into violence, impacting social stability as well as ethnic unity. Though the moderate Ikhwan demonstrably are more conciliatory, yet the suspicions of their allegiance to Wahhabi thought, and 'walking the Salafi road' also potentially renders them as bearing some responsibility for the intra-ethnic

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[*] My field notes report a conversation in February 2011 with 'Ma the baker' where he reported it as a conflict between New Teaching people about how they should worship, which accords well with the hard-line/moderate argument above.

tension. As with the Old Teaching discussion, the sectarian conflict results in inter-ethnic and inter-Hui unity being replaced with a priority for intra-sect unity.

7.3.4 Salafi

The Salafis interviewed consistently hold to an understanding that Islam teaches that only two identities are important, being human, and being Muslim, all else is man-made. On this basis they resist the Party-State driven ethnicization of Muslim identity, and deny the very reality of an historic Hui ethnicity, as imam #30 said:

> "China's *Huizu* have only been recognised for…less than a hundred years…so my feeling is that this kind of division has no benefit at all – that sort of differentiation only results in increased discrimination….I feel that whether you are a Hui or not is not important, the most important is whether you are a Muslim or not."

Salafis also claim to refuse to recognise sectarian identity. As far as they are concerned, the so-called Wahhabi sect, and the sects in northwest China, are the outworking of human interference in Islam. Imam #30 said:

> "Wahhabism is not a sect, we are not following a man. Salafism is not a sect in its earliest period either."

Yet, in Xining the Salafis are the targets of much sectarian criticism, and equally are condemnatory of other sects, which further erodes intra-Muslim unity, as imam #30 said:

> "So now, including the Ikhwan, about 20-30% of Xining Muslims sympathise with us with no difference, about 20-30% really hate us, so much so that they would like to see us destroyed, and the other 40-50% are not bothered, or don't even know!"

Some Xining Hui label Salafis (and some moderate Ikhwan) as Wahhabis, recognising their unique position in denying allegiance to any *maddhab* (school of Islamic jurisprudence):

"They [attendees of Salafi mosque] are three raisers, are they not the international Wahhabi? They belong to Wahhabism, they do not bother about *maddhab*." [hard-line student #27]

A position that meets with some opprobrium:

"The Salafi are not willing to follow any school…although we cannot say they are totally wrong, they are in error." [moderate imam #16]

"The Salafi are fierce – they have their way and I have mine – we mutually non-interfere." [Sufi leader #7]

Despite their own denial of sectarianism on theological grounds, and their desire to value Muslim unity, the Salafi are the recipients of sectarian opprobrium, particularly from the hard-line Ikhwan, and particularly over their literalism in Qur'anic interpretation. Imam #32 expressed his view that hard-line Ikhwan are all *Maturidi* rationalists[*],

"Now these [names a mosque] people, what do they follow? The follow the historically later-formed *Maturidi*…[A hard-line Ikhwan imam] is most estranged from us at the moment, but some of these things are created by misunderstandings. They [hard-liners] are historical rationalists."

The accusation of rationalism in interpreting the Qur'an refers to the non-literal interpretation of difficult texts, where the Salafi are mocked and derided as anthropomorphist in their literal interpretation (Campo 2009: 45). The dispute over whether Allah physically sits on a throne, or whether Allah literally has hands, is commonly raised in any conversation regarding Salafi beliefs, as Gladney also found (Gladney 1999: 103). Some hard-line Ikhwan accuse the moderate Ikhwan of also holding to this view, and it is noteworthy that a Salafi imam regards relationship with the moderate Ikhwan as good, possibly indicating a closer theological position:

"Our relationship with the moderate sect is very good, we can talk." [#30]

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[*] Maturidi refers to one of the most popular schools of theology within Sunni Hanafi Islam (the others are Ashari and Mutazili), and places an increased emphasis on the role of human reason.

Hard-liners view Salafis as unorthodox, with imam #21 referring to them as 'modernists' (*shidaipai*):

> "Of course they [Salafis] are not orthodox – they added to their orthodox Islam elements from the current age…Islam does not need to modernise or move with the times."

The Salafi themselves are very critical of others, not only the hard-line rationalists, nor those they regard as Old Teaching syncretists, but even of the main Dongguan mosque, the centre of the Ikhwan movement, who are also accused of innovation (Ar. *bid'a*):

> "The Dongguan Haiyi mosque makes some *bid'a* – in prayer, at Friday prayer they are not following the Sunna." [#33]

So, in summary, the apolitical Salafi seek to deny the importance of any collective identity other than Muslim, and are strong on the idea of an intra-Muslim unity. They deny that ethnic identity has any value, and only leads to division and discrimination. The challenge of intra-Muslim unity is clear, given the strong mutual criticism between Salafis and other sects. The influence of the Party-State centre on shaping Salafi Islam seems negligible, whereas the influence of a Salafi or Wahhabi Islamic centre seems much stronger. The rising tide of Salafism in Xining[*] demonstrates that the simple non-sectarian message, and the clarity of a simple ideology has an attractive, cohesive power to Muslims.

Summary: intra-ethnic unity

The emphasis on Muslim unity expressed by members of every sect suggests that interpreting intra-ethnic unity as intra-Muslim solidarity is the most prevalent interpretation of *minzu tuanjie.* The ethnic category Hui was never in view in discussions of intra-ethnic unity. However, what also became apparent, was that despite the surface level affirmation of intra-Muslim unity, in actual fact intra-sect unity was significantly more in focus in almost all cases, reflecting the influence of continued sectarian dispute in Xining.

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[*] Mosque attendance grew from 100 to 600 between 2012 and 2015, and a new, prominent and substantial mosque was completed in 2016 (see Figure 7.1, Photo 6).

The Old Teaching respondents rarely identified as Hui ethnically, and unity for them was clearly expressed as Muslim unity with other Qadim and Sufi Muslims, an intra-sect unity.

For the moderate Ikhwan interviewees, the interpretation is much more closely tied to a general intra-Muslim unity, although once again it is apparent that it is a unity of Ikhwan followers that is often in view. Even this is threatened by the fierce fracture in the Ikhwan in recent years between moderate and hard-line, leading to a strong defence of moderate Ikhwan identity as a primary identity. There are some conciliatory voices however, both clergy and non-clergy, who resist condemning other Muslims because of perceived heterodox views, and seek a full Muslim unity.

The hard-line Ikhwan respondents likewise outwardly affirm the importance of intra-Muslim unity, but their responses strongly condemn sects other than their own, particularly labelling the moderate and Salafis as Wahhabi influenced, leading to disunity. This disunity is evidenced by the extreme examples of Ma Youde's Ma Ha sect, and also in the common practice of refusing to pray behind suspected Wahhabi influenced imams.

The Salafis refuse to be identified as ethnic Hui or as a sect, regarding their only identities as Muslim and human. The sectarian disputes do lead even in their case to an emphasis on intra-Salafi unity, despite their denial of that appellation.

Conclusion: National and ethnic identity as understood by the Hui

It is clear from this chapter that despite a consistent promotion of *Zhonghua minzu* national identity by the Party-State through adapted Islam, as well as other common means of disseminating propaganda, there remains a level of ambiguity around the question of identity among the Hui interviewed. Although there was a very clear acceptance by most respondents to being a Chinese citizen, and the concept of China as homeland, yet the acceptance of the common national *Zhonghua minzu* identity promoted by the Party-State is absent. Identifying, as some did, as a Chinese citizen, or as a Chinese person, could be seen as an

equivalent statement of belonging to this national identity, yet respondents often expressed a tension between perceived markers of Chinese identity, such as a Confucian-influenced culture, and a true Muslim identity. The Chinese national identity was definitely associated with a Han-dominated national culture, one that for some was antagonistic to faith, and thus challenging for many Muslims interviewed to accept, although there was significant sectarian divergence on this. For instance, the traditional Old Teaching group did not generally see this Chinese influence as necessarily contradictory to an Islamic identity, and Old Teaching Islam and its proponents had largely accepted the Islamic influence of a more-assimilated expression of Chinese Islam, and were most readily accepting of a truly bicultural identity. The Chinese cultural accretions associated with Qadim and Sufism were resisted more strongly by the New Teaching groups, influenced more as they were by international reformist movements such as Wahhabism, Salafism and the Muslim Brotherhood, leading these groups to regard Chinese accretions as examples of unorthodox innovation, known as *bid'a*. There was a spectrum of resistance to this Chinese form of Islam, ranging from the milder opposition of the hard-line Ikhwan, through an increased opposition of the moderate Ikhwan, to the absolutely opposed Salafi group.

This is evidence of how the different Islamic influences on Hui identity is reflected by respondents of different sects. Those belonging to the most Salafi-influenced group, with the lead imam trained in a Salafi school in Medina, were most rejecting of any Chinese innovation in Islam, insisting on exclusive use of Arabic (except for the *wa'z*), and rejecting the form of prayer used by most other Muslims as unorthodox. The Salafi were insistent on the primacy of an Islamic identity, rejecting of all national and ethnic identities since these were man-made and not Allah-mandated. However, the Salafis were not rejecting of a Chinese citizenship identity, nor did they lack a demonstration of love for the land of China. They regarded these two identities as belonging to totally different categories, with the Islamic identity as the most important. The moderate Ikhwan were closer to the Salafi perspective, expressing some bicultural identity as Chinese Muslims, but preferring a Muslim religious identity, and rarely identifying as ethnically Hui. In the view of the strongly opposed hard-line Ikhwan, this represents the continued influence of Wahhabi thought on the moderate Ikhwan, rejected by the hard-liners

who differ markedly here, owning an ethnic Hui and a Chinese heritage. The Old Teaching respondents expressed the most consistent bicultural identity as Chinese Muslims, yet the Muslim aspect to their identity is criticised by the other three main sects.

The evidence for the acceptance of a Hui ethnic identity was surprisingly low among most interviewees, only really being prominent among the hard-line Ikhwan group. The Old Teaching respondents identified more as Chinese and Muslim, and hardly ever as Hui. It is possible that the degree of conflation of Hui and Muslim identity was greatest with this most traditional of sects, since the prominence given by them to a Muslim identity was also somewhat of a surprise given the level of assimilation they demonstrated. The hard-line Ikhwan are known as those seeking to retain the Islamic reformism of their founder, a reformism utilised by Republican warlord Ma Bufang to aim to unite the Hui under one common expression of Islam. It was thus perhaps unsurprising to find Hui ethnic identity most supported by the hard-line group. The Salafi and the moderate Ikhwan shared more commonality of position on this question, both denying the importance and the veracity of the ethnic Hui identity, and preferring simply a religious category of identity as Muslim. This demonstrates the different responses that varied Party-State and Islamic centre influence generate.

What is clear is that there continues to be a complex and multi-faceted conflict among certain Hui in Xining on the sectarian question. Whilst common assent was given to the unity of all Muslims being a fundamental tenet of Islam, the reality is of a continuing sectarian struggle that obliterates any surface-level unity or solidarity of the Hui. The sectarian discussions ebb and flow between the passive and the aggressive, between the serious and the light-hearted, but continue to represent an powerful endogenous influence on identity, that is, an identity that is largely shaped by the internal influence of this local Islamic centre, conceptualised as the localised expression of a global religion. There is certainly a growth in intra-sectarian identity, generating a strong sense of intra-sectarian unity in response to external pressures, a clear example of identities being made to matter in this context.

Primary identity does seem to be responsive to external pressure, with that identity varying depending on the origin of that pressure. For instance, when the key external pressure is a Party-State pressure to conform to an identity perceived as counter to Islamic faith, then a stronger Muslim-Hui identity emerges, an identity of solidarity and strength that pragmatically utilises Muslim solidarity to resist State interference. However, when the pressure is glocal Islamic pressure, a pressure shaped by the varied Islamic influences on Chinese Muslims, then Hui unity appears to be fragmented, and inter-sectarian strife emerges. Although the Party-State's 'correct Islam' seeks to address this question by urging the Hui to unity, ideologically speaking the Party-State can only emphasise an ethnic or a national unity, whereas the primary concern of the respondents is the emphasis on a Muslim religious unity.

It is difficult to understand how the Party-State truly considers the sectarian question. While on the one hand their 'correct Islam' proscribes sectarian division, and the thrust of approved articles and sermons warn against the evils of 'splittism', yet there is little current evidence of any active suppression of any particular sectarian group. Indeed, the opposite may be seen to be true, with large scale recent religious gatherings of certain prominent, and divisive, sectarian groups, such as the Ma Ha sect (Gjxgs 2015) and the tens of thousands of hard-line Ikhwan who attended radical cleric Ma Youde's death in 2015 in Qinghai with no restriction. The way in which sectarianism is actually treated by the Party-State is very important. Could a passive tolerance of sectarian activity be evidence that fostering sectarian division may be a strategy of the Party-State to undermine any sense of religious solidarity that could impact loyalty to the State? This question of loyalty is the subject of the next chapter, where the question of competing loyalties to nation-state or to the global *ummah* is considered.

Chapter Eight: National Loyalty – Patriotism, the *Ummah* and the Nation

In this chapter I continue to explore how the Islamic centre interacts with the Hui to shape conceptions of identity, turning to how the influence of the Islamic centre impacts the loyalty of Muslims to the nation-state, relative to their loyalty to the *ummah*, that transnational imaginary of the global community of Islam. This potential conflict of loyalty is highly pertinent to twenty-first century China, exemplified by the on-going conflict between the State and those assuming a religious collective identity, such as Tibetans and Uyghurs. The worsening political situation among the Uyghur Muslims, where any sense of challenge to State hegemony is severely punished, such as the life-imprisonment for separatism of Ilham Tohti, a Uyghur intellectual known for his moderate public criticism of Beijing's policies in Xinjiang (Gracie 2014), is reflected more subtly among the Hui, who have seen an increase in anti-Hui sentiment in the popular media in recent years, primarily connected to those areas of life where their insistence on maintaining a religious identity means that they demand to be treated differently, particularly in the area of maintaining a Halal lifestyle (Gardner 2017; Guo 2016). The rising antagonism between Han netizens and the Hui is indicative of this, particularly demonstrated by examples from the social media portal Sina Weibo (Leibold 2016; Ma Chunshan 2016).

Modern Chinese Islamic scholars write openly about how this question of competing loyalties is addressed by Chinese Islam. At a recent conference on the Sinification of Islam, Liang Xiangming demonstrated how this process found its origin in the work of the late Ming dynasty scholar Wang Daiyu (Liang 2009: 54), who through the incorporation of Confucian concepts of three cardinal guides (*sangang*)* interpreted Islam as teaching that the basis of Islam is to "submit to Allah and be loyal to the Emperor" (*shunzhu zhongjun*). Wang wrote in his treatise "*Exegesis of True Religion" (zhengjiao zhenquan):*

> "You have three main duties, submit to the Lord, submit to the Emperor, submit to your parents"   (Yu 1999: 5).

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* sangang wuchang: the three cardinal guides are, emperor guides subject, father guides son, husband guides wife. Together with the five constant virtues these constitute the core ethical teaching of Confucianism.

This is interpreted by Liang as being the correct way (*zhengdao*) of contextualised Islam. This was reinforced by subsequent significant Muslim scholars of that period, Ma Zhu and Liu Zhi specifically. What later came to be known as Qadim Islam, a traditional Confucianised Islam, is however only one of the centres of that notional polycentric Islamic influence. As chapter seven demonstrated, there is significant opposition to this Confucianised Islam by the New Teaching groups, and so one may expect that in the matter of loyalty the Old and New Teaching are similarly in opposition. How do the Hui of Xining today think about this question of competing loyalty?

In the Sino-Muslim pilgrimages to Mecca in the 1930s, prominent students in Al Azhar played a significant role in shaping modernist understandings of China's nationalist cause. Ma Jian, a prominent Azharite and translator of the most commonly used version of the Qur'an in China, frequently articulated his dual loyalties to the Islamic *ummah* and to China (Mao 2011: 387). I will first of all address the different ways the Hui of various sects think about the conflicting and confusing question of Hui as both a religious and an ethnic identity. Following some clarity on that question, I will then examine the core evidence that reveals the relative loyalty given to the nation and that given to the global religious faith community. It should be noted that in my interviews and this discussion, I avoid the use of the term 'nationalism' (*minzuzhuyi),* preferring the politically more acceptable (Cabestan 2005: 22), and linguistically far less ambiguous, term of 'patriotism' (*aiguozhuyi*) (Hunt 1993: 63).

8.1   Ethnic (Hui) or Religious (Muslim) Identity

The discussion of how to distinguish the religious identity 'Muslim' as distinct from the ethnic identity 'Hui' is a clear example of the politics of contestation, where political preference shapes contrary positions. Enze Han defines national identity contestation, as:

> "Concerted political efforts, violent or non-violent, waged by an ethnic group to question and dispute the meaning of a particular national identity imposed on group members" (Han 2013: 4).

In chapter four I explained the origin of the confusion; that *Huijiao* (the Hui religion) was the commonly accepted term for Islam until the Communist Party in the 1950s decreed the use of *Yisilanjiao* for the religion, and the word Hui to be used as an ethnic term only. As chapter seven showed, some of the older respondents belonging particularly to the Qadim school, continue to perpetuate this confusion by not having adjusted their habitual use of 'Hui' to mean 'Muslim'. Other contemporary researchers shared my experience of being asked questions about the Hui in your country, by which the questioner meant Muslims (Gladney 2004: 166; Stewart 2014: 103). However, in thus attempting to marginalise the role of Islam to being merely a component of Hui ethnic identity, however core a component it is, Muslim identity is somehow undermined by the Party-State, in accord with their prevailing secularist ideology. What is apparent in my interviews is that not only is Muslim identity undermined, but by association the ethnic category Hui is undermined, for the pervading local belief is that if a Hui were to cease to believe in Islam, then he would also cease to be Hui. My research demonstrates that many Hui do actually hold to the view that if being Hui did not presume a belief in Islam, then there is not much else that distinguishes them from the Han.

In addition, in the purported Islamic revival occurring in northwest China, the distinction between being Hui and being Muslim is increasingly emphasised, especially it seems among the newer teaching 'revivalist' groups, where 'being Muslim' is a conscious individual religious choice, amounting often to a sense of reversion to Muslim from a traditional, possibly ethnic, understanding. Such a strengthening of Islamic identity is shown to potentially link the now-committed believer into the transnational *ummah* imaginary (Stewart 2014: 352), an identity perhaps having more salience for Muslims than either ethnic or national categories of identity, as chapter seven confirmed. Such newer teaching groups are still in the minority in Xining, as the statistics quoted on sectarian allegiance in section 3.1.2 showed, with less than 1% of Qinghai Muslims adhering to Salafism. Yet the emphasis on Muslim identity as a prior identity was evident in some of the Ikhwan groups too, so when exploring the relative importance of a religious versus an ethnic identity, it again is important to explore the evidence stratified by sectarian allegiance.

8.1.1 Old Teaching

In all the interviews with Old Teaching respondents, the subject of ethnicity was rarely raised, as section 7.1.1 above revealed. Defining themselves as Hui, or distinguishing Hui as an ethnic category from Muslim as a religious category, did not emerge as important from the discussions. The focus of these respondents seemed on the one hand to be in affirming their historical longevity as traditional Chinese Muslims, and on the other a fiercely defensive preservation of their sectarian distinction and Islamic integrity against the attacks of the newer teaching groups. I thus concluded in that section that it was intra-sect unity that was the strongest Islamic influence for the Old Teaching groups.

On the occasional times when the self-referent '*Huizu*' was used, however, it seemed not to be differentiated from a religious category. Indeed, Hui was often used interchangeably with Muslim, and sometimes concurrently. There was a recognition that to be Hui was to be Muslim, and that this was the case whether or not you were a particularly strong Muslim. Thus imam #3 can say, reflecting on his younger self:

> "Although I was a Muslim Hui my contact with Islam was very little."

He viewed himself as a Muslim and a Hui, even though he had little to do with Islam at that time. His ethnic and religious identity were entirely merged.

It was more common for Old Teaching respondents to refer to themselves as 'Chinese Muslims', or sometimes just 'Muslims', rather than Hui, which possibly indicates a preference for a religious identity, and a denial of ethnic identity. During a discussion on the relative ease of passport applications for going on the state-sponsored *hajj*, respondent #6 clearly identified himself primarily with a religious category of identity when he said:

> "It is especially hard for Muslims [to receive passports], because we receive the results of Xinjiang extremism influence."

When thinking about ethnic versus a religious identity in the context of promoting *minzu tuanjie,* the Old Teaching emphasis was focused on religious rather than ethnic unity. For instance, imam #3 said:

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> "We are basically united (*tongyi*) because we read one Qur'an and believe in one Allah, believe in the Prophet and pray."

This intra-faith unity (with the term *tongyi* being semantically close to *tuanjie*) is a common statement from all Muslims of whatever sectarian allegiance, and highlights the importance placed on Islam as an identity category, emphasising the religious identity perhaps over the ethnic category, or at the very least subsuming the ethnic into the religious.

The primary concern of Old Teaching adherents when pressed is on maintaining sectarian distinction, since the Qadim and the Sufis are both under threat of *takfiri* New Teaching adherents – those that deny that they are Muslims at all. In the context of the interviews, this survival mentality of preserving the integrity of their Islamic sectarian identity was far more obvious than any concerns that they may have for the unity of their ethnic Hui identity. The question of religious and ethnic identity seemed entirely fused in one ethno-religious identity, with the religious identity prioritised.

8.1.2   Moderate Ikhwan

The official government position is that the Hui are an ethnic and not a religious group, an opinion shared by some western and Chinese scholars (Wan 2012: 23). This official position contrasts quite strongly with the opinion of imam #11:

> "We first have our faith, and then we have our *minzu*…our faith lets us become a *minzu*, without it we would cease to be Hui, so we strongly value faith and strongly protect Islam."

This moderate Ikhwan imam makes a very clear distinction between the ethnic and the religious category of identity, clearer than any of the previous Old Teaching respondents. He clearly holds that his Muslim identity is a prior, and a more important, identity category, yet he is also clear that this Islamic identity is what allowed Muslims to 'become a *minzu*', that is, a prior religious identity that is fundamentally constitutive of an ethnic Hui identity. This priority is clearly shown in a further comment:

> "Today we are called Muslim, so Muslim is the honoured name that the Lord gave us. Everything else is secondary, they are man-made, but Muslim is God-given, sacred, so we emphasise this point." [imam #10]

This concept that all identity categories outside of Muslim are man-made, and therefore of less relevance, is a view shared by the Salafi respondents. For this moderate Ikhwan imam, religious identity takes priority over all else, but unlike the Salafis, his religious identity is separate but constitutive of the ethnic identity Hui. He has a clear ethnic and a clear religious identity. The first is contingent on the second, thus if you ceased to follow Islam, you would cease to be a Hui. This importance of active Islamic faith is different from the view of the Old Teaching, who as mentioned in section 8.1.1 considered themselves as Muslim Hui however much or little they followed Islam. This understanding is shared by student #17:

> "Before I was in high school if I were to say 'I am not a Muslim' then I don't feel I could have taken on the responsibility for that role, I would not be qualified, I could not be a Hui."

In claiming that without Islam he could not be considered as Hui, he makes a distinction between a religious and an ethnic category, but gives tacit recognition that the religious identity is such a core component of the ethnic category, that ethnicity in this case derives from it – that religious identity is the prior identity category.

As I showed in chapter 7.2.2, it is apparent that many Ikhwan respondents interpret *minzu tuanjie* primarily as referring to Muslim unity, perhaps in part as a result of the Party-State influence on defining 'correct' Islam to support its emphasis on unity. In chapter six I said that, among the official State-distributed sermons, such popular Qur'anic texts as Surah 49:13 (*O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other, not that ye may despise each other*) are interpreted thus:

> "We live in a multi-ethnic, multi-faith country, so this teaching has a very important significance...the unity Islam promotes includes Muslim internal

unity and unity with non-Muslims" (IAC Guidance Committee 2013: 405-406).

The exposure to such adapted teaching perhaps leads some Muslims to think that internal Muslim unity is something supported by the Party-State. In section 7.3.2 I quoted imam #15 stating that:

"Muslims really love unity – the more united the better. The Qur'an says that you should everyone together tightly grab Allah's rope, and the Qur'an rope will never break. So everyone together is good."

Once again, drawing from the popularly cited verse on unity:

"Hold fast to the rope that Allah provides and be not divided among yourselves." (Surah 3:103)

Yet imam #15's statement above refers only to internal Muslim unity, a unity of religious identity, whereas the Party-State seeks from verses such as this to incorporate support for full inter-ethnic unity, a unity of ethnic identities. The challenge to the Party-State position is that, in order to demonstrate their example of unity, many Hui respondents point to the strong, physical demonstration of unity at the two main Id festivals. This vast gathering of Hui at the Dongguan great mosque for Friday prayers, but especially at the two Id festivals, is a source of pride in Muslim strength and unity, but it is a unity of religious identity, rather than an expression of ethnic unity. Imam #11 attributed this, at least in part, to the cohesive force given by the dominant Ikhwan in Xining.

This reality gap between the expectation of the State towards using Islam to strengthen inter-ethnic unity, and the actual Hui focus on inter-Muslim religious unity is a primary disconnect between the goals of the Party-State influence, and the influence of the conceptualised glocal Islamic centre. There is also a latent threat to social stability. The religious pride among these Hui Ikhwan Muslims in the realisation and demonstration of the strength of the cohesive force of Qur'an-sanctioned Muslim unity can be expressed with an undercurrent of threat, or at least passive aggression. An example of this can be seen in the need for the closure of the main thoroughfare in Xining twice-yearly to permit the technically illegal

religious gathering (CCCCP 1987)[*] for upward of 200,000 Muslims[†], and the requirement for large numbers of public security personnel to manage the crowds and control the traffic. This has a huge impact on the businesses and convenience of life in this district, and is resented by many of the numerically superior Han, who shared the view of my Han former landlord, who said he 'couldn't stand Muslims' – their lifestyle was:

> "Inconvenient for others, with their strange times of prayer and strange slaughtering methods."[‡]

I asked imam #15 about how difficult it was to gain permission for these special 'ethnic' events. He said, with evident pride:

> "If they [government] don't permit it, what are they going to do? We may influence public order, but since they can't walk on the street [because of the numbers of Hui praying] where can they walk? So they have to send the traffic police."

Although these religious festivals and large gatherings of people to pray are described by the Party-State as the customs and habits of an ethnic group, yet it is clear that they derive entirely from Islam, and are a core expression of religious identity. Even the fact that these festivals are overseen by the Religious Affairs Bureau demonstrate the government's understanding of this religious identity as a primary category of identity. The imam was keen to show that the police had less power over Muslims because of the strength of their unity:

> "Going the government route for permission to put on religious activity is too difficult. We have religious freedom – as far as I am concerned if we are just practicing our religion, why would we notify you?" [#15]

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[*] Under so-called Document 19, all 'normal' religious activities are permitted as long as they are confined to the registered religious activity sites (*zongjiao huodong changsuo*) meeting points, and should not take place in public areas. In reality, there is local flexibility in applying these laws, as in Xining for Muslims, but still the gathering on the streets is technically against the law.
[†] Estimates of attendance at Id ul-Fitr range from 150,000 to 300,000. Id ul-Adha at around 200,000 and Friday prayers at 30-50,000.
[‡] The public slaughter of sheep and cattle at Id ul-Adha is a source of particular revolt among the Han. It is distressing to witness the mass slitting of animal throats in public areas at this festival – one took place directly outside my apartment in 2011, prompting this conversation.

Although this could be seen as bravado, particularly as it was expressed in a small group, yet the implicit threat and potential consequences of speaking out like this to a foreigner demonstrate a confidence in numbers derived from Muslim unity, a strong religious identity. This unity is in part credited to government policy on freedom of religious belief, and in part due to the phenomenon of urbanisation:

> "Xining is developing and the population is growing rapidly. All villagers who make money come here, and the transport infrastructure makes it easy to get here these days." [#15]

Imam #12 agrees that government policy has resulted in a flourishing Islam:

> "From the Third Congress on, Reform and Opening has had thirty years of history where religious faith is workable, permitted. Policies are taking effect, mosques are blooming and the government is even giving help – after this there is no restriction, we can increasingly practise what we preach without restriction."

Although we can see that the dominant category of identity for the moderate Ikhwan is religious, yet there are obviously still situations where the Party-State ascribed ethnic category is clearly separated from the assumed religious identity; university education being the most obvious, as student #17 reflected:

> "In Chinese universities students are still divided according to *minzu* – they cannot reckon you as Muslim, but they can recognise you as *Huizu*, and allow you halal food, halal canteen and these customs. This is not because you are a Muslim though, since you also need to pray, but they cannot permit you to do that in the school, or give you a prayer room, no way."

This demonstrates in practice the continued attempt of the Party-State to deny the priority of Muslim religious identity, by treating as much of Islamic particularism as possible as simply ethnic customs and habits, thus permissible under the ethnic policy. Clearly, prayer transcends these customs and habits in a university, and so is not accommodated.

Imam #16 holds a slightly different view, yet one that also minimises the salience of the ethnic category Hui, by explaining that should a Muslim cease to be Muslim, he would cease to be Hui. But he puts it this way:

> "In the midst of this population of Chinese Muslims, the overwhelming majority if you were to divide them would be called Han, and a few would be called Muslim. It's true, it is this way. So after the intersecting of the two cultures, it allows Muslims to have dual culture, a Chinese culture and a Muslim culture."

He seems to maintain that without true Islamic faith, these 'Chinese Muslims' would be Han, not Hui. In common with imam #11, his opinion is that being a Muslim allows you to be a Hui, if you ceased to follow Islam, not only do you cease to be Hui, but you would actually be considered Han. It could be thought that there is possibly some ideological conflation of Muslim with Hui here, as with the Old Teaching respondents, but the strength of the religious identity and its distinction from any ethnic identity does not support this view. There is no strong ethnic identity evident among the moderate Ikhwan, only a strong religious identity, which is sometimes translated as Hui, since this is a religious category of identity, but usually as Muslim.

The preference for identification as Muslim, whether Chinese, Xining or Qinghai also reflects the strength of a religious Muslim identity over an ethnic Hui identity, though it should be remembered that the majority of the respondents above are imams or students being interviewed in mosques, so the Muslim identity expressed is likely to be stronger than within the general Hui populace. The preference for Muslim identity by the religious elite demonstrates that the influence of this local Islamic centre is contrary to the position of the Party-State centre, and potentially undermines the preference it gives to ethnic unity.

The Party-State persists in its drive to maintain a separation of ethnic and religious identity, prioritising the former, and effectively seeking to ignore the latter, whilst emphasising that the strong support for unity in the teaching of Islam is to be interpreted actually not only as Muslim unity, but also as unity with all peoples of China. Yet grass-roots Ikhwan Hui prefer to focus on the success of Muslim

(Ikhwan) unity in Xining, emphasising the religious identity above the ethnic identity.

8.1.3 Hard-line Ikhwan

In section 7.1.3 I showed that the hard-line Ikhwan interviewed do have some identification with a Hui ethnic identity, significantly more so than the moderate Ikhwan. Does this also then translate to a clearer understanding of ethnic versus religious identity? If the moderate Ikhwan emphasise their religious identity above the ethnic, and thus effectively render the ethnic category of identity as being entirely derivative of Islamic belief, and not on the Party-State ascription according to the ethnic classification project of the 1950s, how do the hard-line Ikhwan differ?

Section 7.1.3 also demonstrated that there were still serious tensions within the Hui community surrounding the issue of sectarianism. The strength of feeling and energy expended on securing one's own sectarian unity and opposing other sects is a key indicator of the importance of that identity. This perhaps demonstrates that the religious identity of the hard-line Ikhwan is a much more significant driver of identity than any ethnic understanding of identity. The posited influence of this local Islamic centre is actually in fostering a stronger sectarian identity as a hard-liner, rather than a religious identity as a Muslim.

In chapter 7.1.3 I recorded respondent #23 saying:

" [Hui] identity is getting stronger and stronger. A *minzu*'s strength is reflected in its level of knowledge and culture…at reform and opening us Muslims, especially China's Qinghai Xining Muslims, relatively many of us were in business and those studying culture or religious knowledge were quite few…so our ethnic realisation was relatively weak."

Although this statement by a young hard-line student evidences a stronger ethnic identity, it can also be read as evidence for conflating religious and ethnic categories, since in the middle sentence he says 'Xining Muslims' rather than 'Xining Hui' as would be most natural were he emphasising a true ethnic identity.

He also conflates the two identities when he says:

> "In some places bad things happen, and they feel Muslims, especially Qinghai Hui are implicated, and they implicate the whole ethnicity, saying aren't the Hui this way?" [#23]

Does this actually evidence a confusion of religious and ethnic identity? Perhaps imam #21 helps clarify the hard-line position:

> "In Islam we have two ideas, one is religion, the 'Heaven Road' and the other is the 'Human Road', the societal element. Within the society element we can have different philosophies…but in religion we must preserve our belief and our faith."

This clear demarcation between a religious identity and a social, possibly ethnic identity, is however inconsistent. Imam #22 said:

> "On the whole, as far as we *Huizu*, that is as far as we Muslims are concerned…"

In this statement we see a conflation of Hui and Muslim identities, something more common in hard-liners than among moderate Ikhwan, further illustrated when imam #21 confused Hui and Muslim in his reply to my question on the ethnic composition of the China Islamic Association:

> "Everyone must be a Hui…there is only one non-Hui member, the Secretary. All the others must be Muslims."

However, when pressed, imam #22 holds the view that Muslim and Hui are not totally interchangeable terms, but still explained why there was such religious and ethnic confusion by saying:

> "There are non-Muslim Hui, but as far as our Xining is concerned, basically if you are *Huizu* you are Muslim, and if a Muslim then a Hui. But in the interior, for example Shanghai, Nanjing, Guangzhou they say they are *Huizu*, but they are not necessarily Muslim…their ethnicity is Hui, but they have no Islamic faith at all."

He does distinguish between ethnic and religious categories of identity, but crucially, also allows for a non-believing Hui identity, unlike the moderate Ikhwan. The converse is also recognised, that there are other Islamic ethnicities in China, actually indicating that the conflation of Hui and Muslim is less common in this group than at first thought:

> "The Hui are a *minzu*, those that believe in Islam are not all *Huizu*, there are Salar and Uyghur and also Tibetans, of whom some are Muslim." [#28]

So among the hard-liners we see a greater sense of ethnic identity as a Hui, as well as a strong Muslim religious identity. There are occasional lapses into conflation of identity, but on the whole a clearly separate religious and ethnic identity is commonly shared.

8.1.4   Salafi

Turning finally to the Salafiyya respondents, it is not just that the ethnic category is under-emphasised, as with the other sects to varying degrees, but that it is outright denied. For instance, the English-speaking businessman #33 said:

> "I have already broken this *minzu* Hui - the Hui category only existed for sixty or seventy years…Mao Zedong thought up this one, from that time the Hui began, before then we no have Hui, we no have *minzu*, all are Chinese Muslims."

His belief is that the Hui is a constructed ethnic identity of the Chinese Communist Party, and the prior identity was a purely religious identity.

Imam #30 agreed:

> "I feel that China's Hui have only been recognised as such for a short period - whether you are a Hui or not is not important, but whether you are a Muslim or not. If you are a Han yet believe in Islam then you are an outstanding person."

Although this idea of a fairly recent ethnogenesis has strong scholarly support (Gladney 1991; Gladney 2004: 160; Mullaney 2011; Zang 2015), it is still firmly

resisted by the Party-State, and to hear such outright denial of *Huizu* as a true category of identity is significant, since it demonstrates a significant influence of an Islamic centre on the Salafi Hui. Eickelman and Piscatori point out that:

> "The idea that Islam and ethnicity are antithetical and antagonistic also appears in the thinking of Islamists such as Egypt's Sayyid Qutb, who consigns ethnicity, tribalism and nationalism to the category of the *jahiliyya* (time of ignorance)" (Eickelman and Piscatori 2004: 100).

The influence of the early Salafists like Qutb can be seen in these responses to the question of ethnic and religious identity. I already stated in the previous chapter that the Salafi prefer to separate their religious identity from their national identity when exploring the categories of *Zhonghua minzu* against *Huizu* (see section 7.1.4), and in that section saw that the reason given was that these national and ethnic designations are viewed as the work of man, and not the work of Allah. I concluded there that the only categories of identity accepted by Salafis are the common humanity and the identity as Muslim. The Salafi respondents did not accept Hui as an identifying category, although the imam was very careful to couch his responses in a more politically sensitive way, going on to say:

> "Politics and that kind of subject is not a category we teach. Because we are in China's big family, we Hui are good, and the Uyghurs are good – each is a member of China's big family." [#30]

It seems important that he maintain a surface level adherence to the Party-State focus on national unity, especially when being interviewed by a foreigner, but he is more antagonistic towards the Party-State pronouncements than the other respondents, going on to ridicule the much vaunted ideology of mutual adaptability:

> "Definitely there are places of adaptability, and places of no adaptability – for instance our Chinese nation's principal thinking is atheism, right? Another is putting the economy at the centre, right?" [#30]

He was very clear that in these there is no adaptability.

Thus the focus for the Salafi is entirely on religious identity, which will become clearer when we go on in the next section to look at the community that common Muslim identity creates – that transnational imaginary *ummah* community referred to by Bilici:

> "*Ummah* is a body politic but not primarily in political terms. *Ummah* is an imagined community, limited but not sovereign" (Bilici 2006: 320).

Summary of attitudes to ethno-religious identity

It is evident that there is a degree of variance between the interviewees of different sects when it comes to ethnic and religious identity. Although I have shown that among Old Teaching adherents the ethnic and religious identity of Muslim Hui are confused and conflated, and that this situation persists among some Ikhwan respondents, I have also shown that among hard-line Ikhwan there is a much stronger separation of the ethnic and religious identity. The moderate Ikhwan see religious identity as paramount, and indeed ethnic identity as derivative and dependent on that religious identity. The Salafi significantly downplay all ethnic and national affiliations, preferring only to speak of being Muslim. A spectrum of understanding of religious identity can thus be seen across the sectarian groups, ranging from an apparent ignorance of difference (Qadim/Sufi), through a separation of ethnic and religious categories of identity (hard-line Ikhwan), to a dependence of ethnic identity on religious identity (moderate Ikhwan), and an exclusive focus on religious identity and denial of the relevance of ethnic and national categories (Salafi).

From my preparatory work and early interviews I expected to discover a range of emphases. The hard-line Ikhwan were clearest on the separation of ethnic and religious identity, but they did not seem to preference the religious identity over the ethnic to the same degree as the moderate Ikhwan and certainly the Salafists did. What did become clear is that asserting the priority of Islamic identity over national and State-imposed categories of identity has for many become a new sign of adherence to Islamic orthodoxy. But would this shift in identity understanding among the so-called revivalists persist when examining the sensitive question of dual loyalty, to *ummah* and to the nation?

8.2   Patriotism and the *Ummah*

The formation of a strong, cohesive national identity is critical in the formation of the nation-state. I previously explored in chapter two the Habermasian ideal to separate the *demos* and the *ethnos* in multicultural societies. Though the *ethnos* is important for social life, it cannot be allowed to be the basis of political life, instead the *demos* needs to be emphasised through something he terms 'constitutional patriotism' (Habermas 1999: 39). In a stable nation-state, it is the national identity that must be the focus of its citizens' concern, rather than any prior concern for a particular ethnic group, or indeed, religious loyalty. This is particularly the case when that religious loyalty could be seen by the State to be prone to a competing extra-territorial allegiance. At various periods in history, Jews, Catholics, Hindus and Muslims have been subject to accusations of dual loyalty, with a competing or prior allegiance to some other extra-territorial institution, empire or figure-head rather than the nation-state of their residence or citizenship[*]. The transnationality of Islam is popularly conceptualised as a problem (Levey and Modood 2009: 15-16). Indeed, it was only when patriotism came to be accepted as a component message of Islam in China that the Hui themselves achieved both a national identity and an ethnic purpose, prior to that there was always a suspicion of fifth columnism, being thought of as 'the enemy within.'

The important role that Muslim scholars in the late Ming/early Qing played in adapting Islam to Confucianism has been discussed in chapter 4.2.1. One outcome of this process was being able to emphasise that prioritising the nation over faith was not incompatible with Islam, indeed the categories of identity rely on totally different ontological assumptions (Bilici 2006: 321). What was seen as a Confucian submission to the emperor was later replaced by submission to the State, expressed through patriotism. As I described in chapter four, several al-Azhar-educated Muslim Chinese were influential in raising patriotism to the level of Islamic obligation. Muslims are given responsibility to protect their parent's

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[*] Jews' persistent loyalty to ancestral Zion (Sachar 2007: 24); Catholics loyal to the Pope and Holy See (Goossaert and Palmer 2011: 325), a centralisation of religious authority in an extra-territorial State (Burdick 1995), and suspicion of being fifth columnists in 17th century England (Hill 1997); Muslims prior allegiance to the *ummah* (Parekh 2008: 108), and for China specifically (Israeli 2002: 18-27).

country, and in that regard Wang Jingzhai introduced the idea of love of the homeland being a tenet of faith (Ar. *hubb al-watan min al-iman*) to China in the early Republican period. This saying (alleged by many Chinese Muslims to be a *hadith* (Wang Decai 2015: 12)) arose out of the *Nahda* 'Enlightenment' movement centred around al-Azhar, where numerous Hui were studying in this period of reform, and became the foundation of the Hui's participation in the war of resistance against the Japanese – a period in history that firmly established the Hui as patriotic citizens of a new modernising state, and began to express Islam in modernist terms. The importance of scholars like al-Afghani, Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida on the development of this modernist Islam in China is significant. The embrace of modernism by Chinese (including Muslims) studying in Japan in the late Qing period coincided with the embrace of Islamic revival begun in Egypt. It is noteworthy that the key word of this movement was patriotism as a priority over faith – or *aiguo aijiao* – love country, love faith.

This development in Chinese Islam as a result of the influence of the Islamic centre interacting with the needs of the developing nation-state during the 1930s and 1940s effectively legitimised the priority of one's loyalty to the nation-state, which superseded the religious loyalty to the Qur'anic concept of the community of faith, or the *ummah*. With patriotism elevated to one of the key ideals of the Party-State, and also now raised to the level of Islamic obligation by one Islamic centre of influence, how do the Hui view what could be seen as competing loyalties? In the interviews, attempts were made to explore the relationship between love of the nation and love of the faith, but recognising that questioning patriotism was deeply sensitive, my questions were always preceded with an offer to change the subject should the respondents feel uncomfortable. Several did.

The responses are grouped once again according to sectarian allegiance.

8.2.1   Old Teaching

At the time of the Chinese Islamic reform movement, the Old Teaching Qadim was the dominant school of teaching, not only in the east, but also throughout China. The importance of the 'theory of double faith', a theory developed by the early Qing

Muslim scholars Liu Zhi, Ma Zhu and Wang Daiyu, which not only recognised non-Muslim masters (including the Mandate of Heaven) as the outflows of Allah, but also called for "*a duplicate faith toward Allah and toward the Mandate of Heaven*" (Masumi 2006: 120) demonstrates how the adaptation of Islam to Chinese Confucian culture impacted attitudes to patriotism. This emphasis on patriotism continued through the Republican and into the Communist era, and such patriotic attitudes continue to be held by the inheritors of that tradition, the Qadim, today.

Generally speaking, the attitudes to patriotism are therefore matter of fact to respondents from the Qadim. As I showed in section 7.1.1, this teaching school has a very strong, historical, national Chinese identity, and have felt a part of the Chinese nation for centuries; no respondent expressed any sense of conflict between being fully Muslim and fully Chinese. For example imam #3 only raised the question of patriotism in regard to Ma Qi and Ma Bufang's desire to adapt the Ikhwan reformism to support the nationalistic goals of Chiang Kai-shek and the Republican Army in the late 1930s (Lipman 1997: 207-209). The imam did though recount some of the contributions of Hui to the building of 'our' nation:

> "We must not treat with contempt the Hui people's contribution to our nation. For example the founder of the Ming dynasty Zhu Yuanzhang[*] and other successful generals were Hui and made great contribution." [#3]

Emphasising the contribution of the Hui in Republican struggles echoes the scholarly perspective that the consolidation of the Hui as a recognised and loyal ethnicity in China can be traced to their participation in patriotic, anti-Japanese struggles (Wan 2012: 217). The imam continued:

> "It was similar in the Qing, or in the anti-Japanese war – we had a Huihui army." [#3]

Patriotism is fully embraced by this imam, and seen as part and parcel of being a Chinese citizen, which is uncontroversial to the Qadim.

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[*] It is common among Hui to claim Zhu Yuanzhang was Hui, whereas actually this is disputed. Indeed, attributing any ethnic status to people in China's history is fraught with difficulty (Crossley 1990: 1).

However, what is noteworthy given the tactical attempt to conflate Party, State and Nation, is that this patriotic fervour is clearly directed towards the country, and not to the Party-State:

> "Right now there is no conflict between the Party member and religious belief...in the past you had to say, 'my loyalty is to the Party, I give my life to the Party' – if we were to say that we would have a conflict with our faith."
> [#3]

There is no expressed loyalty to the Party-State, whatever sense of loyalty to the country there may be. The idea of pledging loyalty to the Party is antithetical to Islam in the view of this imam.

The Sufi shaykh #2 at one of the tomb complexes did not respond to the question of patriotism at all. When I asked him about the origin of the phrase '*hubb al-watan min al-iman*' he studiously (and my field notes say deliberately) ignored me and carried on reading, avoiding the subject. The leader of one of the other minor tomb complexes was a patriotic, country-loving pragmatist, but in a discussion of the priority of patriotism or a love for the *ummah* his one unguarded comment was:

> "There is no way that we could secede even if we wanted to." [#8]

A rare mention of secession, couching religious dreams in the pragmatism of reality.

We can see the continued strong influence of the historical Chinese Islamic centre of Islamic thinkers like Wang Daiyu and Liu Zhi seeking a Confucian expression for Islam reflected in responses from Old Teaching. This is reflected by contemporary Old Teaching adherents such as family head #6 in his comments on patriotism:

> "Islam is loyal to one's country and filial to one's family. Loyalty to the Prophet leads us to return to the Prophet and be loyal to teacher, filial to parents and belonging to those who govern."

This is very close to the exact formulation Wang Daiyu outlined in his work "*Exegesis of the True Religion*" (*Zhengjiao zhenquan*) previously cited, that you have

three duties, submit to Allah, submit to the King, submit to your father. This respondent had a strong identity as a Chinese citizen,

> "As far as the common people are concerned, there is no kind of contradiction [between being Chinese and being Muslim]…we only live well as a citizen ought to as a duty, we do not violate the country's laws or regulations." [#6]

Does this attitude derive from Party-State influence, or from the Islamic centre influence? Certainly, polycentric Islamic influence does includes a strong internally developed and Confucianised expression of Islam, which emphasised patriotism. However, in the opinion of student #4, patriotism is derived from the Party-State influence through patriotic education. He reflects:

> "From entering kindergarten Chinese people, it is hard to say, but it is a kind of brainwashing process of loyalty to the Party and loyalty to China."

This is the emphasis of the education that all receive, but this student certainly has accepted the view of the traditional Qadim Islamic centre of influence by also affirming that:

> "Love of the country is a part of Islam – this is a *hadith*, it is also a sentence in the books we study." [#4]

So the instrumentalisation of Islam in support of the Party-State emphasis on patriotism can be seen to have several origins. Firstly, it appears in the modernist reinterpretation of Islamic teaching that accompanied the rise of the nation-state; secondly, it appeared in the defensive attempts to assure the imperial leaders that Muslims were no threat to their authority; and thirdly it appears in the socialist adaptation of Islam to suit the Party-State purpose of prioritising love of country ahead of love of the faith. The challenge is that the Hui Muslims interviewed will generally express the reverse, that their faith always comes first. If Islam truly is adaptable in this area, and there is no conflict between love for country and a love for the community of Islamic believers, then the Hui are able to fully play their part as uncompromised Muslim citizens. However, as I turn to the more reformist, even fundamentalist, respondents I would expect to see a stronger expression of loyalty to the *ummah*, since the conception of *ummah* was rarely discussed or even raised

by Old Teaching, with the exception of one slightly guarded and realistic recognition of the religious dream not being pragmatic.

8.2.2 Moderate Ikhwan

The range of responses among the Ikhwan is wider, given the range of viewpoints spread across the two main Ikhwan sects. One of the major ways of interrogating this question was to explore the well-known and oft-quoted saying, claimed by some as a *hadith*, '*hubb al watan min al-iman'* (love of the fatherland is a tenet of faith), and seeking to understand what the Ikhwan believe about patriotism, and how love for the homeland impacts any sense of prior allegiance to the *ummah*.

Imam #10 made it clear that he firmly believed in a loyalty and patriotism towards the country, his homeland. He expressed it with an interesting analogy:

"Let me give you an analogy, suppose China, this land is the Hui's mother, and Islam is the Hui's father. As far as the children are concerned, the mother has the greater emotional attachment and is more liked, but it is the father's genes that have the greatest influence on the child. This is how I would emphasise it." [#10]

The emotional attachment to the notion of 'motherland' is held deeply by this imam, yet he concedes that the greater influence on him is Islam. This prioritises in his mind the influence of the Islamic centre above that of the Party-State. Indeed, when I reflected his analogy back to him I said "*you say Islam is the Hui's father and Chinese government is the Hui's mother*" he was very quick to interrupt and say:

"No, not the government, the country!" [#10]

His allegiance very clearly was to the country, the land of China, and very definitely not to the Party-State, despite the conflation of Party with State with Nation discussed in chapter two.

This same imam however shed doubt on the veracity that *hubb al-watan min al-iman* was actually a *hadith*:

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"First we have to say whether those words were or were not a *hadith* of Muhammad, and there are different views." [#10]

The utilisation of this so-called *hadith* by the Party-State to emphasise the value of patriotism was initiated by Wang Jingzhai in the 1930s, as he sought (in vain initially) for some support for patriotism in the authoritative sources of Islam. Eventually he discovered this saying supported by some Egyptian al-Azhar scholars. There is a very mixed reaction to claims that this is a *hadith*. Imam #16 has doubts:

"You can say it is from the *hadith*, but which one I am not really sure since I have never read it there. It may not be a *hadith* at all."

Yet there are several learned and educated imams who accept this as a core teaching of Islam, even claiming to know where this saying may be found:

"Love of the country is a tenet of faith – this is probably found in the *hadith* Nawawi, and is reliable." [#15]

Imam #12 also believes this to be a published *hadith*, though he didn't know where.

"*Hubb al-watan min al-iman*? This is published as a *hadith*."

In actual fact, this saying is not a *hadith*, does not appear in Imam Nawawi's collection, and has been shown by Islamic scholars to be nothing more than a saying, an aphorism, and yet importantly, the moderate Ikhwan agree that even if it is not a *hadith,* the saying is true, and in line with Islamic teaching[*]. For instance, imam #10 said:

"Whether he wrote it or not that sentence itself is not wrong, because when Muhammad left Mecca, his home, his watan, he said 'I swear by God you are

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[*] That this is an alleged *hadith* is confirmed by my personal correspondence with a *hadith* scholar at Oxford University, Belal Alabbas, who wrote "According to the *hadith* manual the *hadith* you enquired about is not considered and in fact does not occur in any of the six canonical collections. There is a general agreement that the *hadith* is not valid but there is disagreement whether its meaning is acceptable."

my favourite place'…for people to like their home is normal, and Muslims cannot oppose it. I have no way of not liking China, for I am Chinese."

This perspective is very significant, since while some claim that the *hadith* thus gives their love for China an Islamic authority, this imam says it matters not whether this *hadith* is reliable or not, since Muhammad clearly demonstrated a love for homeland that this Chinese Muslim cannot help but experience toward China. This could be seen as a clear case of emotion driving theology, in that the individual feels love for China and so must find a way to justify it.

I wanted to further explore the concept of *watan* from this saying, since in the Chinese translation of the Qur'an the word country or nation (*guo*) is used for *watan*, but what notion of 'country' was the Prophet allegedly referring to? When I pressed imam #15 on this, he clearly stated that *al-watan*:

"…means country - your own country."

When I queried this he went on to say:

"When the Prophet spoke this *hadith* he was probably indicating the caliphate, and his saying was directed at Muslim countries, but this has been handed down to Muslims spread all over the world…so in our mind loving our own country is our faith. If we didn't love our country how would we be standard citizens, how would we be the Prophet's good *ummah*? We feel Muslims should be patriotic toward any country they live in." [#15]

Fascinatingly, he first introduces the concept of the Caliphate here, but goes on to reinterpret this for the modern nation-state world. This is a clear application of an earlier Islamic theory to the modern world, that a love for the country of your citizenship is the same as love for *watan*. I wanted to press him and his friends on this, and explored the theoretical dichotomy of *Dar al-Harb/Dar al-Islam*. Does orthodox theology not teach that either Muslims should seek to move to a Muslim country, or through struggle seek to establish a Muslim country in the place of their residence? Imam #15 answered:

"You have the right to choose, so you can move to an Arabian country. But at the moment we do not have the right to choose, since our family

members are too numerous – I feel our lifestyle is not in conflict with the constitution of the country, so we feel we must love our country, why fear if it is a non-Muslim country?"

His imam friend [#13] explained further:

"You cannot say this country is *Dar al-Harb* – when we can live and can practise our faith in safety we cannot have holy war – that would be unlawful. You can say that if our Muslim's safe lifestyle in China was attacked, then China becomes the enemy – but China is good. If we Muslims were to face menace and a threat to our lifestyle, then it becomes the enemy. But our life, property and freedoms are all protected, so we do not call it the enemy." [#13]

This unguarded response seemed to shock even himself, and he quickly backtracked to deny that at any stage of Chinese history such conditions for jihad had ever been reached:

"Even before reform and opening, though freedom of the people had not been reached, nor religion too, property was still protected and you were allowed to practise religion privately…[so conditions for jihad not reached]." [#13]

This question of struggle towards establishing *Dar al-Islam*, or seeking the establishment of the caliphate, while an extremely sensitive question still provoked much discussion. Imam #16 said:

"In today's China there is no one with that kind of thought [establishing a caliphate], of establishing any kind of independence, whether among China's Muslim scholars or among the common people because it is not realistic."

Imam #10 agreed:

"We cannot because of a distant theory ignore the reality of things as they are."

As did another imam #12:

"We are relatively realistic, if you were to separate yourself from the current reality and set up an empire like you suggest, we are unable already to return to that…we say in China, we are born in China and on the one hand we have local responsibility to abide by our laws and respect our government…we cannot have any inordinate ambitions."

It is noteworthy to see such pragmatic realism tempering any hopes of establishing an Islamic Caliphate, or even in fostering some sense of pan-national *ummah* belonging.

The strong influence of Party-State ideology, together with particular freedom to practice Islam with minimal interference from Party-State organs of power, and a realisation of the unattainability, even undesirability, of change combine to support a pragmatic acceptance of the status quo, and a desire to find and support theological reasons for maintaining it.

For instance, imam #11 quoted his speech at a symposium on "The Hui and the Chinese dream":

"My subject is, 'the positive function of the four distinctives of Hui people in the current *Zhonghua minzu* culture.' In my analysis, the Hui distinctives are, first: patriotism. In Hui history our distinctive is contending with religious disputes, not disputes with the country. This is to say, when our faith received freedom of development, we didn't interfere in who held power, you can see that. Furthermore, the Hui really loved the country, for example, from history, our ancestors came from remote Arabia and Persia along the Silk Road to China, they discovered this land suited their development, so they settled here, intermarried here, and flourished, they received their dreamland, so they loved this country. So in our faith, in our doctrine there is a very important sentence, "love of country is a tenet of Islam", so although all nationalities love the country, Hui patriotism is raised to the level of high level religious belief – I think this is an exceptional situation. Also, patriotic examples in history are numerous, from Zhou Baogui (a commended patriot) to Ma Benzhai (Hui who fought Japanese, and joined CCP)."

> "If you are not patriotic, how can your country be strong…only with patriotism can there be construction and protection." [#11]

He says that patriotism has been raised to the level of religious belief, in line with what Wang Kuan and Wang Jingzhai had sought to achieve in the Nationalist period. This has accomplished two things; first, it strengthens the Islamic identity of Hui people, since it gives Islamic authority to the patriotic beliefs of many Muslim Hui. The people can see that their response to Party-State demands for patriotism are religious rather than political responses. Second, it also therefore strengthens the national identity of the Hui, since they are able with full Islamic conscience to subscribe to the Party-State doctrine of 'love for country, love for faith' (*aiguo aijiao*) without being concerned about the relative priority of these two loves.

This strong argument for patriotism seems to define the moderate Ikhwan approach, although there are dissenting views. A former classmate of imam #11 believes that interpreting *al-watan* as your homeland is a very self-centred view:
> "The true orthodox ahongs do not think this way [that watan refers to your homeland], this is the contemporary scholarly trend, erroneously following the status quo translation. The real '*hubb al-watan*' is not a selfish scheme." [#12]

He seems to be arguing against the use of this alleged *hadith* to accomplish personal goals, although he was unwilling to expand upon this it seems he does take a slight contrary position – mainly against the use of this *hadith* to affirm patriotism.

The question then presents itself, if Chinese Muslims' prior loyalty is to the '*watan*', that is to their homeland of China, then what is the salience of the *ummah*, that transnational imaginary, the brotherhood of all Muslims? What are the range of feelings towards the *ummah*? What definition is given for *ummah*, for in the Chinese translation of the Qur'an there is a seeming confusion, since the word *ummah* is translated *minzu*. Qur'an Surah 2:143 states:

> "Thus have we made of you an *ummah* (*minzu*) justly balanced." (Surah 2:143)

This Chinese translation by Ma Jian is the most commonly used version in China, begun in 1949-51 and published posthumously in 1981 (Jin Gui 2016; Spira 2005). Imam #20 says this merely indicates the challenge of Qur'anic translation:

> "Different people translate [*ummah*] differently – you can't translate it."

He explains that *ummah* means faith community, which is very different from the socio-political category of ethnic group*, minzu:*

> "*Ummah* is a subject that comes from faith, a republic of faith of different races and different nationalities, but a common faith. The word *minzu* in Arabic is *Sha'b*, which has nothing to do with faith." [#20]

In that this imam was highly-educated we can be confident that his perspective on semantics is accurate. However, the transnationality of the *ummah* as he defines it would be a challenge politically to the unity and integrity of the Chinese nation-state.

Although the most common and widely used Qur'an in modern China is that of Ma Jian, it is neither the earliest nor the only translation[*]. When Wang Jingzhai (who introduced the saying *hubb al-watan min al-iman* to China) translated Surah 2:143 in the first complete Qur'an translated by a Chinese Muslim in 1932, he rendered ummah as yihuo:

> "I in the same way have made you become an *ummah* (Ch. *yihuo*) justly balanced " (Surah 2:143, Wang Jingzhai version)

There is a significant difference between the term *minzu* and *yihuo* – the first easily being confused with the socio-political category, the latter being much more generic as 'a group'. This development from thinking of *ummah* as a group to proposing *ummah* as a *minzu* could be seen to be the significant influence that Ma Jian brought to Islamic identity for the Hui.

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[*] Some even earlier Chinese translations are receiving increased attention among Sino-Muslim scholars (Ma Jing 2015).

So when I returned to the meaning of *minzu tuanjie*, and could this in fact be interpreted as *ummah tuanjie* i.e. the unity of all Muslims, or whether we should focus only on the unity of all fifty-six ethnicities, imam #20 responded:

> "These are two very different things."

Imam #16 was helpful in trying to explain that the concept of *ummah* as somehow related to the land, the promised land of Saudi Arabia, was flawed:

> "Allah never said your land, your soil is Muslim – Islam only asks that you believe in Allah, your land and your customs, your native language etc. these things do not need to be changed…so as long as you do not seriously interfere with our religion and don't seriously slander our religion then we are people from here. I am a Qinghai person, a Xining person, and East District man, but these never influence me being a Muslim."

The understanding then that he brings is that regardless of your homeland, you can be equally Muslim and patriotic.

Away from the clerics, the layman also has fixed views on the place of patriotism for Muslims – it is sometimes associated with the fullness of the mixed cultural education they receive. Student #17 sees Islamic and Confucian cultures as compatible in many areas:

> "You often discover that the two cultures, especially at the essential places, are often the same – respect the old, cherish the young…you must be patriotic."

So while such Confucian concepts as respect for the old and cherish the young has clear support in the Qur'an, for example Surah 17:23-24, or in the *hadith* of for example Al-Tirmidhi or Abu Dawud (Sound Vision 2016), there is no support for patriotism in these sources, and the majority opinion is on patriotism being un-Islamic.

And yet this student confesses to having:

> "…a very intimate feeling about the *ummah*…but regarding my country, this is my country, this is my home and I love it more. But for the *ummah* I have

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an intimate feeling, and we sometimes yearn for it…but since I was born in this country I still live according to the laws of this country." [#17]

It seems to be a divided loyalty – the one to an ideal that seems impossible to realise, the other to the reality of natal identity:

"We hope to achieve mutual assimilation – not to say I want something unconventional such as to let myself become really independent - we don't have that kind of thinking. But regarding the *ummah* we yearn, we really yearn like for an old friend…if only you were to let me go to the *ummah*, allow me to go there, assimilate to it I would not be opposed. But if you let me stay in China then I wouldn't be really unhappy – probably it is like this." [#17]

These moderate Ikhwan respondents seem fairly rational in their assessment of dual loyalty. They embrace patriotism as an outcome of the modernist tendency of Islamic reform, yet seek to identify with the global *ummah.* There is a recognition that pragmatically speaking they neither have nor need any conception of a true territorial *ummah*, some kind of pan-national Islamic state, and maintain that working within the constraints of the ethnic and religious policy of China is permissible, even desirable with the Islamic influence they have received. However, there is occasionally an undercurrent of guarded threat, a conditional submission and obedience to the Party-State being based on continuing the growing freedom provided by the Constitution to practise their faith. Should those freedoms be restricted, identification with and desire for transnational allegiance may grow.

8.2.3   Hard-line Ikhwan

I have previously expressed the view that the hard-line Ikhwan are those who seek to maintain the original reformism introduced by Ma Wanfu, which focused on removing Chinese cultural accretions from China's Islam. The strong opposition by the Ikhwan and Salafi to Sufism and what is perceived as Confucian syncretism was explored in chapter seven, and it may be expected that since patriotism is also supported by reference to Confucian ideology that this too may be opposed by the

hard-line Ikhwan. However, such expressed opposition would be contrary to the Party-State ideology, and certainly unwise to express to foreign researchers. However, it may be that such a rejection of Confucian influence leads to potentially weaker support for the expression of patriotism as a tenet of Islam (under influence of the Islamic centre), even if patriotism as an expression of ethnic and national identity was fully supported (under influence of the Party-State centre).

In my interviews the subject of patriotism was not discussed by the various hard-line imams interviewed, though it was raised by some of the students and other hard-line respondents, such as respondent #23:

> "How can we realise patriotism? A major point of patriotism is ethnic unity – don't violate the national law, violating such things as human morals, because first of all your religion forbids it…and second, national law is a restraint."

He, in common with the moderate Ikhwan, seems to have accepted an interpretation of patriotism and Islam in line with these Confucian ideals of submission to rulers. His reference to obedience to national law was something emphasised in the interpretation of the Qur'an in the official *wa'z* collection (see for example sermon v1.1, v1.4, v3.4), demonstrating again the influence of the Party-State. But we can also see that this emphasis is supported by the Islamic centre of influence, when that influence is an acceptance of the Confucianised Islam that treats submission to rulers as part of Islamic faith.

Student #24 has also accepted some of the current ideology promoted by Party-State that is supported by a Confucian understanding of Islam:

> "Islam teaches this – love your country, love your faith – this derives from *imani* (faith)."

A clear patriotic statement by a hard-line Ikhwan student, and seeming full acceptance of compatibility of patriotism with Islam.

Although the imams did not raise or respond to questions on patriotism, examining the identity of the *ummah* led to more fruitful discussion. For instance, imam #28 said:

> "The Hui are a *minzu*…these *minzu* represent a condition of the people, the different conditions of the people, different *minzu*, but the most important is that we put the *ummah* as the most important."

So if the prior allegiance is to the concept of *ummah,* what is his understanding of the *ummah*?

> "The *ummah* is in the realm of religion…those believing in Islam, abiding by the Qur'an and abiding by the *hadith* – this is the *ummah*." [#28]

A view shared by imam #22's student:

> "The *ummah* is every Muslim in the world." [#24]

This is a fairly standard understanding – the community of the faithful. Yet imam #28 goes on to assert that:

> "The Muslim *minzu* is the *ummah*."

I was unclear about his use of the word '*minzu*' here, so I asked of the relative importance of the religious *ummah* or the ethnic category *Huizu* or even national identity *Zhonghua minzu* and he responded with:

> "As far as we are concerned, the *ummah* is the most important." [#28]

So in terms of religious identity, in terms of allegiance and loyalty, his stated belief is that the *ummah,* the Muslim *minzu* has the first place. So how does he reconcile this with the teaching that patriotism is a tenet of faith? He affirms that *hubb al-watan min al-iman*:

> "This is from the *hadith*…exactly where I don't know, but it is in the *hadith*." [#28]

He also asserts that the correct way to understand *watan* is:

> "*Watan* means country – your *watan* is the place where you live, your hometown – so China is our homeland." [#28]

Student #24 agrees:

> "*Watan* is your country…if you are British Muslim you must love Britain."

Thus he sees support in the *Sunna* for loving your homeland, China. But what of relative loyalty between these two concepts? When pressed on the priority of *ummah* vs *watan* he replied:

> "Wherever you live, in whatever country, if you do not love your country then the country will not give you a platform to do whatever you want to do, and you would have no way of practising your religion." [#28]

This is a very pragmatic view. It does not demonstrate the kind of ardent love so often professed for China. Patriotism for this man is a means to an end – and that end is being permitted to practise your religion. Once again the need for the country to continue to permit freedom for Muslims to practise their faith is seen as of paramount importance, and once again as with the moderate Ikhwan there are those unguarded moments where the dream of something bigger seems to emerge. When asking about the Hui dream in the context of the Chinese dream, student #25 replied:

> "The Caliphate. Now that dream is a good dream – but just at the moment under American interference it is not possible."

So it does seem possible that the hard-line Ikhwan are more ambivalent towards a strong patriotic sentiment, and conceive of the *ummah* as primary, although the quantity of evidence is lighter than is desirable, owing to the difficulty and sensitivity of the subject:

> "Regarding that [the *ummah* and *watan*] I have not seen it in our books, so I'd better not say, because it is serious in regard to Islamic education." [#27].

8.2.4 Salafi

Having seen the way in which both strands of Ikhwan accept the sentiment of the disputed *hadith*, and in different ways reflect the patriotism demanded by the Party-State and permitted by their Islamic belief, I turn now to the Salafi response.

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I previously concluded that for Salafi respondents the only category of identity that mattered to them was that of being Muslim, and they resisted all man-made categories of identity. Thus I found that Salafism in Xining seems largely apolitical, and denies any relevance for patriotism with Islamic belief, as imam #30 states:

> "The earth belongs to Allah, all the earth's Muslims are brothers, and are not separated by national boundaries."

Hence there is no place for patriotic belief within Islam. This imam also utterly rejects the credibility of *hubb al watan min al-iman* as a reliable *hadith*:

> "This is not a *hadith* – it is a motto, an aphorism, and we must separate these from the *hadith* since their position is very different." [#30]

> "If we say that the love of the fatherland is a tenet of Islam then patriotism fetters faith – restricts it. This kind of thinking is extremely parochial – we should love the world's people." [#30]

He sees patriotism classically in Salafi thought as derived from man, and not from Allah:

> "As for westerners, patriotism is a kind of patriotic story that you have in your education from being young. From our Islamic perspective the earth including everything in it belongs to Allah" [#30]

The resistance to all accretions to Islam cause this strand of Islam in Xining to reject the work of Wang Daiyu, Liu Zhi and Ma Zhu, and see patriotism taught in official Islam as unorthodox.

> "I don't say Islam is my father and China my mother. To my understanding the world is not anyone's, the world is Allah's. So these countries divided into territories are thus divided by men – this is all men's work, and it is of no purpose." [#30]

Since *ummah* is a clear Qur'anic concept, I was eager to hear his interpretation of the importance of the *ummah* today:

> "Of course there are two opinions – Allah says "all Muslims are brothers" and the relationships between brothers is different from the rest of

humanity…we have different levels of relationship…we can say that all believers are brothers in a special sense. But the other opinion from a broad sense is that all men have common ancestry – Adam and Eve – and from this perspective we are all brothers." [#30]

Here he was keen it seemed to downplay the strong affinity of Muslims with co-religionists and stress the brotherhood of humanity, yet he returned to what he saw as an unhelpful dichotomy of love for country and love for faith. He would not see these as incompatible, just that they belong to two very different conceptual categories:

"I would say Islam is my father and my mother. We should take our faith and our country and separate the concepts. At the national level of course I am Chinese…and I love this place, every blade of grass, every tree, mountain…but this is not faith. Faith and country are two different concepts." [#30]

There is no doubt that the expressed Salafi position is strongly influenced by an Islamic centre in opposition to the Confucianised message of the Old Teaching, or indeed the official Islam promoted by the Party-State. Claiming patriotism as a tenet of Islam, or raising it to the level of religious belief, is firmly resisted by the Salafis. Faith is faith, and nation is nation – it is irrelevant to faith whether you are patriotic or not; clearly this Salafi respondent loved his country, but he loved Islam and the *ummah* more. We can see a closer connection between the Salafi position and the moderate Ikhwan position in this shared attitude. We can also see a significant disconnect between the Salafi position and the Old Teaching position.

Conclusion: Religious and Ethnic Identity as understood by the Hui

In chapter seven I showed how the Party-State downplays religious identity, and clearly preferences and promotes the ethnic category of identity. What the above interviews demonstrate is that ethnic identity is certainly not the priority identity expressed by Hui men of all sects at the grass roots level, whether by significant mosque leaders, or by the students, or others in the Muslim community. A Muslim religious identity is the primary expressed identity. For some respondents this

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involves a strong expression of commitment to the *ummah* of all believers, but more usually the commitment is to some form of sectarian unity, and a rejection of other sectarian beliefs.

Although Old Teaching respondents made little distinction between ethnic and religious categories, merging and conflating them, yet they were strongest in asserting their sectarian religious identity. That there was minimal distinction between being Muslim and being Hui demonstrates clearly that the ethno-religious identity of the Old Teaching is fully fused, and the respondents related to this identity as historically-rooted Chinese Muslims, celebrating their Islamic faith. The primary concern of Old Teaching adherents was in defending the integrity of their Islamic position, and resisting the extreme pressures of *takfirism* by other sects. At the same time, being Chinese Muslims with a strong sense of belonging to the Chinese nation, and a pride in their unique expression of a truly Chinese localised Islam, attitudes to patriotism and love for the nation were uncontroversial, and widely held, although they would not go so far as to embrace a Party-State loyalty. The Old Teaching fully embraced the notion of patriotism as the duty of a Chinese citizen, and indeed the mandate of the Islamic faith. They made no mention of the *ummah,* whether through ignorance, irrelevance or avoidance is unclear in the evidence.

Within the Ikhwan interviewed the now familiar division between the hard-line Ikhwan continuing the reforms of Ma Wanfu, and the moderate, possibly Wahhabi-influenced Ikhwan was again evident. Both of these groups demonstrated a religious identity as primary, and recognised an ethnic category of identity also. For the moderate Ikhwan this ethnic category was derivative, and relied entirely on the Islamic religious identity - to cease to be Muslim was to cease to be Hui. Although there were two clearly identified categories, one ethnic and one religious, yet the priority placed on the religious, and the fact that it gave a reason for the ethnic category, clearly showed that the Party-State priority on emphasising the ethnic category was less influential. The Ikhwan were also somewhat divided in their patriotic expressions towards China. Both moderate and hard-liners saw that patriotism was compatible with Islam; some it seemed out of a belief that it was indeed a tenet of Islam, taught by the Prophet; others from a true passion for the

land of their birth, whereas still others more for pragmatic reasons of this being the only realistic way that they could continue practising Islam. The moderate groups showed a greater sense of the pragmatic difficulty in identifying with a global *ummah*; although they were warm towards *ummah* feeling, the reality is that any sense of pan-national movements are just not practical, and importantly not necessary given the good circumstances under which the Hui currently live. For hard-line Ikhwan respondents, the religious and ethnic categories were more clearly distinguished, and separated. The former was not constitutive of the latter in the same way the moderate Ikhwan viewed things. Indeed, the recognition that there were indeed some Hui who did not believe in Islam shows that in fact the hard-liners were closer to Party-State conceptions of identity categories, yet they too prioritised the religious category over the ethnic, contrary to the Party-State desire, although their expression of religious identity, similar to the Old Teaching, was strongly sectarian. The hard-line imams were reticent to discuss patriotism and the *ummah* with me, but the other respondents were very strongly positive of the priority of *ummah* allegiance, but interpreted the *ummah* as being the Muslim *minzu*, though with sufficient ambiguity to see *ummah tuanjie* as in line with government stipulations. The acceptance of patriotism as a tenet of Islam and belief on *hadith* justification for this position is supported by acceptance of the Chinese ideals of submission to rule.

The Salafi respondents gave no importance to ethnic or national categories of identity relative to the all-encompassing religious category of Muslim. This was the only category that mattered, all else was man-made and of no matter. The ethnic category of identity was disputed, and other than the brotherhood of all humanity, the priority to a faith identity was held above all. For these Salafi, patriotism belongs to a different category of behaviour than faith. In faith the *ummah* is everything and the country is nothing, and they firmly resist the elevation of patriotism to the level of religious belief. At the level of emotional feeling, though many Salafi express patriotic allegiance to the nation of their birth, it is a relatively low priority for them though when compared with inter-Muslim sentiment, although they are apolitical and any thoughts of pan-national organisation is firmly denied.

It is noteworthy that most Hui interviewed in Xining demonstrate a love for their homeland that is in line with patriotism, but they are by no means supporters of the Communist Party. You rarely see any Muslims involved in celebration of the many Communist Party anniversaries, slogans in praise of government are rare in the mosques, yet prolific outside. In the interviews there was rarely any positive mention of the role of the Party or the State, and often an undercurrent of disapproval coupled with a pragmatism of the powerless. Ma Qiang's observation that historically when cultural symbols that were in conflict with Islam were imposed on the Hui, such as the imperial period requirement to erect a tablet in praise of the emperor, and have the Muslims bow to it, the Hui gradually found ways to eliminate the practice is pertinent here (Ma Qiang 2016: 18). The Hui are both realists and pragmatists, and yet underlying this in Xining is a rising Scriptural literalism in the revival tradition, which should government policy change and assimilation again be actively and forcefully pursued, could result in a backlash not only in the internal Hui world, but also in the way in which China is seen by trading and business partners in the Islamic world, and in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation. In order to guard against the rising religious identity, and the potential unification of non-patriotic sentiment, is it possible that the Party-State passively permit, or actively encourage internal sectarian struggle to prevent a unified Islam with developing *ummah* allegiance? Is sectarianism actually fostered, with political space given for wide diversity and mutual criticism, so long as no one sect advocates any of the three evils of splittism, extremism or terrorism?

The twin influences on the Hui inhabiting Xining demonstrably seek very different emphases in identity construction. The Party-State engages in a comprehensive attempt to influence Muslims specifically through the adaptation of Islam to prioritise national identity, an ethnic understanding of being Hui, and a patriotic duty to support the nation, submit to the law and strive to the collective realisation of the Chinese dream. The various Islamic centres reflected in the current sectarian distinctions in Islam interact with this message in different ways, resisting the minimization of Islamic religious identity, and seeking a collective, powerful and politically influential intra-Muslim Hui identity. However, the persistent sectarian arguments and conflicts conspire to undermine Hui unity and solidarity.

Chapter Nine: Negotiating Hui Identity in Xining

The Sino-Muslims of northwest China have always been located between two centres of civilisational influence: the hegemonic governing centre of China, and a polycentric Islamic influence, both of which shaped the identity of the people known as Hui Muslims, and equally shaped Islam in China. The politics of identity negotiation between being Chinese and being Muslim has a long history of scholarly discussion, summarised in chapter one. The construction of Hui ethnic identity in the Communist period represents the attempt of the current hegemonic centre to ascribe an ethnic identity to certain Muslim people, an identity that is not defined by Islamic belief, and also to fully incorporate this culturally defined ethnic group into the promoted national identity of *Zhonghua minzu*. Islamic belief and practice are thus relegated in prominence to being mere aspects of cultural customs. The goal of constructing such a common national identity is to strengthen the development of the modern Chinese nation-state, uniting the complex and diverse people of China around a newly constructed common national identity.

Hui studies have developed from the more general overview that characterised the last decades of the twentieth century, concerned as they were with identifying the origin and development of Hui and Uyghur people especially. Recent decades have focused on more localised studies; rather than general 'Islam in China', scholars recommend that a narrower focus of scholarship, making use of cross-disciplinary approaches, is now required. Various studies that seek to understand Hui identity and situating it with relation to the Party-State have been conducted. In addition, explorations of the developing nature of Chinese Islam and its sectarian character, as well as the connections between Chinese Islam and international Islam have also been carried out, particularly in the late twentieth century. This study has sought to develop both areas of scholarship, connecting the negotiation of Hui identity not only in their relationship to the governing centre, but also to the changing and diverse Islamic influences on concepts of identity. The particular examination of how the different sects respond to various promotions of national, ethnic and religious identity, and how grass-roots Hui experience dual competing influences of both the Party-State and the Islamic centre, are unique approaches to exploring this question of negotiated Hui identity.

The diversity of responses obtained during interviews demonstrate a diversity in attitude towards these various ascribed identities that is strongly related to the sectarian influence to which the Hui subscribe. Whereas previous studies focus strongly on the powerful influence of the Chinese state, this study seeks to balance this with a recognition of the continued and growing influence of various Islamic teachings, such that the strongly promoted national and ethnic identity are accepted by some, amended and incorporated by others, and resisted by still others. The original contribution that this research project makes to the field of Hui studies lies in the demonstration that a primary reason for the varied response of different Hui groups to the identity question is their sectarian allegiance, and this allegiance represents distinct Islamic influences, both past and present, that are often of more significance in identity construction than the prevailing political centre narrative. The strengthening of an assumed Muslim identity as a primary category of identity for many Hui is also shown to be a response to the dominant influence of the Islamic centre, and a counter-response to Party-State attempts to minimise the salience of this religious identity.

The interviews were exclusively carried out with men, for reasons explained in the methodology, and as such extending the findings of this study to incorporate the entire Hui community in Xining is unwise. Gender difference clearly plays a significant part in identity construction, and limiting the study only to men, and largely imams and manla does result in a biased sample. However, a study of hegemonic influence, focusing on the dominant message received and transmitted by those in positions of authority (as undoubtedly these imams are), certainly generates valuable data about the success or otherwise of State identity politics.

The fundamental question asked in this thesis concerns the identity of Hui Muslim people in Xining, Qinghai, and how that identity has been negotiated in contemporary China between the influence of the Party-State, and the influence of Islam. It posits that:

> "The identity of the Hui community of Qinghai has always been shaped by
> its location between the Islamic community (*ummah*) and the political
> condition (and problems) of Chinese statehood. In contemporary Qinghai,
> despite intensive efforts of the Chinese state to control and shape the Hui

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identity, perceived or actual inter-relations with the Islamic world remain the dominant influence."

Islamic centres of influence include both external Islamic influences (through those teachers of Islam entering China at various periods of history, as well as returning *hajji*, and in recent years, the rising cyber-Islamic influence), as well as internal Islamic influences, that of the localised Islamic schools and sects, and the indigenised versions of Islam that have developed over the long history of Islam in China. The politics of contestation between identity as conceived by the Party-State, and identity as encouraged by the teachings of Islam represent a complex internal-external dialogue between competing influences, a dialogue which has ranged from antagonism and opposition, to pragmatism and accommodation. Building on the theoretical and historical foundation of Part One, this chapter draws together the evidence from the fieldwork set out in Part Two, and discusses this evidence in the light of the hypothesis proposed above. This final chapter seeks to evaluate this hypothesis through answering the following tiered questions:

1. *How was Hui identity in Qinghai created/ constituted and why/ how does it change?*

The first question examines the way in which Muslim identity in Xining was created, and is continually being shaped and reshaped both by changing political circumstances (the Party-State centre of influence), and by changing relationships with the Islamic world and the exposure to changing Islamic teaching (the Islamic centre of influence). This question is examined in section 9.1 below.

2. *How does the Chinese state interact with the Hui in the area of identity construction, and with what consequences? How does the global Islamic community interact with the Hui in the area of identity construction, and with what consequences?*

This question looks specifically at the interaction with the Hui of the twin centres of influence, and especially focuses on the consequences of that interaction in

constructing and influencing primary identity. Section 9.2 examines the consequences of these sometimes competing, sometimes complementary influences.

> 3. *Explain and define the balance between external centres and internal change.*

This final question seeks to define and explain the negotiation of identity between the two influences, how they interact with each other, and is examined in section 9.3. The final section 9.4 returns to the hypothesis to determine the dominance or otherwise of the Islamic identity. The chapter ends with some discussion of areas for future study.

9.1   Construction and Development of Hui Identity in Contemporary Xining

In Samuel Huntington's thesis on the clash of civilisations, the Islamic and the Chinese civilisation represent two significant world civilisations. For the Hui in China, these two significantly different civilisations constitute two collective identities that can be considered as competing for prominence in the identity construction of the Hui. The theoretical foundation for this study that was set out in chapters two and three showed that personal and collective identity are closely related, and the process of identifying who we are is essential for each individual, and for each collective. The simultaneity of similarity and difference is important in the process of identification; identity construction is a negotiation between assumed and ascribed identities, yet the dominant belief of actors themselves is that identity is primordial, and is largely a matter of lineage and blood descent. Defining who we are is a matter of assuming categories of identity, yet these categories of identity are not from a fixed, finite list of acceptable identities. Indeed, the ascription of identity is a significant function of the hegemonic centre, defining and categorizing others who are the same as, or different from, us. The contestation of identity that often results from the dialogue between an ascribed and an assumed identity often results in disagreement, disenfranchisement, and sometimes conflict.

This section describes the general process for Hui people in Xining of identity construction, the process of indigenization, looking at how the people today known as Hui gradually moved from being foreign guests, to temporary residents through full inclusion as an ethnic group and as citizens of the People's Republic of China through the hegemonic project of nation building. It first describes the historical construction of identity, and then describes the way in which a sample of Muslim Hui men today in Xining self-identify.

9.1.1 Historical Identification

The people known as Hui have always been located between two distinct identities, Muslim and Chinese. From the earliest period, Muslim people in Xining settled largely in separate communities, defined by boundaries of language, dietary habits, trade and proximity to mosques. They are known to exhibit a 'widely scattered, closely concentrated' (*da fensan xiao jizhong*) pattern of distribution; that is, they are all over China, yet they live in tightly-knit communities. Since the Song dynasty and the construction of the main Dongguan mosque in Xining, the East District of Xining city has always been the principal Muslim district, in which the majority of Muslims in Xining have lived and maintained a largely distinctive lifestyle, defined by adherence to ritual purity laws, distinctive dress, the practice of Islam and marriage propinquity. That this is the dominant Muslim district is demonstrated by the high numbers of mosques present in this district relative to the rest of the city. The presence of distinctive markets and businesses engaged in traditional Muslim-dominated professions such as trading caterpillar fungus (*dongchong xiacao*), gold, skins and furs, and the taxi and haulage businesses all demonstrate the long history of this separate Muslim enclave in Xining. The district is located outside the old city wall, now largely destroyed, a fact of great significance historically, since it more than implies a separation from the main community of Han in the city, and is a relict of the conflicts that dominated late dynastic periods, particularly in Xining history the 1895 HeHuang rebellion, described in chapter three, which saw the massacre of large numbers of Muslims and Han at each others' hands. The hegemonic centre at that time preferred to isolate Muslim communities outside the protection of the garrisoned city wall, a strategy practised not only in Xining, but in all the major Muslim settlements in

northwest China.

Chapter three explored the ethnogenesis of the Hui, and showed that until the twentieth century, the identity of *Huizu* was entirely synonymous with being a Muslim. In the imperial period, little attention was given to modern ideas of ethnic identity, a concept introduced from Japan at the end of the imperial period. Although many modern Chinese scholars seem to deny the ethnogenesis of the Hui from a collective religious identity into a constructed, modern ethnic identity, the historical facts I believe are undeniable. Ethnicity as an identity was only politicised, and made to matter, from the early twentieth century; it was a newly introduced category of identity utilised for political ends. Prior to this, any Hui identity in early, modern China must be understood contextually as meaning Muslim, although hyphenated identities were used to distinguish between Turkic Muslims (called *chantou* Hui, meaning Uyghurs and Salar particularly) and the so-called Chinese Muslims (*Han Hui*). In the process of ethnic categorization, it is true that while many Hui do trace their ancestry back to common migratory origins, and that there are aspects of culture, language and psychology that support a more historical origin to Hui ethnicity, yet it is perhaps unhelpful to ascribe a modern ethnic identity to a pre-modern age where such categories did not exist. The concern of many of these modern Hui scholars who insist that the Hui have always had an ethnic identity, is to deny that Islam is a key boundary marker between Hui and Han, as if they were only defined by their faith, a matter also discussed in chapter three. This would be problematic, as in an atheist country that officially subscribes to an ideology believing in the eventual disappearance of religion, Hui would then indeed simply be the often ridiculed 'Han with hats on'; that is, essentially Han people who happen to believe in Islam. The widespread acceptance of Hui as an ethnic identity by the Hui themselves thus is a response first to the ascription and definition of Hui identity by the hegemonic centre, and then the concession of the salience of this identity by the Islamic centre. However, in conceding the ascribed Hui identity, the Islamic centre challenges the hegemonic narrative of Hui being an ethno-cultural identity, and emphasises instead the powerful salience of Islam as the core of being Hui, in opposition to the Party-State definition.

Hui identity continues to be a source of much discussion and misunderstanding. The responses detailed in chapter seven demonstrate quite clearly that most Hui men interviewed, whether imams, students or business people self-identify as Muslim first and foremost, largely without denying a common citizenship as Chinese. The sectarian differences are significant, however, with the Old Teaching Qadim and Sufi demonstrating a clear bicultural identity as Chinese Muslim, an identity that in practice seems to continue to regard Hui and Muslim as synonymous. The Salafi were clearest in their assertion of the primacy of Muslim identity, and the moderate Ikhwan were similarly close to the Salafi position. Only the hard-line Ikhwan expressed a truly ethnic understanding of Hui identity, and only the hard-line believed it was possible to be both Hui and non-Muslim – a significant finding, as will be discussed below.

9.1.2   Changing Hui Identity

This intersection of religious and secular understandings of categories of identity, this negotiation of identity between two great civilisational influences, has always been the concern of the people today known as Hui in China. The secular construction of an ethnic identity from an original, largely religious, identity, and the possibility of acceptance of this newly constructed identity by the targeted people, is greatly impacted by how the individual and the collective consider the cultural content of that identity, and whether or not they identify themselves as essentially similar to that identity. For instance, an identity as 'Chinese' could be conceived of as little more than a Han identity, one that necessarily embraces a Confucian morality, but also accepts a diffused view of religion, an all-pervading influence of the Three Teachings, leading to the practice of religion that would be seen as idolatrous by most Muslims. An identity category that has a cultural content essentially the same as being Han is thus resisted, due to a deeply held dislike of the Han Chinese majority, based on their unclean dietary habits, their atheism, and historically grounded Hui-Han animosity. The Party-State needs to construct a national identity that binds the Hui in a stable modern nation-state, where the nation is united as a *demos* sharing a national culture. This cannot take place without recognising the strong influence of the Islamic centre on Hui identity conception, and essentially the Party-State uses an adapted Islam to construct an

ethnic and national identity category that is aimed to be acceptable to Muslims.

The strength of an Islamic identity among Hui is greatly dependent on the political space permitted for the Islamic centres to exert their influence, since religious identity likewise is not essential, it also has to be made to matter. For instance, in the most oppressive period of the Cultural Revolution, it was apparent that Islamic identity did not appear a strong identity category at all, since the space for expression of that identity had all but disappeared. Religious identity has grown significantly in China with the increased space for religious expression after reform and opening up in the 1980s, and thus the influence of the Islamic centre on the content of the ascribed Hui identity, as well as the veracity of this very identity, has also been significant. In the past two decades more political space has been permitted for the practice of Islam, for the development of Islamic belief, for increased access to Islamic education, and for widespread diplomatic and trade connections with the Islamic world. Allowing space for Islam in the self-understanding of the Hui identity category for wider political ends appears to be a strategy employed by the recent government - one that is quite different from that permitted for other Muslim ethnic groups, such as the Uyghur. This strategy is clearly sensitive, as chapter two discussed, and has required significant pressure to be applied to make Islam adapt to China's national situation, and to disseminate that adapted Islam, a process described and evaluated in detail in chapters five and six. All of these have contributed to changing perceptions of identity for the people known as Hui, and has influenced the acceptance of this identity, and other identities ascribed by the Party-State, described and evaluated in chapters seven and eight.

Hui identity as an ethnic group, one of the fifty-six ethnic groups making up the *Zhonghua minzu,* is essentially a creation and continued project of the hegemonic Party-State centre. The changing perceptions of the content of that identity is a response to the ascribed cultural components that the Party-State define as being essentially Hui, many of which are reflected by the Hui men interviewed. The changing political environment has allowed a flourishing of ethnic and religious consciousness in recent years that has allowed a development of Hui identity that responds more to the influence of the Islamic centre. This has meant that

essentially many Hui now define themselves as ethno-religious, rather than ethno-cultural; they are a Muslim *minzu* and Islam is a defining boundary of being Hui. Yet they also consider themselves as Chinese citizens, assuming a bicultural, or sometimes a hybrid identity, as Chinese Muslim, Xining Muslim, or occasionally Muslim Hui. The identity category *Zhonghua minzu*, or *Huizu*, was rarely reflected in the interview sample.

9.2 Hui Identity Construction and the Influence of Twin Centres

The second tiered question to test my hypothesis looks specifically at each of the twin centres of influence, and seeks to describe how each interacts with the Hui in the area of identity construction, and with what consequences. In the two sub-sections that follow I will look at each centre of influence, and describe the consequences of that centre's interaction with the Hui, and offer some explanation of this process and its significance.

9.2.1 Hui identity and Party-State influence

The hegemonic Chinese centre has historically employed different strategies regarding inclusion and governance of the diverse peoples of China. As I showed in chapter four, the Party-State centre has similarly attempted various strategies of nation-building, ranging from forced assimilation to the majority Han ethnicity, towards incentivizing belonging to a multi-ethnic national identity, the *Zhonghua minzu*. Since the period of reform and opening, an increased celebration of ethnic difference, and an increased political space for ethnic expression (including the practice of religion), has allowed a Hui ethnic religious identity to flourish. The numbers of people registering as Hui, the numbers of mosques rebuilt and imams trained, the numbers of people going on the annual pilgrimage, and the numbers attending the annual Id festivals have all been increasing. The Party-State centre has a particular understanding of the permissible space to express ethno-religious identity, but continues to insist upon the primary unifying identity of *Zhonghua minzu*, and prefers to define the Hui in terms of ethnic, cultural difference rather than being defined by a particular religious belief. One principal avenue of interaction between Party-State and Hui is the China Islamic Association (IAC),

tasked by the state to adapt Islam to China's national situation, and thus promoting a Party-State message of national identity, unity and patriotism. The IAC does this through a process of adapting Islam to meet the national situation, and seeking to control the promotion of this adapted Islam through distributing official sermons and directing the content of Muslim-directed media, a process examined in chapters five and six. How successful has this project of control been in the area of identity construction?

The Hui interviewed in this study demonstrate a variety of understandings of identity, some at variance with Party-State dimensions of the permissible, some in accord. The primary category of identity that the State promotes is the multi-ethnic, unified national *Zhonghua minzu* identity. This has been a term used since early in the twentieth century, but as an identity it has been made to matter only in the past decade, and the strong promotion of this as the priority national identity is the primary message of the Party-State. This promoted identity includes narratives of common descent, claiming a shared historical origin for all the people of China, yet seeking to retain some cultural homogeneity for ethnic groups, without threatening the unity of the national identity. This is a challenging project for any modern nation, preserving unity and diversity, and as a multicultural model pursued by the Chinese Party-State has some critics.

The emphasis on ethnic unity, *minzu tuanjie*, which can be seen as the subsuming of particular ethnic identity in favour of a prior *Zhonghua minzu* identity, is a key strategy to accomplish this challenging project. Ethnic unity in the conception of the Party-State has assimilatory goals, seeking to bring a degree of national homogeneity to the diverse people of China with the goal of strengthening national identity, an important political theory explored in chapter two. However, this Party-State central understanding of ethnic unity is often at odds with the perception of the Hui minority at the periphery, where the focus of ethnic unity is in retaining the cultural homogeneity and distinctiveness within the ethnic group. For many Hui, this translates to a strong Islamic identity, and consequently Hui unity is easily, and often, interpreted as Muslim unity. The challenge of religious identity and the various ways in which religious identity has been treated by the hegemonic centre have also been documented in chapters three and four, but the

current focus on the mutual adaptability of religion with socialism represents a more accommodating way of controlling the rising religious belief that has characterised China since the last decade of the last century. There remains a strong challenge to the Party-State's goal of establishing a dominant national identity, and in ensuring the willing participation in assimilatory ethnic unity. There also remains a strong challenge in handling the preferred religious identity of many Hui. These challenges are seen in the responses of Hui interviewed.

All the Hui interviewed identified positively with belonging to the country of China; it represented their homeland, they were concerned for their homeland, they loved their country, and most saw no conflict nor contradiction between patriotism and Islam, a particular outworking of Islamic centre influence, as I showed in chapter four. A civic national identity is acceptable; being a Chinese citizen, as opposed to any other national identity (Persian or Arab for instance), was clearly assumed as a component of self-identity for Hui people. There is no sense of belonging to any other nation, and among the Hui no consequent desire for independence, separatism or secession from the Chinese state. This identity of Chinese citizenship however was clearly challenged by a perception of Han ethnocentrism. Civic identities that are devoid of ethnic components are unrealistic, particularly in a nation that has essentially developed from a cultural, civilisational model of statehood. As a consequence, the common Hui identification with the homeland did not always translate to an identification with the Chinese nation (which is perceived as a Han dominant nation), and certainly for most did not translate to an identification with the State, or a loyalty to the Party. I showed the Party-State strategy of extrapolating loyalty to the nation to a loyalty to the State and consequently a loyalty to the Party in chapter four. Among the Hui interviewed no one expressed a loyalty to the Party, some were slightly more supportive of the State, many of the nation and everyone of the country. These responses however were noticeably influenced by the sectarian allegiance of the respondent, demonstrating the varied consequences of the Party-State interaction with the Hui.

Chapter seven concluded that the Salafiyya were the least responsive group of Hui to Party-State attempts to construct national identity. They claim not to accept

man-made categories of identity, only those mandated by the Qur'an and the *hadith*, namely being a member of humanity and being a Muslim. There was no expression of an assumed ethnic or national identity. Indeed, these very identity categories were seen as insignificant compared to one over-riding identity category of being Muslim, an identity that was absolutely primary to these respondents. However, a love for the country, for the land of China, was clearly expressed by the Salafiyya, and contrary to the portrayals of Salafi in the western media, the apolitical quietism of this group coupled with a love for homeland means that there is no evidence of any sense of transnational activism, or a perceived threat to national stability. The Salafiyya, while strongly identifying with the concept of *ummah* identity, do not seem to present a threat to the Party-State. This may be the reason why they enjoy political space to practise their understanding of Islam, even to the point of being given permission to build a substantial new and prominent mosque in the East District. The absence of political interference, and the apparent favour which the Salafi seem to enjoy, are indications that the Party-State likewise does not view this group as a threat, even if it is a growing movement in China, with links to international Islamism. The consequences of Party-State promotion of national identity to the Salafiyya can be summarised as largely irrelevant, and of no real interest to them, compared to the much preferred, and superior, identity of Muslim.

The Old Teaching Qadim and Sufi groups express a strong affinity with being Chinese, belonging to the nation, sharing the Chinese cultural heritage and assuming a strong and consistent simultaneous bicultural identity of being both Chinese and Muslim. Citizenship seems not to be a contested question for the Old Teaching groups, yet the Party-State promoted *Zhonghua minzu* category of identity was never once referred to, suggesting that this identity had not at all been assumed by this group. Interestingly, this group also did not refer to their ethnic category of Hui as an identifier, but only referred to themselves as Muslim Chinese. One reason for this was likely the persistent conflation of Hui and Muslim as identity categories, that confusion rooted in pre-Communist times, as I showed in chapter three, yet continuing in Qadim circles especially today. There was also a strong sense of sectarian identity expressed by this group that seemed to supersede all other identity categories, and was commonly asserted. Being Old

Teaching (*laojiao*) was the identity that most mattered to them, an identity that in their understanding represented an expression of truly Chinese Islam, a localised expression of Islam that should not be viewed as syncretistic, nor even accommodated, but as encompassed by China, as Zvi Ben Dor Benite pointed out (Ben-Dor Benite 2005: 14). This mutual adaptation of Islam to China in the Ming and Qing dynasty continues to be remarkably successful in generating bicultural and nonconflictual Chinese Muslim identity for the Old Teaching.

The two Ikhwan sub-sects had some similarity, but also considerable divergence in how they related to the Party-State drive towards *Zhonghua minzu*. Both adopted Chinese as an identity, but the moderate Ikhwan were more accommodating to the State-driven *Zhonghua minzu,* whereas the hard-line Ikhwan did not mention it, yet were far more adopting of a Hui ethnic identity than the moderate Ikhwan. The reforms of Ma Wanfu summarised in chapter three, and the desire of the hard-line Ikhwan to continue his work, result in a reformed Chinese expression of Islam, and an expression of Islam that seemed much more rejecting of international Islamic influence, particularly Saudi Arabian influence. The moderate Ikhwan built on the foundation of reformed Islam to embrace a more international expression of Islam, and it is in this difference of identity, this difference of orientation, that the sectarian conflict between hard-line and moderate Ikhwan is most evident. The consequences of Party-State promotion of national identity were shaped according to sectarian allegiance. The moderate Ikhwan had some bicultural Chinese Muslim expression, rarely identified as ethnically Hui but always as religiously Muslim. This can be attributed more to the influence of the Islamic centre which I will look at in the next section. The hard-line Ikhwan interviewees frequently identified as ethnically Hui, and adopted a Chinese identity, yet also did not self-identify as *Zhonghua minzu*.

The interaction of the Chinese state with the Hui in the area of identity construction seems to have varied, yet limited, success in establishing the desired national identity as primary. Representatives of each Muslim sect to some degree assumed a clear Chinese citizenship identity, and many expressed a love for their homeland, which is unsurprising given the historical longevity of the Hui Muslim people in China. However, this falls well short of the Party-State project of a

primary homogenous national *Zhonghua minzu* identity. Most groups also did not appear to have assumed an ethnic Hui identity as a primary identity, with the exception of the hard-line Ikhwan. The primary expressed identity was a Muslim religious identity, a fact true both for imams and non-clergy alike. This Muslim identity was closely followed in most cases with an expression of a strong sectarian identity, particularly by Old Teaching and hard-line Ikhwan adherents, demonstrating that it is the religious Muslim identity that is the key component of primary Hui identity in the interviews.

9.2.2 Hui identity and Islamic influence

Identity is constructed from the internal-external dialectic of similarity and difference, and identities have to be made to matter. Prior to the nineteenth century, no one thought in ethnic categories, since racial ideas still dominated. There was more space for varied religious identities to be included in racial categories. Ethnic categories only really emerged in the twentieth century, for the categories that today appear ethnic were in actual fact racial, given the common conflation between Muslim and Hui that persisted for centuries. Asking the question of Muslim identity in the dynastic period would involve asking about Hui identity, but that identity is entirely Muslim. In order to incorporate the Hui in the national identity the project of ethnic classification needed to 'de-religicize' the Hui identity. When the external pressure is clearly perceived as a pressure to secularise the Hui identity then strategies of resistance ensue, hence the ethnic conflicts that continued for centuries, to the detriment of Han, Hui and the nation. With the emergence of the Communists as the victors in the civil war, a new strategy for incorporation was envisaged, along the Soviet model. Once again when the atheistic expectation of religion disappearing became apparent, strategies of resistance emerged, and were heavily repressed. The limited liberalization of the Deng Xiaoping period led to an entirely different strategy of accommodation. The final expectation of the disappearance of religion remains the Party-State's goal, an expectation that is understood by some of the Hui respondents. Yet it is a counter-response to this goal that galvanises a growing commitment to not only preserving, but also to maximizing and strengthening an Islamic identity.

The Party, in seeking to accommodate Muslims into the national identity, increased

the permitted space for Islam to be practised, and consequently the practice of Islam continues to grow. This can be seen especially in Xining, where special circumstances allow such technically illegal practices as Islamic education of children in mosques, multiple gatherings in public spaces outside the registered meeting points, permitted graveyards allowing Islamic burial, concessions for Islamic holidays, Friday prayers, and even religious belief among cadres. The solidarity of some Hui communities perceive themselves as a potential threat to the Party-State, and there is an uneasy equilibrium that is so easily shattered, as when violence erupts when the local seemingly Halal bakery is spotted transporting goods to the bakery in a van containing pork sausages (Chang 2015), or when any restriction of activity in mosques or tombs takes place.

The multi-centred *ummah* influence also has significant impact on the acceptance of Party-State values on the Hui. The Islamist Salafiyya group may be thought to be the most sensitive and politically active group, aligned as they are often thought to be with that trend in Islamism that advocated the *Dar al-Harb/Dar al-Islam* dichotomy, and advocated for the establishment of the caliphate, prioritizing religious identity above any other man-made identity. However, the apolitical quietism advocated by the imams in the Salafiyya, and the clear love for the country of China and rejection of the dominant discourse of separatism explain why this movement has been allowed to flourish. Within the Salafiyya there are a significant number of committed reverts; that is, those that have personally embraced an Islamic faith having previously been culturally Hui and nominally Muslim. Many of these reverts are zealously adopting *da'wa* trips, which are evangelistic trips seeking to call Hui people to active religious belief. In a recent study by Alexander Stewart he identified Muslims from across the sectarian schools participating and being mobilised by the international *Tablighi Jama'at* (Stewart 2014), a significant international Islamic movement, whose presence in Xining was officially denied by the imams I interviewed.

The international Islamic influence is seen clearly in the strong, persistent allegiance of Hui men to sectarian identities. The Qadim groups can be seen to draw their identity from a particular localization of Islam within the Chinese milieu through the use of the Han Kitab, and the adoption of Chinese religious practices

such as incense burning, food sacrifices, wearing of mourning clothes, and kowtowing to ancestors and former shaykhs. Such practices are anathema to many other Islamic groups, yet are adopted by Qadim and Sufi groups alike, and originated in transnational influences during the imperial period, as I showed in chapter three. These transnational Sufi brotherhoods continue to exert influence on the Sufis within the Old Teaching groups, with national gatherings on remembrance days contributing to a strong sectarian identity.

The Ikhwan were divided in their Islamic influence, with accusations of Wahhabism leveled at those known as moderate Ikhwan by those known as hard-line. To be a Wahhabi is a pejorative term, seen to be un-Chinese, and to be aligning oneself with international Saudi Arabian influence. The moderate Ikhwan are perceived as closer to the Saudi-influenced Salafi interpretation of the Qur'an and *hadith*, and less political than the hard-liners. The hard-line Ikhwan are seeking to maintain the reformism of Ma Wanfu, in its patriotic, nationalistic form, and as such are most accepting of ethnic Hui categories. The reforms of Ma Wanfu were directed primarily against the syncretism perceived in the Old Teaching expression of Islam, that particular Confucianised form of Islam opposed by all other groups to varying degrees. The moderate Ikhwan were more strongly opposed to the Old Teaching groups than the hard-line Ikhwan, explained by their Islamic influence being similar to the Salafi group who are most extremely opposed to perceived innovations.

The way in which the IAC adapted Islam to promote patriotism is most revealing regarding the consequence of Islamic influence in adopting or rejecting this theme. The process by which patriotism came to be seen as compatible with Islam is outlined in chapter four, and chapter eight makes clear the responses to this across the sectarian spectrum. Although patriotism is affirmed by most groups (excepting the Salafis), yet the research found that asserting the priority of Islamic identity over national and State-imposed categories of identity has apparently become the sign of adherence to Islamic orthodoxy. Such a priority can mean a strong expression of commitment to the *ummah*, particularly among Ikhwan and Salafi respondents, but this is coupled with recognition that the *ummah* is a transnational imaginary, and will never usher in an Islamic state; this is simply not seen as

pragmatic nor realistic. The stronger identity expressed was sectarian related, and this is where most commitment and passion was evidenced; clearly sectarian identity was increasingly being made to matter. Having affirmed the great unity within Islam in China, meaning among the Hui community, respondents from all the sects would then criticise and attack each other, and justify their own expression of Islam as the true orthodox expression. This strong sectarian identity results in a fragmentation of Islamic unity, and is suspected of being permitted, if not encouraged, by the Party-State.

9.3   Between the State and Islam

The third question concerns defining and explaining the balance between external centres and internal change. Negotiating identity between the two external centres of influence is a complex and contested process. In the hegemonic structure of identity politics in northwest China, the influence of the Party-State identity message is prominent, powerful and apparently dominant. All public media serves the Party-State agenda. The all-pervading presence of Central Propaganda Department billboards exert a passive, somewhat subliminal, influence in support of the Party-line (figure 7.2 has several examples). The internet is monitored and controlled to ensure that subversive elements are repressed, and critical content quickly expunged. Islam itself is particularly subject to control and adaptation by the Party-State to ensure that it is in line with what the Party regards as the needs and priorities of China's current national situation. The influence of the Party-State control of Islam is reflected in the interviews, and in the analysis of IAC produced publications and official sermons in chapters five and six. The apparent strength of Party-State influence is difficult to avoid. However, the more subtle, apparently less powerful and easier to control influence of the Islamic centre is perhaps overlooked, or at least underestimated, in contemporary scholarship. The potential power of a rising religious consciousness and the strengthening of a prominent and prior Muslim identity derives from a counter-influence of the Islamic centre, both an international influence, and a localised sectarian influence.

Identities are made to matter. The Party-State attempts to make national *Zhonghua minzu* identity the primary concern of the people of China, and secondly fosters

ethnic identity construction that allows for some recognition of difference, although the emphasis on inter-ethnic unity seeks to guard against any potential ethno-nationalism. The Party-State particularly does this in the case of the Hui through demonstrating the affinity of Party goals with Islamic teaching. Pragmatism can be seen as the response of the peripheral Hui to this central civilising influence. With the improving economy, rising living standards, relative social stability, and adequate freedom to practise their faith the status quo goes a long way towards satisfying the Hui dream. Yet the promoted national identity has not been assumed by the Hui men in this survey. There is a counter-view expressed in some of the interviews - almost an implicit threat - that should things change and the relationship between hegemonic centre and peripheral people become conflictual with increasing restrictions, or should perceived freedoms be removed and religious rights be affected, then the latent, yet growing, Islamic identity could be further made to matter. A political mobilisation of Islamic solidarity, a unity of 'the Muslim *minzu*', could become a threat to social stability.

Change in the internal assumption of identity is mobilised as a response to external threat or pressure. When the Party-State pushes a particular political theme, then there is of course a reflection of that theme and some internalization as a consequence. This is seen in the ready repetition of standard propaganda slogans by respondents, yet the understanding and acceptance of the Party-State meaning of these slogans is subject to a second influence. Patriotism needs to be defined and justified in Islamic sources. Inter-ethnic unity must be expressed in accordance with Qur'anic principles. Obedience and submission to non-Muslim authority requires the affirmation and support of the Islamic centre. The counter-response to this Party-State influence is very often seen in the rising prominence of an Islamic identity, since the Party-State has legitimised Islam through its adoption and adaptation of Islamic authority, and through the increased political space to practise the tenets of Islamic faith. With rising global Islamic consciousness, where 'Muslim' as a category of identity has more valence than ever before, the rising identification of significant Hui in authority as primarily Muslim is a cause of concern for the Party-State. If the hardening of Muslim identity is thought to be a response to the Islamic centre influence, it is as much a counter-response to the Party-State centre, an occupation of permitted identity space given through a

tolerance of rising religious consciousness. The evident growth of personal Islamic faith among Hui men, the concept of reverts, and the national growth of the Salafiyya, together with the breakdown within the Ikhwan between those focused on a Muslim identity, and those accepting an ethnic identity, should be a cause of concern to the Party-State.

Internal change in recent decades appears to be seen in the hardening of Islamic identity, a rejection of true inter-ethnic unity in favour of an intra-Muslim Hui unity, and a resistance to an ascribed national identity perceived as Han-centric. Citizenship is not in question; loyalty to the motherland is clear, yet there remains an unwillingness to accept the ascribed identity of the Party-State, possibly due to the historical consciousness of persecution at the hands of the hegemonic centre, and at the hands of non-Muslim groups such as Han and Tibetans (McCarthy 2009: 131). Susan McCarthy believes that the minority promotion of their culture should be seen as a way of asserting their citizenship, rather than establishing dissent. However, although she resists internal cultural diversity being seen as a threat to internal cohesion, she perhaps overlooks the power of *ummah* identity and its potential for mobilising a Muslim identity and solidarity that supersedes all others. The seeds of this internal change are perhaps seen in this study with the growth of Muslim identity as a primary identity, despite the significant secularizing efforts of the Party-State.

9.4   The Dominance of Muslim Identity and Influence

Returning finally to my central hypothesis, I have shown the efforts of the Chinese Party-State in constructing national and ethnic identity, and in utilizing adapted Islam to accomplish its purpose in prioritizing the State-promoted identity categories. I have also shown the persistence of sectarian identity among Hui men, particularly within the mosque, and the influence of the Islamic world in shaping and sustaining some of these sectarian affiliations. The growing Muslim preferred identity of all sectarian groups demonstrates categorically that for those interviewed it is these Islamic world influences that should be seen as the dominant influence on construction of Hui identity.

Being Muslim is increasingly becoming a personal, self-validated identity. Although traditional adherence to Islam as part and parcel of being Hui continues, yet the salience of Muslim identity has been accorded more political space than ever before. The Party-State, in its desire to portray itself well to the Muslim world as well as to develop trading relationships with the Islamic world, has allowed unprecedented opportunity for Hui to express their religious Muslim identity. This has allowed a closer connection between transnational organisations like Tablighi Jamaat, Muslim Brotherhood, Sufi networks and Saudi Wahhabism to maintain an influence on Islam in China that in many respects exceeds that of the Party-State. However, that influence is not currently a threat to national security or stability, since the Hui are strongly patriotic Chinese citizens. The implicit threat that emerges from the study is that this patriotism is to the homeland, not to the Party-State, and very much represents pragmatic acceptance of the status quo, according the Party performance legitimacy. As long as the Party-State continues to allow the unfettered practice of Islam in Xining, then the Hui will remain peaceful, outwardly supportive of the present situation, and committed to seeing the further development of China, since that contributes to their own continued freedom to practise Islam. As soon as the restrictions to the practice of faith emerge, then the potential for opposition to the Party-State control is strong, and the influence of *ummah* identity could become more prominent. The further changes to the implementation of religious policy in 2016 may have a deleterious effect on the uneasy stability of the relationship between peripheral Hui and Party-State, but for the present a pragmatic approach to balancing the two influences seems to be accepted.

Perhaps the clearest example of a such a balanced approach is found in 'middle-way ideology' (*zhongzheng sixiang*) promoted through the official channels, and generally supported by respondents. It was a prominent theme in the magazines (chapter five), the sermons (chapter six) and in the interview responses particularly of the moderate Ikhwan (chapter eight). Such a middle way highlighted the safe themes of tolerance, moderation, adaptable, flexible, peaceful Islam. This Party-State influence is reflected by an Islamic centre influence, in that one imam recognised the importance of the connection of middle way ideology with Yusuf al-Qaradawi, and even identified him as one of the *mujaddin*, the

periodic revivers believed to be sent each century by Allah to revive Islam. The persistent influence of the external Islamic centre is seen even here. However, unlike the IAC promotion of middle-way ideology, Qaradawi's *wasatiyya* movement sits in the Islamist tradition, and he himself is a controversial figure, seen in the west as a very immoderate shaykh. The promotion of the external centres of Party-State and Islam here support a common acceptance of a new expression of acceptable adapted Islamic theology. However, what the Party-State intends by middle way ideology is very different from what al-Qaradawi appears to intend.

The influence of the Party-State external centre on identity formation is strong. The Hui belong to the Chinese nation, and they have a freedom to practise what the State regard as cultural expressions of their ethnicity but which the Hui recognise as Islamically mandated practice of faith. The construction of a national identity that includes Hui as one of the minorities uniting is a strong influence, but does not seem to have resulted in an acceptance of the mandated national identity as the dominant identity, since the influence of the external Islamic centre appears to be stronger. Although strictly controlled, the Islamic sects in Xining have many transnational connections with the Islamic world, and have received and incorporated many trends of Islamic teaching, including patriotism, nationalism and localization of Islam. However the space permitted for the practice of Islam has resulted in a growing prominence of Islamic identity, and the Muslim identity was the most strongly assumed identity of most respondents, particularly in the Salafi and moderate Ikhwan school, but also in the Qadim and Sufi schools of thought. Hui ethnic identity was only really reflected by the most isolated and unchanging groups of hard-line Ikhwan.

The strong Islamic identity was closely followed by the strong sectarian identity, and the persistence of intra-ethnic disputes between all sects and the Qadim, between the Salafi and the moderate Ikhwan against the hard-line Ikhwan, and between the hard-line and moderate Ikhwan continue to generate stronger sectarian Islamic identity. Being Old Teaching, or hard-line Ikhwan, is made to matter by the critical attacks of other sects, a particularly fierce dialogic interchange between similarity and difference. Such a strong sectarian unity

appears to take priority for many Hui over intra-Muslim unity, and certainly over inter-ethnic unity and a national identity.

With the powerful tools of the State at their disposal, such sectarian conflict could be addressed and controlled by the Party. Adapted Islam certainly is anti-sectarian in its content, and yet little control of sectarian disputes is apparent, or referred to. During the festivals police are present at each of the three main gatherings of worshippers; little preference is accorded to any sect in terms of permission to build or extend their mosque, or hold religious activities. The State appears to treat all the sects equally. Yet with prominent internal agitators like the late Ma Youde, or with Islamist groups like the Salafis seeking to build a huge mosque, or with hard-line Ikhwan meeting at different times in opposition to the mainstream Dongguan mosque, one would expect more intervention, more involvement by the State. Could it be in fact that persistent sectarianism serves the Party-State well, through preventing the solidarity of Hui people around a common Muslim identity? Whenever a powerful Hui solidarity has emerged historically, the threat to hegemonic control and social stability has been significant. The Party-State is clearly concerned to maintain overall social stability, and if this means some toleration of intra-Muslim tensions, then that is a calculated risk perhaps worth taking.

At a recent symposium held at the University of London, one speaker said that sectarian issues in Chinese Islam had not really been studied in the past 20-30 years (Stewart 2017). The problem is usually portrayed as a dichotomy between Old and New teaching, and is seen primarily as a historical struggle. Without wanting to reify sectarian identities, this research project has not only revealed a much more persistent and complex sectarian identity struggle in Xining than had formerly been considered, but has also demonstrated how allegiance to sectarian identity aligns one with an influence of a particular Islamic centre that generates a different counter-response to the Party-State project of nation building. Islamic identity matters, it is made to matter, and it is increasing in its prominence among Hui men in Xining, northwest China.

9.5   Further Study

Several areas lend themselves well to further study. I should like to have been successful in my attempts to record and transcribe a series of actual sermons in the mosques in Xining. To compare what was actually taught verbally with what is required to be taught by the Party-State would further confirm the discrepancy between official and unofficial Islamic teaching. Although permission was given in some cases to record these sermons, my inability to find a Qinghai dialect speaker willing to transcribe meant this aspect of the project remained firmly out of reach. For non-Muslim local people transcribing was a task too difficult, since so many loan words and Arabic terms were used; for Muslim locals there was a distinct discomfort in transcribing holy words for a non-believer.

Further exploring the transnational ties and influences of each sect with the Islamic world would also be a good further development. Analyzing the Islamic texts prominent in each imam's study and their preferences, exploring curriculum content from a textual background would all be beneficial, yet were beyond either my linguistic abilities as a non-Arabic speaker, and requiring a background in Islamic studies.

A final development would be to extend the study to compare with other locations. Conducting a comparison in negotiated identity for Hui between Xining, Linxia (Gansu) and Yinchuan (Ningxia) would prove valuable in exploring whether the sectarian influence on Islam continued to have a string bearing on preferred identity categories in cities where the sectarian dynamic differs markedly from Xining.

In conducting my interviews, permission to use a recording device was given often on the basis of anonymity. Much of the evidence given is politically sensitive, and in order to protect my sources I have used a numbering system for all interviewees grouping them by allegiance to sect, based on their self-identification and mosque attendance. I have recorded their age (when given), and what their main employment was, as well as the location of the interviews. A supplementary document identifying the mosques to which these interviewees are aligned is available on request, but does not form part of this thesis, for security's sake.

Interviewee #1-9 are Old Teaching, mixed between Qadim and Sufi
Interviewees #10-20 are New Teaching, moderate Ikhwan
Interviewees #21-29 are New Teaching, hard-line Ikhwan
Interviewees #30-33 are Salafi

Interview Number	Age of Interviewee	Employment Category	Interview Date	Interview Location
#1	63	Caretaker	19 Jun 12	Reception room, tomb complex 3
#2	44	Shaykh	6 Jun 12	Reception room, tomb complex 1
#3	42	Imam	8 Jul 14	Mosque office
#4	20	University student	14 Jul 14	Local cafe
#5	42	Taxi driver	17 Jul 14	Mosque courtyard
#6	48	Taxi driver	21 Jul 15	His home
#7	60	Caretaker	2 Jul 14	Tomb complex 3 courtyard
#8	24	Manla (Islamic student)	7 Jul 14	Reception room, tomb complex 2
#9	45	Trader	18 Jul 14	Mosque courtyard
#10	46	Imam	31 May 12	Mosque office
#11	48	Imam	3 Jul 14	Mosque office
#12	60	Imam	7 Jul 14	Mosque office
#13	34	Junior Imam	15-17 Jul 14	Mosque courtyard
#14	38	Junior Imam	17 Jul 14	Mosque courtyard
#15	36	Junior Imam	15-17 Jul 14	Mosque courtyard

Interview Number	Age of Interviewee	Employment Category	Interview Date	Interview Location
#16	48	Imam & teacher	14 Jul 15	Office in business district
#17	21	University student	21 Jul 15	Tea shop
#18	65	Retired	22 Jul 15	Mosque courtyard
#19	36	Junior Imam	22 Jul 15	Mosque office
#20	49	Imam	28 Jul 15	Mosque office
#21	44	Imam	12 Apr 12	Mosque office
#22	46	Imam	12 Jul 14	Mosque office
#23	22	Taxi driver	16 Jul 14	Street-side pagoda
#24	26	Manla (Islamic student)	17 Jul 14	Mosque student dormitory
#25	>40*	Mature student	15 Jul 15	Mosque courtyard
#26	24	Manla (Islamic student)	16 Jul 15	Mosque classroom
#27	33	Manla (Islamic student)	23 Jul 15	Mosque dormitory
#28	50	Imam	27 Jul 15	Mosque reception room
#29	22	Manla (Islamic student)	17 Jul 14	Mosque courtyard
#30	41	Imam	19 Jul 14	Mosque office
#31	26	Undeclared	24 Jul 15	Walking along street
#32	42	Imam	25 Jul 15	Mosque prayer hall
#33	43	Businessman	27 Jul 15	Coffee shop

* He only admitted to being 'over 40', my guess would be early retired age, around 60.

Appendix 2: Mosques and Tombs in Xining

* indicates an interview location

#	Chinese name	Pinyin	Sectarian Affiliation
1	百玉巷	Bai Yu Xiang	Ikhwan moderate
2	北关	Beiguan	Ikhwan hard-line*
3	北磨尔园	Bei Mo'er Yuan	Ikhwan hard-line*
4	宾河路	Binhe Lu	Ikhwan
5	丁字路	Dingzi Lu	Ikhwan hard-line
6	东关大寺	Dongguan Dasi	Ikhwan moderate*
7	凤凰山拱北	Fenghuangshan Gongbei	Sufi tomb *
8	富强巷	Fuqiang Xiang	Ikhwan moderate
9	广德门拱北寺	Guang De Men Gongbei Si	Sufi tomb*
10	鲜门拱北寺	Xian Men Gongbei Si	Sufi tomb*
11	乐家湾	Le Jia Wan	Ikhwan
12	联合村	Lianhe Cun	Ikhwan
13	路林巷	Lu Lin Xiang	Ikhwan hard-line
14	南关	Nanguan	Ikhwan moderate*
15	南山路	Nan Shan Lu	Ikhwan
16	上林家崖	Shang Lin Jia Ya	Ikhwan
17	树林巷	Shu Lin Xiang	Salafiyya*
18	水城门	Shui Cheng Men	Ikhwan moderate
19	王家庄	Wang Jia Zhuang	Ikhwan
20	夏都大街	Xiadu Dajie	Ikhwan moderate*
21	下林家	Xia Lin Jia	Ikhwan
22	杨家庄	Yang Jia Zhuang	Qadim *
23	一颗印	Yi Ke Yin	Ikhwan
24	怡心圆	Yi Xin Yuan	Ikhwan
25	玉带桥	Yu Dai Qiao	Ikhwan hard-line*
26	园山	Yuan Shan	Ikhwan
27	韵家口	Yun Jia Kou	Qadim
28	中庄	Zhong Zhuang	Ikhwan

NB: When moderate/hard-line affiliation unknown, simply Ikhwan is used

Appendix 3: Sample Interview Transcripts

a. Interview #2, 6 June 2012, Sufi shaykh

"Yes, there are misunderstandings, as far as we Qadiriyya gongbei are concerned some big misunderstandings. The Qur'an has a stipulation, [*he first quotes in Arabic then translates to Chinese*] "People, I made you male and female and made you many tribes and religions, you should mutually respect each other and exist peacefully." This is the Quran's stipulation, you know, no matter what ethnicity, what religion we should respect each other. Of course they [*Salafi and Ikhwan*] oppose us! Particularly attack and particularly fiercely – not just an average opposition, they cannot accept the Classics, like we read the Persian scriptures, but the Wahhabi are clearly not comfortable with these. Why don't they read them ? They say that they are not from the Qur'an or *Hadith*, like our own teachers and guides, they don't care what they say either…They don't respect Persian, and don't respect the Tafsir, the Ikhwan only respect the Wahhabi Tafsir…They say they are Hanafi school, but the actual situation is that they have not changed the general principles of Hanafi school, but there are certain Hanafi principles – such as honouring ancestors, they don't honour. We are also Hanafi school. Beneath this though there are things they do not accept. When we pray, the Hanafi school has clear stipulations, if you enter the Wahhabi way of praying, it is not Wahhabi stuff, if it was this stuff then the prayer would not be successful, its like that. [For example] you cannot move. When we pray to the Lord, our thought is that you cannot move. When they pray and they move, this is not Hanafi but they have entered Shaf'i. When they pray they move their heads, their prayer is not successful. This is Shaf'i school. They say they are Hanafi, not Shaf'i…We don't have other activities, only remembering the Prophet's birthday, Muhammad's birthday, yes, Prophet's birthday is celebrated here…The Sufi and Qadim, you can say they have assimilated, yes, the actual situation is you have these…just…as far as I am concerned the Qur'an explanations called Tafsir – they (Qadim?) do not care about Tafsir, and their study of the Qur'an is not very thorough, so they have some contradictions. Do all the sections of the Tafsir have contradictions or not? I think they have no contradictions. They are all one, they are all the same. If you don't accept the Tafsir then the differences are very big. We study them. As far as we in the gongbei are concerned, and what we teach, within the Qur'an are 124,000 saints/prophets. We don't know the names of most of them, but as far as we are concerned, Confucius was one of these saints, and not a man. Confucius, yes, a prophet. Our recognition and their recognition of him are different. He is a prophet – why do we think of him as a prophet? Because our Muhammad had five principles – the pillars – confession, prayer, fast, alms and pilgrimage, and Confucius also taught five – Benevolence, righteousness, proper rites, knowledge and integrity. So, yes, as far as we are concerned, he is a prophet."

b. Interview #28, 27 May 2015, hard-line Ikhwan imam

"...Xi Jinping mentioned the *minzu tuanjie* and the meaning is all China's 56 *minzu* should unite, the religious aspect should have mutual respect. In the big Han country, large *minzu* and small *minzu* all should respect the minority *minzu* habits and customs, if you are a big Hanzu country then you can't ride roughshod over the minority people, you need to regard their customs and habits. For example in the Dongguan mosque, you mustn't take in pork, this is not harmonious. His request is for unity among the 56 *minzu* - the big family, everyone, for national development. His meaning - we care about religion, our country supports it, receiving the laws that protect it, but the principle is that within the national permitted limits you can merely carry out your normal activities within the law. You cannot exceed the law, so he mentions this, his meaning is only that you do not transcend the law, then 56 *minzu* can achieve unity, achieve relationship – you can carry out your religion, and they won't care. But if you exceed the law, they will not allow you to practise, so in the mosques you can have a study class, you can exceed the family planning for Han families, and the other times, society has these can also have these study classes, but you are not able outside the mosque to put up a stall, this is not permitted. There is a scope, a range to be within. In the mosque, whatever you do they don't mind, as long as it is not illegal I am supporting you, the law supports you. In your home it is fine to have a study class, just one condition, that there not be any foreigners. Foreigners are not allowed to come, nor are they allowed to preach..."

c. Interview #6, 21 July 2015, Qadim family head

"Now the country's policy towards us is really good, in all fairness and relying on the facts we can say, as long as you do not violate the country's laws and regulations, and do not act recklessly or foolishly, you have religious freedom. For example, if at night you read the Qur'an, if you read it constantly each day for 30 or 40 hours and prayed, no one would bother. This is not like during the Cultural Revolution, even at home in the Cultural Revolution you couldn't do that. The current policy is really very good... Because [the prayer style] you see now, what you saw that day as we read and praised, this type of prayer is in the northwest. In other places, in Arabic countries, in Saudi, only small numbers do it this way, but in Southeast Asian countries, countries bordering India – India is actually the cradle of Sufism – many of the great shaykhs were Indian, yes they came from India, including Pakistan, to these Southeast Asian countries. There is still some conflict, yes. Among the people they will not directly dare to attack you, because of the national policy on mutual non-interference, mutual non-influence, whatever you want to do, you just do, you do not bother about others who have no authority, in this country this policy is good. So they have no influence...At the moment things are good, originally at the time of Ma Wanfu, who was today's Ma Changqing's grandfather, he used the political power given him by Ma Bufang – he was with the Saudi Wahhabis, with that Wahhabi founder – you understand with the Saudi person, the present king, called – what – Fahd's father were of the same era, he firstly organised and used religion to pass on politics. They used each other...in order to, probably to control... The most important thing as far as the common people are concerned, is that there is no kind of contradiction between being Chinese and being Muslim. You see, we are not engaged in politics, we do not fill

office, the government also gives us some of these contradictions, but they do not come in, because we only do well what a citizen ought to do as a responsibility and a duty; we do not violate your country's laws or regulations, right, the law allows me to have my religion, the constitution of the People's Republic of China allows citizens some kinds of religious freedom, and nonreligious freedom. For example, now there are some cadres in our Qinghai who don't have that 'you have faith, you cannot have faith' perspective; in other places I haven't seen this, but, speaking generally, our Qinghai officials have many minority people, including Tibetans, it is this way. Anyway, China's high level cadres have a much stronger influence, religious activity you can do in private, not able to emerge into the public square, the background to this represents Communism, it is this way as far as we are concerned, we common citizens, we old hundred names."

d. Interview #11, 3 July 2014, moderate Ikhwan imam

"Last year in August, our Hui society annual meeting met here in Xining, and our Hui and Salar in Qinghai took the initiative – I was vice-chair – on the closing day the subject was "the Hui and China's dream". I gave my viewpoint, I said we Hui are a member of China's big family of ethnicities, but we have our distinctives – my subject was, "the positive function of the four distinctives of Hui people in the current *Zhonghua Minzu* culture." In my analysis, the Hui distinctives are, first: patriotism. In Hui history our distinctive is contending with religious disputes, not disputes with the country. This is to say, when our faith received freedom of development, we didn't interfere in who held power, you can see that. Furthermore, the Hui really loved the country, for example, from history, our ancestors came from remote Arabia and Persia along the Silk Road to China, they discovered this land suited their development, so they settled here, intermarried here, and flourished, they received their dreamland, so they loved this country. So in our faith, in our doctrine there is a very important sentence, "love of country is a tenet of Islam", so although all nationalities love the country, Hui patriotism is raised to the level of high level religious belief – I think this is an exceptional situation. Also, patriotic examples in history are numerous, from Zhou Baogui to Ma Benzhai. The second distinctive is their steadfast faith. When I compare Hui with other *minzu*, there is a big difference. Other *minzu*, they first have their *minzu* and then they have their faith. But the Hui they have their faith and then they have their *minzu*. For example, the Tibetans – of course they were always a *minzu*, and their original faith was *Benjiao*, and later they chose Buddhism. My meaning is, suppose the Tibetans abandoned Buddhism, they would still be a *minzu*. But the Hui are not like that. The Hui first had faith, and that faith let them become a *minzu*, my meaning is should the Hui leave Islam they would cease to be Hui, cease to be a *minzu*. So a further distinctive is to strongly value faith, strongly protect Islam, this is the Hui dream – this is the main dream. The third distinctive is their ability to engage in business, in trade, to be merchants, since their ancestors likewise did this. This aspect, when Xi Jinping proposed the China Dream he thought of several aspects – the first is National Prosperity & Strength, the second is Cultural Development and Progress, then there was People's Happiness and the fourth was Harmonious Society. I feel these four are just right, and they correspond: first, if you are not patriotic, how can your country be strong? If a country's ethnic group does not love its own country, that country is not able to become strong, only with patriotism can there be construction and protection; the second, cultural development, as far as Muslims are concerned is Islamic culture, I

feel – let me give you an analogy. Suppose China, this land, is the Hui's mother, and Islam is the Hui's father. As far as the children are concerned, the mother has the greater emotional attachment, and is more liked; but it is the father's genes that have the greatest influence on the child. This is how I would emphasise it."

e. Interview #24, 17 July 2014, Salafi imam

"We also oppose it, this is a worship of people, so why do we now say China's '*laojiao*', because from Qing period it was passed down, that is to say a grain of dust unchanged, that is totally fixed, with things done that I do, not needing to be changed, Now, Ikhwan also think that it is a China specific sect, that it isn't international. China's Ikhwan and *al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin* are not the same - that is to say that China's Ikhwan are originally built on Qadim foundation, with a slight reform. Because at the time of Ma Wanfu, in Qinghai was Ma Bufang, he organised 100 imams to go on the *hajj*. When they went on the *hajj* they saw a series of reforms there, and he thought that he could return to China at begin to change things. So Ma Wanfu came back and proposed the first reform of Islam, which was to no longer worship saints, and not to build *gongbei* on tombs…within the ten points several are secondary, of low importance, but the very first point is very important. These reforms were exactly the same as those proposed by Abdul Wahhab in Saudi Arabia…when he [Abdul Wahhab] first promoted his ideas also no one wanted to accept them. When you promote this kind of thing you must add to your knowledge politics. Two kinds of strength combined – knowledge and politics – and then you can preach. Including Ma Wanfu himself discovered these things, he said as much. If we say at that time there was no Ma Qi, Ma Lin, Ma Lin was Ma Bufang uncle, without their support, that is to say without their administrative way to promote it, it would have been very hard to be accepted. Nevertheless, we have to say, Ma Wanfu he wanted to reform, he wanted to go even further, and in China he preached, and he only just began and then those ahongs following Ma Wanfu gradually died off, and current Ikhwani stagnated. Today's Ikhwan are not the same, the greatest difference, that Ma Wanfu then preached Ikhwan, and regarded others, like the Salafiyya as fine, these he had no desire to attack them. But of course todays Ikhwan are divided into two groups, you probably don't know, one is Ikhwan hard-liners, the other is Ikhwan moderates. Have you heard this before? We are having lots of noise about this at the moment, especially here in Qinghai, Gansu and Xinjiang, these three places. Other places in the interior don't have them. The greatest difference, these hard-line Ikhwan say, when they go to Mecca, they cannot pray inside Mecca. They say they are trying their utmost to oppose Salafis, they say all the imams in Mecca are Salafi, Wahhabis, and they want to oppose them. They say that Wahhabis are not Muslims! Actually the hard-liners are not hugely numerous, today probably about 20-30% of Muslims would be hard-liners…The other is moderate sect, they are Ikhwan, but Mecca is our holy land, that place is our Muslim imams, and to pray there is no problem at all. At the moment, sometimes they worship together, and sometimes they don't. In a given mosque you wouldn't know, since on the surface they look they same, but inside, in their hearts they struggle. In Xining mosques they have split up…"

Appendix 4: Glossary of Chinese translated terms

Chinese	Pinyin	English Translation
阿訇	ahong	imam
爱国爱教	aiguo aijiao	love country, love faith
爱国是信仰的一部分	aiguo shi xinyangde yibufen	patriotism is a tenet of faith
爱国主义	aiguozhuyi	patriotism
白派	baipai	White sect
边疆民族	bianjiang wenti	frontiers question
波斯	bosi	Persia
缠头回	chantou Hui	Turkic Muslims
朝觐	chaojin	pilgrimage, hajj
城东区	chengdongqu	East district (in Xining)
穿衣	chuanyi	graduate (as imam)
道乘	daocheng	vehicle of the way (Ar. tariqa)
大分散小集中	da fensan xiao jizhong	widely scattered, closely concentrated
大复兴中华民族	dafuxing Zhonghua minzu	Great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation
大家庭	da jiating	big family
大食	Dashi	Arabia
冬虫夏草	dongchong xiacao	caterpillar fungus (Cordyceps)
东关寺	dongguansi	East Gate mosque
东乡族	Dongxiangzu	Dongxiang ethnicity
番客	fanke	foreign guest
风俗习惯	fengsu xiguan	customs and habits
分裂主义	fenlie zhuyi	'splittism'
嘎德林耶	Gadelinye	Qadiriyya
改革开放	gaige kaifang	Reform and Opening up
格迪目	Gedimu	Qadim
拱北	gongbei	tomb of Sufi saint
构建和谐社会	goujian hexie shehui	building a harmonious society
规矩	guiju	rules/customs
国民党	Guomindang	GMD (Nationalist Party)
果园十表	Guoyuan shibiao	Ma Guoyuan's 10 point programme
哈底斯	hadisi	Hadith
哈吉	haji	Hajji, pilgrim
汉化	Hanhua	Sinification
汉克塔布	Han ketabu	Han kitab
汉人	Hanren	Han people
汉族	Hanzu	Han ethnicity
和睦	hemu	harmony

和谐	hexie	harmony
和谐共处	hexie gongchu	harmonious coexistence
后世	houshi	next world
虎菲耶	Hufeiye	Khufiyya
回纥	Huihe	Uyghur - early Hui name
回鹘	Huihu	early Hui name
回回	Huihui	early Hui name
回回王国	Huihui wangguo	Kingdom of Huihui
回教	Huijiao	Islam (term used before 1952 in China)
回民	Huimin	Hui people
回族	Huizu	Hui ethnicity
互相尊重	huxiang zunzhong	mutual respect
极端主义	jiduan zhuyi	extremism
教乘	jiaocheng	vehicle of teaching (Ar. shar'ia)
教坊	jiaofang	Qadim Islamic community
教派	jiaopai	teaching school/sect
解经工作	jiejing gongzuo	exegesis work
经堂教育	jingtang jiaoyu	scripture hall education
今世	jinshi	this world
恐怖主义	kongbu zhuyi	terrorism
孔道	Kong dao	one of the silk roads
库夫勒	kufule	deny one's faith, *kafir*
老百姓	laobaixing	the people (colloq.)
老教	laojiao	Old Teaching
两世吉庆	liangshi jiqing	fortune in two worlds
满拉	manla	Islamic student
门宦	menhuan	saintly lineage
民间	minjian	popular, folk
民间机构	minjian jigou	popular organisation
民族	minzu	ethnic group
民族工作	minzu gongzuo	ethnic work
民族识别	minzu shibie	ethnic classification
民族团结	minzu tuanjie	ethnic unity
民族问题	minzu wenti	national/ethnic question
民族主义	minzu zhuyi	nationalism
民族自决	minzu zijue	national self-determination
穆斯林	Musilin	Muslim
南人	Nanren	Southerners
凭经立教	pingjing lijiao	lean on the scripture, establish the teaching
破坏四旧	pohuai sijiu	'smash the four olds'
强硬派	qiangyingpai	hard-line sect

清真	qingzhen	Halal, pure and true
融合	ronghe	intermingling
三纲五常	sangang wuchang	three cardinal guides, five constant virtues
三个代表	sange daibiao	Three Represents
三个离不开	sange libukai	three 'can't leaves'
三股势力	sangu shili	three evils
三教	Sanjiao	Three Teachings
三抬	Santai	Three raisers
塞莱菲耶	Sailaifeiye	Salafiyya
色目人	semuren	'coloured-eye' people
筛海	shaihai	Shaykh
少数民族	shaoshu minzu	minority ethnic group
身份证	shenfenzheng	identity card
时代派	shidaipai	modernist sect
顺主忠君	shunzhu zhongjun	submit to Allah be loyal to Emperor
苏菲主义	Sufeizhuyi	Sufism
提督	tidu	Provincial commander
同胞	tongbao	compatriot, offspring of same womb
同化	tonghua	assimilation
统一	tongyi	united
统一的多民族国家	tongyide duo minzu guojia	multi-ethnic unitary nation
团结	tuanjie	unity
瓦哈比耶	Wahabiye	Wahhabi
维吾尔	Weiwu'er	Uyghur
微信	weixin	Wechat
温和派/软派	wenhepai/ruanpai	moderate sect/soft sect
文化知识	wenhua zhishi	cultural knowledge
五族共和	wuzu gonghe	Republic of five ethnicities
孝敬父母	xiaojing fumu	filial piety
西北回族起义	xibei Huizu qiyi	north-west Hui rebellions
夏	Xia	ancient name for China
邪教惑众	xiejiao huozhong	teach heresy to delude the people
新教	xinjiao	New Teaching
信仰伊斯兰教的少数民族	xinyang Yisilanjiaode shaoshu minzu	ethnic minority believing in Islam
夷	Yi	barbarian/foreigner
伊赫瓦尼	Yihewani	Ikhwan
一伙	yihuo	gang/group
伊斯兰教	Yisilanjiao	Islam (post 1952 usage)

伊斯兰教协会	Yisilanjiao xiehui	Islamic Association
伊斯兰教的优良传统	Yisilanjiaode youliang chuantong	Islam's fine tradition
优惠政策	youhui zhengce	preferential policies
月华	Yuehua	name of Chinese Islamic publication
哲赫忍耶	Zheherenye	Jahriyya
真乘	zhencheng	vehicle of the truth (Ar. *haqiqa*)
振兴中华	zhenxing Zhonghua	awakening China
正路	zhenglu	straight path
中道思想	zhongdao sixiang	middle way ideology
中国梦	Zhongguomeng	Chinese dream
中华民族	Zhonghua minzu	Chinese nation
中宣部	Zhongxuanbu	CCP Propaganda Department
中庸	zhongyong	Doctrine of the Mean
中正之道	zhongzheng zhidao	middle way
宗教与社会主义社会相适应	zongjiao yu shehuizhuyi shehui xiangshiying	religion mutually adapting with socialist society
宗教自由	zongjiao ziyou	religious freedom
宗族	zongzu	patriarchal clan
祖国统一原则	zuguo tongyi yuanze	principle of a unified nation
尊敬革俗	zunjing gesu	respect the scripture reform customs

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