

ABSTRACT: Ethnicity in China – Who are the Hui and Who are the Dungan?

The thesis has three main objectives: (1) to develop a concept appropriate for the comparison of different ethnicities, (2) to use this concept to identify differences of ethnicity in China, and (3) to analyse these differences in the cases of the Huis and the Dungans. The second section postulates the concept of ethnicity as a secondary identity, and this becomes the main theoretical and methodological frame of the work. Six primary identities and dimensions, that together form the components of ethnicity, are discussed. Policy, which is interpreted as a context of ethnicity, and (ethno)culture, understood as an expression of ethnicity, are not seen as components. The concept enables the comparison of distinct perceptions (emic) and qualitative attributes (etic) of ethnicity from six main perspectives.

The third chapter is focused on ethnicity and the ethnic policies of China. The central objective is to define a Chinese official category *minzu*, its position in the context of European concepts of ethnicity and nation, and its comparison with the concept of nation in the Soviet tradition, which represents *minzu's* template. *Minzu* is interpreted, unlike most other concepts, as an ethnic group rather than a nation, and is seen as a political entity that is mostly relevant to the represented ethnicities. Chinese *minzu* is interpreted as a "rigid and chaotic" concept in opposition to Stalin's conception of a "flexible and regular" nation. Rigidity is seen in its selective function (*minzu* or nothing), and the chaos in its non-systematic application of rules in the categorization of *minzu*. The section concludes that the ethnicity of China should be treated flexibly, because there is no single dominant concept. The politics, theory and practice of ethnicity in China vary greatly and are relatively independent from each other.

The case study compares the impact of the ethnic policies of the PRC and the USSR on the formation of the ethnicity of the Huis and Dungans. Less than 130 years ago Dungans emigrated to Central Asia, and thus separated themselves from Chinese Huis. Subsequent developments among Soviet Dungans and Chinese Huis permits the study of how these politically, culturally, and religiously different macroregions influenced the current form of ethnicity. Field research in both communities (around 300 interviews) found that direct ethnic policies influence ethnicity only partially and in the short term. On the other hand, macro-scale policies influencing the broader environment affects the development of ethnicity in the longer-term perspective. Even rigid ethnic politics (Soviet and Chinese) are regarded as marginal variables in the process of ethnicity formation. The case of the contemporary Pan-Huis movement shows, how originally non-ethnic categories can be transformed through internalisation into a vital ethnicity.