No more Arabian Nights at the Yellow River: The End of Yinchuan's Image-Building Strategy as China's Flagship Muslim City[1]

Michael Malzer
(University of Würzburg, Germany)
michael.malzer@uni-wuerzburg.de

China has been experiencing an unprecedented urbanisation wave over the last few decades, which has also led to so-called lower-tier cities in inland regions undergoing rapid development and competing for recognition. The city of Yinchuan, capital of the Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region in the country's north-western periphery and home to the Hui people, a minority distinguishable from the Han majority only by their Islamic faith, had increasingly been developed as China's 'flagship Muslim city' in recent years. Arabian-style architecture, road signs in Arabic script and a 'Hui Culture Park' were constructed to display state-sanctioned Islamic imagery, foster tourism and attract trade with Middle Eastern countries. Although considered much less politically sensitive than the far-western Xinjiang region with its Turkic Uyghur minority and close transnational links to Central Asia, in the context of China's recent strategy to 'sinicise religions', Yinchuan's conspicuous Islamic imagery has largely been removed from urban space. Drawing on observations from three field visits to the city in January 2017, October 2018 and March 2019, this article traces Yinchuan's Islamic image-building strategy as well as its abrupt end, as reflected by transformations of urban space and changes in official narratives.
Keywords: China, Yinchuan, Islam, minorities, image-building, theme park.

Introduction

China has been experiencing an unprecedented urbanisation wave over the last few decades, which has barely left any part of the country untouched. Away from the well-known coastal metropolises, so-called 3rd and lower tier cities in inland regions are also undergoing rapid development and competing for domestic and international recognition.

One such city is Yinchuan, capital of the Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, one of China's smallest provincial-level units. Ningxia is situated in the country's north-western periphery, an area which has traditionally been perceived as a poor, underdeveloped and desolate frontier space. The region around Yinchuan has however long been an agricultural oasis sustained by the Yellow River, itself a mythological source of Chinese identity. Since 1958, Ningxia has been officially designated as the home of the Hui people, a minority distinguishable from the Han majority only by their Islamic faith. Although the Hui make up just over one third of Ningxia's population, the region has a special political significance to the Chinese state both with regard to domestic stability and international trade.

Considered much less politically sensitive than the far-western Xinjiang region with its Turkic Uyghur minority and close transnational links to Central Asia, Yinchuan had increasingly been developed as China's flagship Muslim city in recent years. Arabian-style architecture, road signs in Arabic script and a 'Hui Culture Park' were constructed to display state-sanctioned Islamic imagery, foster tourism and attract trade with Middle Eastern countries.

This strategy had however become increasingly at odds with negative portrayals of Islam in both international and Chinese domestic discourses. In the context of China's recent crackdown on Muslim minorities and Islamic identity in Xinjiang, Yinchuan's conspicuous

---

Special Issue — Edited by I. Pardo, G. B. Prato, J. Rosbrook-Thompson
Ethnographies of Urbanity in Flux: Theoretical Reflections

Urbanities, Vol. 10 · Supplement 3 ·February 2020
© 2020 Urbanities

Arabian-style imagery has largely been removed from urban space since late 2017. Drawing on observations from three field visits to the city and its 'Hui Culture Park' in January 2017, October 2018 and March 2019, this article traces Yinchuan's image-building strategy as China's 'flagship Muslim city' as well as its abrupt end, as reflected by transformations of urban space and official narratives.

Geographical Setting and Historical Background

The Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, situated in China's semi-arid Northwest, was historically long part of a contact zone between agrarian civilisation and nomadic tribal land. Ningxia's economic and cultural centre is the area around its capital Yinchuan in the North of the region. The Yinchuan plain is an oasis sustained by the Yellow River to its East and the Helan mountains to its North, which protect it from desertification. Military forts and defence structures against nomadic tribes were built in Ningxia as early as China's first imperial dynasty, the Qin (221-206 BC). Irrigation canals were dug to cultivate agriculture and sustain these forts. Today, Yinchuan is one of the few Chinese cities still using its ancient irrigation system, and the city has become known under the slogan 'lake city on the frontier' (Xu 2015: 2; 9; 18).

The region's culturally most distinct period came between 1038 and 1227 AD when it was under the rule of the Tangut Western Xia *Xixia* dynasty, one of several regional powers competing with the Song dynasty (960-1279 AD) in China's heartland. Present-day Yinchuan used to be the site of the Xixia capital Xingqing. A massive complex of imperial Xixia tombs located to its West in the eastern slopes of the Helan mountains remain one of Yinchuan's major cultural relics up to this day, and local museums proudly display texts written in Xixia characters, unintelligible to anyone but a few specialists. The Tanguts were defeated by the Mongols in 1227 AD, and after several name changes, the region became known as the 'pacified' or 'tranquil' *Xia* (Ningxia's literal name) (Xu 2015: 13). Today, two urban districts of Yinchuan are named Xingqing and Xixia respectively — the once independent Xixia empire has long been incorporated into Chinese historiography and Yinchuan's spatial identity. During subsequent centuries, Ningxia, now again largely peripheral to Chinese history, was settled by descendants of Arab and Persian traders who introduced Islam to the region.

The Hui Minority

Ningxia has been labelled an 'autonomous region' for the Hui minority since 1958, forming the smallest of five such provincial-level units for ethnic minorities in China today. As a result of an ethnic classification project conducted in the 1950s, the Hui are one of 56 state-recognised ethnic groups *minzu* 民族 in the People's Republic of China today (Zang 2015: 11). The Han majority (making up ca. 92% of the population) and the 55 minority groups are officially equal by law, although the government's conception of the Chinese nation is driven by the Confucian notion of *ronghe* 融合, which assumes the eventual acculturation and assimilation of minority groups into Han society (Zang 2015: 28). While the Chinese state is sponsoring the preservation of minority cultures, this only applies to certain apolitical and non-threatening forms of culture,

such as song and dance, which are often used as a way to display unity and present the image of China as a 'harmonious society' (Zang 2015: 66ff.).

The Hui are one of ten recognised Muslim minorities, and the only one who speak Chinese as their mother tongue. The Hui descend from Arab and Persian immigrants of the Tang (618-907 AD) and Yuan (1279-1368 AD) dynasties who intermarried with Chinese women. Hui people, who are phenotypically not distinguishable from the majority Han, can be found virtually everywhere in the country. In fact, the term *Hui* used to denote *all* Muslims, including Han converts to Islam, before the People's Republic's *minzu* classification system was established (Gladney 1996: 27; Lipman 1997: xxii-xxiii). As such, Hui as a *minzu* category is an umbrella term for a large variety of sinicised Muslim communities rather than a denotation of one homogeneous group — in fact even secular Hui communities exist in some parts of the country (Gladney 1996: 262ff.).

Religion does however play a defining part for Hui communities in Ningxia: 'Hui identity in the northwest is inseparably identified with an Islamic tradition handed down to them by their Muslim ancestors. It is more than an ethnic identity; it is ethnoreligious, in that Islam is intimately tied to the northwest Hui's self-understanding' (Gladney 1996: 118). Indeed, in a study by Gustafsson and Ding (2014), almost all 2,289 Hui respondents from various regions in Ningxia stated that they were religious — with just 239 individuals not answering the question, but nobody declaring themselves to be non-religious (2014: 974). As a Hui Communist Party member (whose party affiliation prevents him from attending mosque) told me, even Hui not practicing Islam generally abstain from eating pork. This is reflected in the ubiquitous green and white 'halal' *qingzhen* 清真 label[2] found on front doors of the majority of Yinchuan's restaurants, as well as on many products in supermarkets. Indeed, being Muslim and belonging to the Hui *minzu* is often not distinguished in everyday conceptualisations. In a conversation with acquaintances (all Han) over the Spring Festival in 2017, it was explained to me that because of their Islamic faith, Hui people do not celebrate the Chinese New Year. When I told them that one of my Yinchuan friends, a Hui, was currently at his grandfather's house performing traditional Confucian New Year rituals, I was met with reactions ranging from scepticism to complete disbelief. Later this friend of mine explained to me that his father was a Ningxia Han, and his mother a secular Hui from Shanghai — which meant that although he grew up in Yinchuan as a Hui, nobody in his family was Muslim, making his identity a rare exception in Ningxia.[3] Stroup (2017: 205) notes, however, that Hui communities who have recently migrated to Yinchuan are increasingly starting to celebrate Chinese New Year,

---

[2] In the context of food, the Arabic word 'halal' can be used as a translation of the Chinese term *qingzhen*. However, as Gladney argues, the concept of *qingzhen* actually goes beyond the meaning of the term 'halal'. Its notions of 'purity' *qing* and 'truth' *zhen* are not only related to ritually prepared food, but more generally to moral purity and 'the authenticity of ethnic ancestry, lifestyle, and heritage'. As such, the concept is central to the Hui's ethnoreligious identity (Gladney 1996: 13ff.)

[3] In inter-ethnic marriages, parents can decide the ethnicity of their children (Zang 2015: 18). In the case of my friend, it is slightly unusual that he received the *minzu* status of his mother.

suggesting that these clear-cut assumptions on group behaviour are becoming blurred in the context of urbanisation.

In the mid-19th century the Northwest of China saw several violent conflicts, often only appearing in history books under the label 'Muslim rebellions'. These conflicts rarely had clear-cut front lines, as Islam in Northwest China existed in many forms, ranging from various fundamentalist teachings to very sinicised and assimilated factions (Gladney 1996: 61). As Lipman argues, Han and other outside observers often falsely perceived Muslims as being unified, leading to stereotypical conceptions such as the image of the 'violent Muslim' which suggest a homogeneity that never existed (1997: 215).

Religious practices were stifled during Mao Zedong's Cultural Revolution (1966 – 1976), with mosques in the whole country largely closed down or destroyed. But China's reform era initiated in December 1978 quickly led to a revival of religious life in the 1980s: Hui Muslims were allowed to rebuild mosques, print Islamic publications, organise *hajj* pilgrimages to Mecca and reinstate Islamic education (Dillon 1999: 167ff.).

Yinchuan's Urbanisation Development and City Image-Building Strategies
The reform and opening up period did not only lead to a new religious revival in Ningxia, but also to an unprecedented surge in urbanisation in the region. Yinchuan was showcased in a 1984 article of the Chinese Communist Party's official German language publication *Beijing Rundschau* as a rapidly modernizing and industrializing city of 400,000 inhabitants, which was completely unrecognizable to an 86-year old Muslim returnee who reportedly had left it 35 years earlier, just before the Communist victory in 1949, when Yinchuan had only 27,000 residents (Cui 1984: 28). It has been another 35 years since the publication of this article, and according to official statistics Yinchuan's population has meanwhile risen to 1.4 million inhabitants in its three urban districts, and to a total of 2.2 million inhabitants within its total administrative area (Chen et al. eds 2017: 102). The enlarging of Yinchuan's urban jurisdiction to include rural counties is a result of the 'Large Yinchuan' strategy in 2002, a reaction to the 'Western Development Strategy' fostered by the Central Government since the year 2000 in order to combat growing regional disparities between China's heartland and its western peripheries (Wang et al. 2017: 88). Urbanisation has been viewed as the solution to the problem of unequal development throughout the country, and Yinchuan's spatial expansion and attempts to rapidly urbanise even small county towns by resettling peasants into high-rise buildings are manifestations of this approach. Yinchuan is also no exception to China's nationwide trend of so-called third- and lower-tier cities emulating spatial forms and international appearances of flourishing coastal metropolises such as Shanghai and Guangzhou by building skyscrapers, monumental government buildings and oversized 'Central Business Districts' (CBDs) (Shepard 2015: 134f.). Under market conditions, cities in China are increasingly employing 'image engineering' strategies as attempts to 'attract domestic and international capital, bolster the loyalty and civic pride of their residents, and promote their relatively leading roles in national economic development' (Cartier and Tomba 2012: 33; see also Grazer-Bideau 2018: 261).

Special Issue — Edited by I. Pardo, G. B. Prato, J. Rosbrook-Thompson
Ethnographies of Urbanity in Flux: Theoretical Reflections

Urbanities, Vol. 10 · Supplement 3 ·February 2020
© 2020 Urbanities

Yinchuan, trying to shake off widely held stereotypes of poverty and backwardness, has also been using such image-building strategies in an attempt to find its modern identity.

In fact, the city has long been suffering from an image problem — stereotypes about its lack of development and backwardness compared to the eastern part of the nation are abundant, and Yinchuan residents are very much aware of them. For instance, one of the respondents of a non-representative online survey (n=30) I conducted in 2017 among Yinchuan residents claimed that outsiders considered Yinchuan people to be 'extremely poor, living in the desert and riding camels'. Others stressed negative connotations connected to the presence of the Muslim Hui minority.

As the capital of the Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, Hui culture would seem to be an obvious element within the local image-building process of Yinchuan. However, as the following quote aptly demonstrates, the Hui constitute somewhat of a problem for Chinese minority policies:

> 'The Hui are a *minzu* which is good at doing business, over the long flow of history they have gradually lost the cultural characteristics of the Arabian lands, the assimilation to Han culture got gradually stronger. Especially compared to those ethnic minorities of Inner Mongolia, Tibet and so on who are good at singing and dancing, the Hui lack the rich historical sediment in terms of music, song and dance, the development of the Hui's music, dances etc. is lagging quite far behind' (Duan 2011: 118).

Since the 1980s, the image of minorities as objects of admiration has been fostered by the state, and ethnic tourism has been identified as a means to boost local economies as well as strengthen China's image as a multicultural society (Zang 2015: 37). Cultural consumption and commodification went along with an 'exoticisation and sexualisation of minority representations' (Zang 2015: 38). For the latter, the term 'internal orientalism' has been coined in a study by Louisa Schein (1997) on ethnic tourism to minority areas in southwestern Yunnan province. Schein's argument is based on Edward Said's 1978 well-known concept of 'orientalism.' Said's *Orientalism* describes the discursive process within the Western world of constructing the image of the so-called Orient as an inherently different and inferior *Other*, which stands in contrast to Western rationality, and which used to implicitly legitimise Western imperialism.[4] Schein then adds the adjective 'internal' in order to apply it to the domestic Chinese context and thus 'describe a relation between imaging and cultural/political domination that takes place inter-ethnically within China' (Schein 1997: 73). Similar practices of internal orientalism have also been identified within Europe, where Mediterranean societies in particular have been essentialised within anthropological works (for a critical analysis, see, e.g., Pardo and Prato 2011: 4ff.).

However, marketable items such as songs, dances and colourful clothing are at best secondary features of Hui identity, which is after all defined by their Islamic faith. Yang (2008)

---

[4] For a more in-depth discussion on legitimacy, particularly regarding policies affecting minority cultures, see e.g. Pardo and Prato 2019.

Special Issue — Edited by I. Pardo, G. B. Prato, J. Rosbrook-Thompson
Ethnographies of Urbanity in Flux: Theoretical Reflections

Urbanities, Vol. 10 · Supplement 3 ·February 2020
© 2020 Urbanities

views Hui culture as a 'brand', which he criticises as not being well marketed, lacking for instance 'premium leisure tourism goods'. He advocates for marketing slogans that describe Yinchuan as a 'mysterious Muslim metropolis' (Yang 2008: 129) — an attempt which could be considered exoticisation and *Othering* — though it is interesting to take into account that the author is of Hui ethnicity himself.

When I asked about the relation between the Hui and Islam, I did not get a uniform response in my 2017 survey; some respondents stressed the difference between Hui culture and Islam as an international religion, others highlighted that the Hui had assimilated to Chinese culture, while others still argued that the Hui are not able to represent all of Islam, as they are not the only Muslim minority in China. Some respondents also distinguished the Hui from Islamic terrorism, with one respondent suggesting the city of Yinchuan should stress the ethnic aspect of the Hui more than Islam as a religion, which he viewed negatively. On the other end of the spectrum, another (Han!) respondent disagreed with the term 'Hui culture' and advocated for an emphasis of Islam, despite that being 'a bit sensitive as a result of the problem of extremist groups'. These ambivalent views ended up being reflected in Yinchuan's adoption and subsequent rejection of using Islam as an image-building strategy. The city branded itself as China's 'flagship Muslim city' in order to foster trade with Islamic countries, but this policy was abandoned around a decade later in 2018, when national policies to 'sinicise religions', first conceptualised by Xi Jinping in 2015, were starting to be implemented (Gan 2018: n.p.).

Yinchuan's Islam Strategy until 2018
This change in strategy was reflected by the fate of the nation's only 'China Hui Culture Park *Zhonghua Huixiang wenhua yuan* 中华回乡文化园', situated in fast urbanizing Yongning county, a forty minutes-drive from Yinchuan's centre but still within the city's administrative boundaries. The park, a mixture between theme park and museum, featured a distinct entrance gate modelled after India's Taj Mahal. When I first arrived there over the Spring Festival in 2017, hundreds of red lanterns celebrating the (Han Chinese) New Year were placed on the entrance building just as everywhere else in the park. An oddly shaped sculpture in the form of an oversized rooster, as well as two hands forming a handshake accompanied by the inscription 'Hui and Han are one family *Hui Han yi jiaqin* 回汉一家亲' greeted the New Year on the large empty square before the entrance. The entrance was free during the holiday as long as one subscribed to the park's official WeChat social media account.[5] Once inside the park, the group I was with made our way through a tunnel of even more red lanterns until we arrived at the temporary Hui museum. Unlike the more comprehensive *Ningxia Museum* in Yinchuan's civic centre which featured a large exhibition on Hui Muslim culture including dioramas with life-sized puppets, this temporary exhibition was mostly displaying maps detailing the migration routes of the Hui people's ancestors from the Middle East as well as information on Hui customs and Islamic practices. A new museum, which just like the *Ningxia Museum* had been shaped to

---

[5] This WeChat media feed provided me with frequent updates on activities in the park over the following two years, which reflected the changing political climate this locality was soon to be affected by.

Special Issue — Edited by I. Pardo, G. B. Prato, J. Rosbrook-Thompson
Ethnographies of Urbanity in Flux: Theoretical Reflections

Urbanities, Vol. 10 · Supplement 3 ·February 2020
© 2020 Urbanities

look like the character *Hui* 回 from a bird's eye perspective, was still undergoing renovations.[6] Nearby, dozens of small vending stalls formed a food street decorated with various flags of the world and offering specialties from all around the country. Our group made its way through the dense holiday crowd towards a temporary stage hosting New Year performances, which was located next to a large building featuring the English words 'Arabian Nights' and the Chinese inscription 'Dream of the Hui — One Thousand and One Nights *menghui·yi qian ling yi ye* 梦回·一千零一夜', with the first stroke of the character *ye* 夜 for 'night' taking the shape of a crescent. In a bizarre way this inscription combines Luisa Schein's 'internal orientalism' with Edward Said's original concept of orientalism, as it manages to relate both to the Hui and an imagined mystical Arabia at the same time. In fact, the whole park's underlying imagery appeared to be a mixture between undistinguished Indian, Arabian and Turkic elements forming a diffuse notion of the Middle East,[7] all blended into the omnipresent Chinese roosters and red lanterns, while international flags and assorted cuisines set a carnivalesque backdrop. Meanwhile we had removed our shoes and joined other tourists happily taking pictures inside the largest structure of the park, an Arabian-style mosque. Virtually everyone in the mosque seemed to be of Han ethnicity, with just the attendants at the entrance wearing the white cap typical for Hui men. I may have been the only one among my group (a foreigner among young middle class Yinchuaners) who felt slightly uneasy with this spectacle, as it lacked any religious atmosphere and appeared to disregard the people whose culture was supposedly on display. Haddad-Fonda (2016), who had visited the park in August 2015, reports an experience similar to mine, except that he apparently visited on a less crowded day than I did:

> 'In the corner is a panel explaining how Muslims pray, but one gets the sense that no Muslim has ever actually prayed inside. Instead, the only thing happening during my visit was an animated contest to see which of three tourists could best photograph the tiled dome with a selfie stick. It was a sterile, empty building, and no tourist spent more than a few minutes inside before wandering back into the courtyard' (Haddad-Fonda 2016: n.p.).

---

[6] These renovations had been going on since 2015 (Haddad-Fonda 2016: n.p.), and were eventually never completed.

[7] The concept of the Middle East is also used in the Chinese language (*zhongdong* 中东), even though from the Chinese geographical point of view it should technically be the 'Middle West' — an example of the dominant influence of Eurocentric conceptions of space.

Special Issue — Edited by I. Pardo, G. B. Prato, J. Rosbrook-Thompson
Ethnographies of Urbanity in Flux: Theoretical Reflections

Urbanities, Vol. 10 · Supplement 3 ·February 2020
© 2020 Urbanities

Figure 1: The Hui Culture Park decorated for Spring Festival 2017 — by M. Malzer

Two years later, when the park was facing imminent closure, one of the Hui attendants confirmed to me that the mosque had indeed never been used for prayer.

After exiting the park, we turned South towards what was supposed to be China's 'First Hui Street'. With the exception of one lonely shop selling Hui clothing at its southern end, the whole street, which takes around 15 minutes to walk through, was composed of empty buildings, with no trace of activity.[8] At the southern end of the street lies the historic *Na jiahu* 纳家户 mosque, built in 1524 and architecturally so firmly Chinese that its function is not easily recognisable to an outsider. Hardly any of the Hui Park's visitors had made it to this historically much more significant building. Gladney (1996: 117ff.) visited *Na* Homestead several times from 1983 onwards, and reports religious revitalisation and even a potential 'fundamentalist revival' at the locality. He describes a closed community — most villagers share the surname *Na* — with flourishing religious life, local identity, increasing conservatism and isolationist tendencies. This was in the 1980s, at a time when the village was recovering from the Cultural Revolution, during which the famous mosque had been turned into a ball-bearing factory and some villagers had been forced to raise pigs (Gladney 1996: 136). It is hard to imagine that this location could be the site of any kind of fundamentalist revival today. While Gladney described Na Homestead as somewhat isolated, reachable only via a dirt road three kilometres off the highway (1996: 199), it had meanwhile been 'gifted' with a large tourism site right outside its doors, which opened this locality up to the world. Of course, the Hui Culture Park was a colourful, disneyfied space (compare also Krase 2009: 32), in which religious activities were

---

[8] Haddad-Fonda (2016: n.p.) reports it to have been abandoned in August 2015 as well. According to him, the street used to house 179 shops and restaurants. A conversation with a local resident in March 2019 confirmed that the planners of the street had overestimated tourist numbers, and it had never been successful even when the park was still regularly visited.

conspicuously absent. The park seemed to have been constructed to showcase a government-sponsored version of domesticated Islam, while at the same time being part of China's wider strategy to play the 'Islamic card' (Drewes 2013: 65) and brand Yinchuan as a 'flagship' Muslim city in order to reach out to the Arab world and strengthen economic trade links.

When I first arrived in Yinchuan in January 2017, all street signs throughout the city had recently been altered to feature Arabic script next to the Chinese characters, even though the potential audience was limited; while some Hui Muslims learn Arabic, none of them speak it as their mother tongue. The city had however been hosting large China-Arab Expos in 2013 and 2015 and would host another one in September 2017. These economic trade fairs were direct attempts at attracting foreign investment, and urban infrastructure had accordingly been ornamented with cultural markers branding the city as a gateway to the Middle East.

Yinchuan's China-Arab Axis *Zhong-A zhi zhou* 中阿之轴 used to be the most direct attempt aimed at symbolizing these transnational relations with the Arab world. Built in 2016, the axis is 2.1 km long and 90 meters wide, situated in Yinchuan's yet-to-be completed Central Business District north of its administrative centre and surrounded by wide and mostly empty streets with barely any people to be seen. Until early 2018, various Chinese and Islamic architectural elements used to be symmetrically arranged along its broad passage, the latter including crescents and poles in the style of minarets. Both Chinese and Arabic styles were presented on a level playing field, symbolizing how the foundation for Chinese and Arab relations were officially supposed to be structured. Similar to the conflated styles in the Hui Culture Park, the vagueness of architectural forms indicated an openness to the Islamic world beyond specific nation states. The axis was displaying national flags of a broad variety of Muslim majority countries. A few years earlier, Duan (2011) had indeed listed not only the Arab league, but also culturally very dissimilar countries like Turkey, Iran and Malaysia as potential targets of Ningxia's Opening Up strategy (2011: 134f.). This leaves the axis to be best interpreted as the spatial manifestation of an open declaration of intent to get closer to an imagined Arabia, and not a reflection of any existing or historical relations.

The above mentioned 'Ningxia Inland Opening Up and Economic Development Strategy', which includes strengthening relations with the Islamic world, can be traced back to a State Council decision from 2008 (Duan 2011: 101). Ho (2013) sees this to a reaction to the 2008 global financial crisis, which saw China's trade with developed countries fall and therefore led it to reach out to new markets (2013b: 214). However, while the more recent developments in this regard may have started in 2008, Yinchuan's role in being a gateway to Arab countries can be traced back to the very early days of China's reform and opening up policy.

Drewes (2013) outlines the history of China-Arab relations since the 1980s, recording instances of China playing what she calls the 'Islamic card' by conducting 'Islamic diplomacy' via official *haji* pilgrimages for Hui Muslims, inviting tourism to Chinese Islamic sights for foreign official delegations, providing official support for Islamic studies and of course initiating trade conferences to improve economic ties with Middle Eastern countries (2013: 65ff.). Gladney links the reconstruction of Yinchuan's Nanguan 南关 Mosque in 1981, the first to use Arabian architectural elements, to the same strategy (1996: 167). In 1988, even plans for

Yinchuan becoming the country's first Islamic Special Economic Zone (SEZ) were proposed, but never carried out (Drewes 2013: 72).

Earlier strategies for Sino-Arab relations not only included Ningxia, but also the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in the Far West of China, home to more than half of China's Muslim population, who are culturally and ethnically much further distinct than the Hui (Drewes 2013: 70). However, with Xinjiang having long been politically less stable and constituting a more sensitive case for the Chinese government, Ningxia was perceived as a safer choice. Duan (2011) makes the same argument, seeing Xinjiang's 'stability problems' as negatively influencing its development, which left the door open for Ningxia being at the 'forefront' of opening up to the Islamic world (2011: 356).

Within the larger framework of revitalizing the historic Silk Road under China's 'One Belt, One Road' initiative, Yinchuan was thus supposed to become the centre for trade with the Middle East, specifically catering to a market for Muslim products (Ho 2013a: 101). In 2012, a four km² 'comprehensive bonded zone' was established in Yinchuan, a trade area which was framed towards facilitating relations with the Arab world (Drewes 2016: 327). The centre of 'halal' *qingzhen* 清真 food and other Muslim products was suggested to be situated in Yinchuan, along with creative industry, Islamic publications, Arabic language software, etc. (Duan 2011: 115). A *qingzhen* food industrial zone had indeed already been established in Yinchuan in 2003 (Erie 2014: 549), and cooperation with halal certification organisations in Malaysia and Thailand were established to guarantee proper supervision of food production (Ho 2013a: 102). Moreover, Sino-Arab student exchanges and cultural projects were rapidly expanded (Armijo 2013: 233ff.), and in early 2016 U.A.E. airline *Emirates* started to connect regularly Dubai and Yinchuan with direct flights (Haddad-Fonda 2016: n.p.).[9]

Despite all the rhetoric surrounding business, Ningxia's actual trade with Arab countries never seemed to have taken off. Consulting import/export figures taken from the 2017 *Ningxia Statistical Yearbook* show the strongest trade relations in 2016 to have been with the United States, Korea and Japan — the table only lists two predominantly Muslim countries (Malaysia and Indonesia, both with comparatively low numbers) and does not provide data for any Middle Eastern Country (Jia et al. 2017: 480). Data regarding foreign investments appears to be incomplete but, in any case, does not show significant funds from Arab countries (Jia et al. 2017: 481), suggesting that at least the economic part of the strategy cannot have been particularly successful. Drewes (2013) finds some limited Arab investment, though she reports substantial donations by Arab sponsors specifically to religious projects, such as renovating mosques and Islamic schools (2013: 71). In fact, religious life of Ningxia Hui was seen to be increasingly influenced by contact with the outside Islamic world in recent years, with some groups showing interest in more conservative teachings (Drewes 2016: 326). These trends were clearly not the original intentions of the Chinese government.

Even before the worldwide discourse on Islam changed with September 11th 2001, and well before unrests in Xinjiang in 2009 changed perceptions on Islam within China, Dillon

---

[9] According to the website flightmapper.net these Emirates flights stopped operating in November 2018. As of March 2019, Sichuan Airlines is still operating some flights between Dubai and Yinchuan.

Special Issue — Edited by I. Pardo, G. B. Prato, J. Rosbrook-Thompson
Ethnographies of Urbanity in Flux: Theoretical Reflections

Urbanities, Vol. 10 · Supplement 3 ·February 2020
© 2020 Urbanities

(1999) saw China's playing the 'Islamic card' as an 'Islamic Gamble', and argued that Chinese leaders needed to find a balance between 'exploit[ing] Islamic sentiment for trade and investment' and not 'encouraging Uyghur and Hui identity to the point at which they will have to concede genuine political autonomy' (Dillon 1999: 180). The latter part of Dillon's statement seems somewhat far-fetched in the case of Ningxia. Situations in Xinjiang and Ningxia are vastly different and, unlike Uyghurs, Hui Muslims are, as Lipman (1997: 226) stresses on multiple occasions, inherently Chinese in their identity and generally not connected to any secessionist movements.

Still, given that Islam serves as the common denominator for constructing ethnoreligious identities, any state policy towards Islam in Ningxia was likely to have spill-over effects going beyond the region, and vice versa. Erie (2014) argues that although 'turmoil in Xinjiang had long predated the People's Republic of China or the 9/11 conception of 'terrorism', changing state policy towards Islam following 2001 has also been impacting Hui in Ningxia (2014: 555).

From the Chinese government's point of view, any state policy towards Islam thus would have to balance constantly between domestic stability (downplay religion) and international image-building (display religion), to avoid domestic power challenges on the one hand, and negative images abroad on the other.

The End of Yinchuan's Islam Strategy in 2018
Starting in summer 2017, reports of large-scale internments of Muslims (mostly Uyghur, but also Kazaks and other Central Asian minorities) in China's far western Xinjiang region have been emerging, and evidence of 'the country's most intense campaign of coercive social re-engineering since the Cultural Revolution' has since been collected (Zenz 2018: 23). Surveillance and policing of urban spaces in Xinjiang have become virtually universal in the region. Despite international protests, the 'sinicisation of religions' strategy has been continued and is affecting both Christian and Muslim communities in other parts of China as well (Gan 2019: n.p.). Even though Ningxia signed an 'anti-terrorism cooperation' with Xinjiang in late 2018 in order to learn from Xinjiang's 'experiences in promoting social stability' (Ji 2018: n.p.), Ningxia Hui have not faced similar repressions as Xinjiang Uyghurs as of early 2019. Yinchuan's image-building strategy as China's 'flagship Muslim city' has, however, been abruptly ended, as the following ethnographic report illustrates.

In late 2017, all street signs in Yinchuan were replaced by versions without Arabic script and Arabian-style architecture was seldomly shown on official media. Fears of 'Islamization' tendencies, for instance through the alleged spread of halal *qingzhen* food, were increasingly discussed online, as an article by the CCP's English language publication *Global Times* reported (Liu Xin 2017). In March 2018, the Arabic script was removed from all *qingzhen* food labels (Cao 2019: n.p.), Middle Eastern-style architectural ornaments were removed from public space and no more new Arabian-style mosques were approved by the urban planning bureau (though existing ones are as of yet still untouched). The China-Arab Axis replaced its large crescents with Chinese jade discs, removed all foreign national flags, and left only the Chinese pavilions unaltered (Gan 2018: n.p.). The space, which had never had a function beyond the

Special Issue — Edited by I. Pardo, G. B. Prato, J. Rosbrook-Thompson
Ethnographies of Urbanity in Flux: Theoretical Reflections

Urbanities, Vol. 10 · Supplement 3 ·February 2020
© 2020 Urbanities

representational aspect, lost its initial symbolic function and has become a decontextualised and essentially meaningless.

Figure 2: The remains of the China-Arab Axis in Yinchuan's Central Business District, October 2018 — this oversized Chinese jade coin used to be an Islamic crescent — by M. Malzer

The WeChat social media account of the Hui Culture park, which had regularly been advertising events with colourful pictures of its mosque and Arabic ornamentations, slowly started to post different content after the Spring Festival celebrations in 2018, which also appears to be last time a major event was held at the park. Content posted after March 2018 largely avoids showing any of the parks Arabian-style buildings, and focuses on different tourism aspects of Ningxia instead. On 17th August 2018, the park was silently renamed 'Ningxia Folk Customs Park *Ningxia chuan minsu yuan* 宁夏川民俗园' on its Wechat feed, dropping references to both the Hui minority and to the Chinese nation *zhonghua* 中华[10] from its official name. While the old name had featured the Chinese nation right next to the Hui culture, the new name is nondescript and reduces the park to a local attraction. In the following, the park's Wechat feed only sporadically continued posting local news items, for instance regarding the 60th anniversary of the founding of the Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region. A visit to the park in late October 2018 revealed that the park was barely being maintained anymore. Hardly any people were to be seen, the food street was gone, all but one shop (whose owner announced he would leave the next day) and all buildings except the mosque and the museum were closed. Most strikingly, all Arabic script and most references to the park's previous name had been covered with tape, though this was done hastily and sometimes neglected in corners not easily visible to visitors. One building was used as storage for old event decorations (including the large rooster from the Spring Festival 2017), and nobody was around to prevent us from entering this backstage space. The (officially still 'temporary') Hui museum had seen

---

[10] *Zhonghua* is a term referring to China in the sense of a nation, it was coined in the early 20th century to construct a larger Chinese identity beyond ethnic (Han, Hui, Manchu) categories (Zang 2015: 20).

Special Issue — Edited by I. Pardo, G. B. Prato, J. Rosbrook-Thompson
Ethnographies of Urbanity in Flux: Theoretical Reflections

Urbanities, Vol. 10 · Supplement 3 ·February 2020
© 2020 Urbanities

what can only be described as a storm of iconoclasm, with large parts of the exhibition torn down or taped over. The story of the Hui minority's origins as well as all references to Islam were now removed, and some texts had even single words or phrases individually plastered over with paper. The exhibition only left a few items unaltered, which did not reference anything related to religion or the Hui's origins.

A follow up visit to the park in March 2019 saw little further change, except that some buildings had started to fall into dereliction — while an entrance fee was still charged, the visit felt like an exploration of an abandoned place. The park was basically no longer advertised and hardly received any visitors. An elderly park employee at the mosque admitted to me that the park faced imminent closure as it had stopped receiving government funding in early 2018. By March 2019, wages for park employees had not been paid for months, and visitor numbers were so low that entrance fee revenues no longer covered the electricity bills. Another informant at nearby historic *Na jiahu* mosque — which unlike the mosque in the park is actually frequented for prayer — complained about the waste of money which had been invested into the now largely abandoned park, and the misunderstandings within society with which his religion was currently confronted.

The *Ningxia Museum* in Yinchuan's centre temporarily closed in October 2018 until further notice, officially for maintenance work on fire safety and protection of cultural artefacts. This closure happened just nine days before the 60th anniversary of the founding of the Autonomous Region, which was celebrated on red propaganda posters everywhere in the city (though official ceremonies had already been held in advance). Since such an anniversary would presumably be an occasion when the largest museum in the region could be expected to be hosting special events rather than facing maintenance work, the reason for closure did not seem convincing. It was thus of little surprise that, when I visited the reopened museum in March 2019, the exhibition on Hui culture and Islam had been fully removed. Unlike the Hui park, the museum had seen a full restructuring of its exhibitions, the most prominent one now depicting Ningxia's role during the Communist Revolution. The Hui were only referenced briefly towards the end of the remodelled exhibition on the historic *Xixia* culture. A model of the Chinese-style *Najia hu* mosque is accompanied by a brief description of its architectural history. Another text under the title *minzu ronghe* 民族融合 (translated as 'national unity'[11] by the curators, though the term *ronghe* carries the Confucian notion of assimilation, as described above) mentions the Hui as just one *minzu* group which had developed the region alongside Han, Manchu and Mongolian people. Given that just 0.84% of Ningxia's population is of neither Han nor Hui ethnicity (Jia et al. 2017: 103), the sudden inclusion of previously rarely mentioned Manchu and Mongol groups as equal partners within the region's history, appears to be an obvious attempt at reframing the identity of the Hui Autonomous Region. This is also highlighted by a name change for one of Yinchuan's rivers, *Aiyi* 艾依, which was deemed to sound too similar

---

[11] The term *minzu* has been variously translated as 'nation' or 'ethnic group'. In older official Chinese English-language publications the 55 minorities would usually be called 'national minorities', while more recently the term 'ethnic' has become more common — presumably because it has been realized that 'nation' carries implicit connotations of statehood.

Special Issue — Edited by I. Pardo, G. B. Prato, J. Rosbrook-Thompson
Ethnographies of Urbanity in Flux: Theoretical Reflections

Urbanities, Vol. 10 · Supplement 3 ·February 2020
© 2020 Urbanities

to the Arabic female name *Ayishah*. The river is now named *Diannong* 典农, an ancient Han dynasty (206 BC-220 AD) name for Yinchuan, in order to 'better reflect Chinese culture' (Liu Caiyu 2018).

'Halal Food and Wine': The Remains of Yinchuan's Muslim Identity

While Yinchuan had been connected to the idea of a 'showcase Muslim city' since the 1980s, this concept had never been uncontroversial even before the strategy was cancelled. Wu (2016) argues that Middle Eastern elements within architecture in Yinchuan's public space were disregarding local conditions: while Hui culture could be considered the 'leading culture' in Yinchuan, Han residents make up the majority of the population after all. She argues that 'Yellow River culture' and Western Xia culture constitute Yinchuan's local characteristics, whereas Islamic culture is an 'outside culture' (Wu 2016: 66). In response to this point one might argue that the Tangut Xixia dynasty could also be considered an 'outside' influence, but this fallen kingdom has long found its place within Chinese historiography, and — in an act of retroactive incorporation into the Chinese nation — the historical Tanguts are today even described as an 'ethnic minority'. In contrast, Islam is still perceived as a foreign culture, even though by the time of the Song dynasty — which partly overlapped with the Xixia rule — some Muslims had already been living in China for generations (Lipman 1997: 29). Hui of course did assimilate to Chinese culture, and Islamic architecture — such as *Na jiahu* mosque — did adopt Chinese architectural styles, though many of these mosques were destroyed during the Cultural Revolution (Gan 2018: n.p.). How far the Arabic elements introduced since the 1980s when many mosques were rebuilt are welcomed by Hui themselves is a different question. A study by Fan (2013) on Arabian-style buildings in the eastern Chinese city of Quanzhou, which also had been built to attract foreign capital, finds that locals did not feel these styles had anything to do with them, and did not wish to be represented by 'other people' (2013: 346f.). Gladney (1996: 167) also reports that *Na jiahu* villagers saw Yinchuan's centrally located Nanguan mosque, which at the time had been reconstructed in Arabian style, in a critical light. A Hui Park employee I asked about whether he approved of the style of the park's mosque evaded the question by commenting the building produced a 'nice echo'. But Hui in Ningxia are not a homogeneous group, and according to Stroup (cited in Gan 2018), certain reformist schools do not intend to go back to Chinese-style mosques, seeing Arabian styles as a way to connect to the larger Islamic world. It is of course exactly these transnational religious connections which are perceived as a threat to CCP rule.
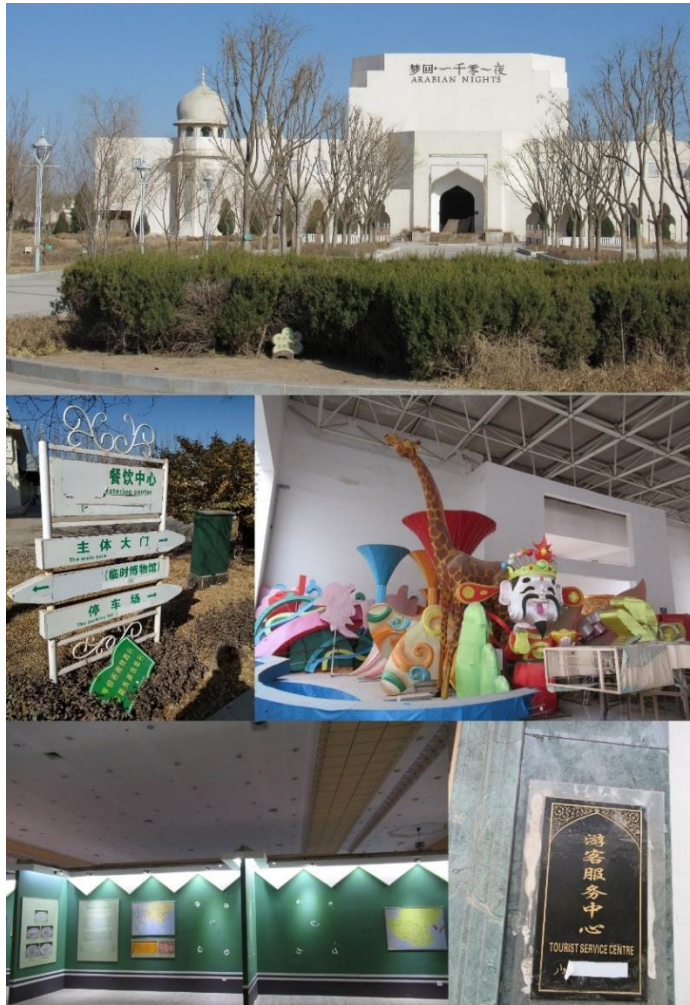
Figure 3: Impressions from the Hui Park, now no longer maintained. Arabic script and references to Islam are taped over or removed (October 2018 and March 2019) — by M.Malzer

    Yinchuan has recently been fostering the development of wineries and wine tourism in the Helan mountains — there were 390 km² of vineyards as of late 2014, and a Ningxia wine has even won the renowned international Decanter award in 2011 (Zhang / Thach 2016: 43). Wine may not fit the image of a Muslim city, but is seen as part of a modern, high-quality, urban lifestyle. Asked which local characteristics the city of Yinchuan should stress more for their image-branding, one respondent to my survey cited '*halal* food and wine' as local specialties in the same sentence. This suggestion reveals the way the 'Muslim city' was always really conceptualised: in a secular, commodifiable manner, in which 'ethnic food' could serve as a local specialty without needing to evoke religion at all. It may therefore be not that surprising that even after the urban iconoclasm against Islamic imagery, the green and white *qingzhen* food labels — in new versions without Arabic script — continue to be ubiquitous in the city.

Conclusion

In an attempt to catch up with developments in the eastern part of the country, the city of Yinchuan in China's long-neglected Northwest had been trying to make use of its local Hui Muslim minority in order to brand itself as China's 'flagship Muslim city' and set up economic

relations with the Middle East. While the origins of this strategy reach back to China's early reform years in the 1980s, its most visible and active phase lasted roughly a decade after 2008. Yinchuan's urban space was adorned with Arabian-style ornaments, and a 'Hui Culture Park' was displaying a colourful theme-park version of state-sanctioned Islam. The strategy, controversial among residents and not particularly effective in reaching its intended goals to attract more international trade with the Islamic world, was eventually deemed to be at odds with Xi Jinping's national policies to 'sinicise religions' that have been increasingly implemented since 2017. While far-western Xinjiang region has seen a massive crackdown on religious and ethnic identities, much more assimilated Ningxia has (so far) been less radically affected. Nevertheless, the city of Yinchuan has experienced a large-scale iconoclasm which removed or altered unwanted ornaments, imagery and narratives throughout urban space. The history of the capital of the Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region has been rewritten in its museums and spatial monuments at the expense of the Hui minority, whose culture may previously have been instrumentalised in 'orientalist' manner, but who are now increasingly removed from the region's official narrative.

References

Armijo, J. 2013. China and the Gulf: The Social and Cultural Implications of their Rapidly Developing Economic Ties. In T. Niblock and M. Malik (eds), *Asia-Gulf Economic Relations in the 21st Century: The Local to Global Transformation*. Berlin: Gerlach Press.

Cartier, C. and Tomba, L. 2012. Symbolic Cities and the 'Cake Debate'. In G. R. Barmé et al. (eds), *China Story Yearbook 2012: Red Rising Red Eclipse*. Canberra: Australian National University.

Cao Siqi. 2019. Ningxia sets up democratic system to select imams for mosques. *Global Times,* 06.03.2019. http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1141153.shtml Accessed on 21 March 2019.

Chen Yueyue 陈越月 et al. eds. 2017. *银川统计年鉴* [*2017 Yinchuan Statistical Yearbook*]. Beijing: Zhongguo tongji chubanshe.

Cui Chengwu. 1984. Ningxia – das größte Hui Gebiet [Ningxia – the largest Hui region]. *Beijing Rundschau* 21.21: 25-32.

Dillon, M. 1999. *China's Muslim Hui Community: Migration, Settlement and Sects*. Richmond, Surrey: The Curzon Press.

Drewes, F. 2013. Chinese Muslims Going Global? The Role of Islam in Current Sino-Arab Relations. *Berliner China-Hefte/Chinese History and Society*, 42: 63-81.

Drewes, F. 2016. *Orientalisiert – Kriminalisiert – Propagiert? Die Positionen von Muslimen in Gesellschaft und Politik der Volksrepublik China heute*. [*Orientalized – Criminalized – Propagated? The position of Muslims in Society and Politics in the People's Republic of China*]. Würzburg: Ergon Verlag.

Duan Qinglin. 2011. 段庆林. *城与乡：宁夏二元结构变迁研究* [*On Urban and Rural Area: Changes of Ningxia's Dual Economic Structure*]. Yinchuan: Ningxia Renmin Chubanshe.

Special Issue — Edited by I. Pardo, G. B. Prato, J. Rosbrook-Thompson
Ethnographies of Urbanity in Flux: Theoretical Reflections

Urbanities, Vol. 10 · Supplement 3 ·February 2020
© 2020 Urbanities

Erie, M. S. 2014. Defining Shari´a in China: State, *Ahong*, and the Postsecular Turn. *Cross-Currents: East Asian History and Culture Review* 3 (2): 542-72.

Fan Ke 范可. 2013. "'再地方化'：一个闽南回族社区的近年来都市规划中的建筑表现 ['Relocalization': recent architectural manifestations within city planning in a Minnan Hui ethnic community]." *城市化进程中的民族问题研究*. In Zhou Daming et al. (ed.). *Research on questions on ethnicity within the process of urbanization*].周大鸣. Reprint. Beijing: Minzu Chubanshe, 2013.

Gan, N. 2018. How China is trying to impose Islam with Chinese characteristics in the Hui Muslim heartland. *South China Morning Post*, 14 May. https://www.scmp.com/news/china/policies-politics/article/2145939/how-china-trying-impose-islam-chinese-characteristics Accessed on 20 March 2019.

Gan, N. 2019. Beijing plans to continue tightening grip on Christianity and Islam as China pushes ahead with the 'Sinicisation of religion'. *South China Morning Post*, 6 March. https://www.scmp.com/news/china/politics/article/2188752/no-let-chinas-push-sinicise-religion-despite-global-outcry-over Accessed on 21 March 2019.

Gladney, D. C. 1996. *Muslim Chinese: Ethnic Nationalism in the People's Republic*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Grazer-Bideau, F. 2018. Resistance to Places of Collective Memories: A Rapid Transformation Landscape in Beijing. In I. Pardo and G. B. Prato (eds), *The Palgrave Handbook of Urban Ethnography*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Gustafsson, B. and Ding S. 2014. Why Is There No Income Gap between the Hui Muslim Minority and the Han Majority in Rural Ningxia, China? *The China Quarterly* 220: 968-87.

Haddad-Fonda, K. 2016. China's Massive, Garish Theme Park for the Muslim World. *Foreign Policy*, 11 May. http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/05/11/chinas-massive-garish-new-theme-park-for-the-muslim-world-hui-minority-yinchuan/ Accessed on 20 March 2019.

Ho Wai-Yip. 2013a. Mobilizing the Muslim Minority for China's Development: Hui Muslims, Ethnic Relations and Sino-Arab Connections. *Journal of Comparative Asian Development*, 12 (1): 84-112.

Ho Wai-Yip. 2013b. Mobilizing the Muslim Minority, Targeting Arab Trade: China's Ningxia as the Islamic Hub for China-Arab Connections. In T. Niblock and M. Malik (eds), *Asia-Gulf Economic Relations in the 21st Century: The Local to Global Transformation*. Berlin: Gerlach Press.

Jia Hongbang 贾红邦 et al. eds. 2017. *宁夏统计年鉴 2017* [Ningxia Statistical Yearbook 2017]. Beijing: Zhongguo tongji chubanshe.

Ji Yuqiao. 2019. Ningxia learns from Xinjiang how to fight terrorism. *Global Times* 27 November. http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1129272.shtml Accessed on 21 February 2019.

Krase, J. 2009. A Visual Approach to Multiculturalism. In G. B. Prato (ed.), *Beyond Multiculturalism: Views from Anthropology*. London: Routledge.

Lipman, J. N. 1997. *Familiar Strangers: A History of Muslims in Northwest China*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.

Special Issue — Edited by I. Pardo, G. B. Prato, J. Rosbrook-Thompson
Ethnographies of Urbanity in Flux: Theoretical Reflections

Urbanities, Vol. 10 · Supplement 3 ·February 2020
© 2020 Urbanities

Liu Caiyu. 2018. Ningxia renames river back to Chinese culture. *Global Times*, 26 September. http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1121068.shtml Accessed on 21 March 2019.

Liu Xin. 2017. To avoid being accused of Islamization, Ningxia treads cautiously when opening up to the Arab world." *Global Times*, 14 September. http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1066430.shtml Accessed on 20 March 2019.

Pardo, I. and Prato, G. B. 2011. Introduction: Disconnected Governance and the Crisis of Legitimacy. In I. Pardo and G. B. Prato (eds), *Citizenship and the Legitimacy of Governance in the Mediterranean Region*. London: Routledge.

Pardo, I. and Prato, G. B. 2019. Ethnographies of Legitimacy: Methodological and Theoretical Insights. In I. Pardo and G. B. Prato (eds), *Legitimacy: Ethnographic and Theoretical Insights*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Said, E. W. 1978. *Orientalism*. London: Penguin, 2003.

Schein, L. 1997. Gender and Internal Orientalism in China. *Modern China*, 23 (1): 69-98.

Shepard, W. 2015. *Ghost Cities of China.* London: Zed Books.

Stroup, D. R. 2017. *Modernization and Ethnicity in China: A study of everyday ethnicity and urban renewal in Hui neighborhoods*. Doctoral Dissertation. University of Oklahoma.

Yang Baojun 2008. 杨保军. "论银川回族文化城市品牌构建 [Discussing the construction of an Yinchuan Hui ethnic culture city brand]." 西北第二民族学院学报 [*Journal of the Second Northwest University of Nationalities*] 4: 128-30.

Wang M., Krstikj, A. and Hisako Koura. 2017. Effects of urban planning on urban expansion control in Yinchuan City, Western China. *Habitat International* 64: 85-97.

Wu Yue 2016. 吴悦. "城市公共空间的准确文化表达探究：以银川市为例 [Investigation of the accurate cultural expression of urban public space: on the example of Yinchuan City]. *智能城市* [*Intelligent City*] 3: 66.

Xu Guangguo 2015.徐广国. *银川史话*[*A Brief History of Yinchuan*]. Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press,

Zang Xiaowei. 2015. *Ethnicity in China*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Zenz, A. 2018. 'Thoroughly reforming them towards a healthy heart attitude': China's political re-education campaign in Xinjiang. *Central Asian Survey* DOI: 10.1080/02634937.2018.1507997.

Zhang Wenxiao and Thach. L. 2016. Building a Wine Destination from Scratch in Ningxia, China. In L. Thach and S. Charters (eds), *Best Practices in Global Wine Tourism: 15 Case Studies from Around the World*. New York: Miranda Press.