


Serhii Plokhly to the effect that the myth of Ukraine as an “economic superpower ... was ‘ingrained in the minds of the country’s inhabitants.’” What goes unregistered is the view among Donbas miner-activists that they could get a better deal from Kyiv than from Moscow, a strategic calculation that overcame ethno-linguistic ambivalence.

Zubok’s contention that Gorbachev “identified with Lenin,” “modeled himself on” the great revolutionary, and “was the last true Leninist believer” (21, 269) occupies an important place in the narrative. When learning of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster, Gorbachev “re-enacted Lenin” by using the crisis “to jump to sweeping conclusions” that “the entire old system was deeply sick and contaminated” (26). His introduction in 1987 of the Law on Socialist Enterprises combining “socialism’ with a state-regulated market” (27) was reminiscent of NEP. When pondering the proposed plan for conversion to a market economy (“the 500 Days”) in July 1990, he “continued to read Lenin in search of clues” (135). He even, according to his aide Anatoly Chernyaev, “began to impersonate Lenin, mimicking his style and gestures, his accent and favorite words” (67). Alas, this late twentieth-century “Lenin” continually went hat in hand to Western leaders begging for relief from Soviet indebtedness. And so “overwhelmed by everyday troubles” had Soviet citizens become that “had a real Lenin appeared by magic in downtown Moscow in December 1991, nobody would have paid attention to him” (422).

Recent events give added piquancy to *Collapse*, which was first published in 2021. In 1991, as the book makes clear, it was Yugoslavia that served as the primary negative example of what could happen when a supra-national state implodes. But plenty of alarm bells sounded as well about the two most populous Slavic-speaking countries – from the newspaper *Sovetskaia Rossiia* experimenting in 1988 “with a new language of Russian conservative nationalism” (156) to the influence that Alexander Solzhenitsyn’s rabidly nationalistic pamphlet “How to Rebuild Russia?” exerted on Yeltsin, the latter’s declaration in the wake of the failed coup in August 1991 that the Russian Federation “reserves the right to raise the question of the revision of boundaries,” (324) and his warning later in the year that “if Ukraine had its own Army, currency, and state borders, ‘there would be no peace between Russia and Ukraine’” (408).

Indeed, there are other warnings as well – about what happens when democracy is used as a weapon against political enemies instead of becoming institutionalized as a practice; about the effects of unfettered access by global capital to domestic economies; and about the unexpected consequences of fulfilling the ambition of doing away with America’s principal transcontinental rival. Readers take note!

In the final analysis, the collapse presented in *Collapse* is more contingent, and less indicative of sustained social malaise than in other interpretations. Despite its intimidating length, the book is highly accessible and could work well in political science as well as history classes even at the undergraduate level.

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 doi:10.1017/nps.2023.67

Pure and True: The Everyday Politics of Ethnicity for China’s Hui Muslims, by David R. Stroup, University of Washington Press, 2022, 268 pp., \$105.00 (hardcover), ISBN 9780295749822, \$32.00 (paperback) ISBN 9780295749839.

David Stroup’s *Pure and True* is a political ethnography of the Hui, the largest of ten Muslim “minority nationalities” (*shaoshu minzu*) in the People’s Republic of China (PRC). The material in the book is drawn primarily from a year of field research Stroup conducted in 2015 and 2016 in four

Chinese cities, two in the Han-dominated northeast (including Beijing) and two in western provinces where the Hui and Muslim presence is more pronounced. As a work of qualitative political science, *Pure and True* illuminates the political dimensions of ethno-religious identity in the PRC. Stroup is especially interested in the way official policies and discourses intersect with Hui self-understandings, practices, and intraethnic divisions. Despite his disciplinary background, he takes pains to avoid one of the occupational hazards that political scientists who study ethnic politics often face, the lure of cases involving overt contention and conflict. Stroup argues that too much attention to contentious politics can lead researchers to reify identities and overlook the effects of intragroup cleavages on “the conduct of ethnic politics” (7).

To evade this pitfall, Stroup trains his focus on the ways “daily practices reflect the fluid, contested nature of ethnic identity,” in an effort to understand “why, how, and when feelings of attachment to the group—or “groupness”—are most salient” for Hui Muslims (7). *Pure and True* investigates contestation, but that contestation mostly takes the form of debates and disagreements among the Hui regarding the meanings of “Huiness” in China’s overwhelmingly non-Muslim, secular society. The frictions Stroup analyzes are thus quite different from what is typically denoted by the phrase “contentious politics.” His emphasis on the “quiet politics” of ethnicity makes sense, given that the Hui are frequently (though not always) portrayed in official discourse as China’s “good Muslims,” more assimilated and less restive than the Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities.

Pure and True evokes the pioneering scholarship of the late Dru Gladney, who more than three decades ago argued that Hui ethnogenesis was an effect of PRC policies. In Gladney’s analysis, regime policies worked to engender and solidify a novel Hui ethnic identity among diverse communities of Sinophone Muslims. There is no question that Hui identity is informed by narratives of descent transmitted by Chinese Muslims about their historical and religious origins. Yet Hui recognize themselves as such in great part because the party-state has designated them as Hui and codified that identity on passports, residence permits, in dossiers, and so on. Hui identity is salient also because *minzu* identity is salient in China. Chinese people learn from a very young age that all citizens of the PRC are members of distinct “nationalities”; the very idea of minority (and majority) *minzu* is taken for granted.

Stroup builds on Gladney’s insights by demonstrating the continued influence of the party-state not just on what it means to “be” Hui but what it means to “do” Huiness. He does so in chapters analyzing practices related to relationships and family, diet, dress, language, and religious observance. Drawing on a wealth of interview and observational data, Stroup shows that there is considerable contestation among his subjects regarding these practices and their importance for Hui identity. He further argues that debates and disagreements reflect intra-Hui divisions of class, language, region, sect, and devotional intensity, all of which have been exacerbated by trends such as rural migration and urban redevelopment. The increasing salience of intra-Hui cleavages might seem contrary to the regime’s desire for nationalities unity, but Stroup argues that the “inward focus” of intra-Hui contestation “facilitates the CCP’s management of ethnic politics” insofar as it “limits contentious politics to intragroup discourse” (130).

Stroup keeps the focus on his cases, addressing theoretical debates and questions obliquely rather than head on. That said, the book is well grounded in theories of ethnicity, nationalism, and ethnic conflict. These include the work of Fredrik Barth, who emphasized the importance of boundaries and boundary maintenance to ethnic identity. Barth showed that ethnic boundaries could persist long after members of a group abandoned ostensibly essential cultural attributes and adopted the practices of other peoples among whom they lived. He also observed cases in which boundaries were dissolved and identities abandoned, usually when social conditions made it impossible for members of an ethnic group to fulfill cherished norms and expectations. In *Pure and True* Stroup reveals the anxiety and even shame experienced by some Hui due to failures to adhere to behavioral norms they view as essential markers of Hui identity. Yet none of his interviewees entertain the possibility of abandoning their Hui identity—and how could they, given its “official” character?

While *Pure and True* situates intra-Hui contestation against a backdrop of official policies, the Islamic dimensions of this contestation might have been more thoroughly addressed. The kinds of debates Stroup analyzes are (in my experience) rare or nonexistent among non-Muslim minorities in China. Islam may be a factor here. Scholars such as Talal Asad, Saba Mahmood, Nadia Fadil, and others have argued that Islam is not so much a creedal religion à la post-Reformation Christianity as a set of contested, heterogeneous and flexible practices and traditions. In other words, divergence and disagreement over the performance of everyday practices is an enduring and constitutive feature of Islam. It may be that among the Hui, the practice of contestation itself is shaped not just by government policies but by Muslim and Islamic traditions. If so, this highlights not the capacity of the Chinese regime but the limits of its ability to define and categorize those it governs.

Pure and True should interest scholars in many disciplines who research contemporary China, religion and ethnicity, and the politics of Islam in non-Muslim societies. Stroup writes in clear, accessible, jargon-free prose, making the book appropriate for undergraduate as well as graduate courses. His thoughtful research design and comparative ethnographic approach would also make *Pure and True* an excellent teaching tool in a course on qualitative methods. Stroup notes in an epilogue that he completed his field research just as Xi Jinping was launching a crackdown on a wide range of religious expression, especially among Chinese Muslims. This crackdown, the pandemic, and the broader political climate unfortunately make ethnographic research in the PRC difficult if not impossible to pursue, at least for the foreseeable future.

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 doi:10.1017/nps.2023.37

Under the Banner of Islam: Turks, Kurds, and the Limits of Religious Unity, by Gülay Türkmen, New York, Oxford University Press, 2021, 204 pp., \$82 (hardcover), ISBN 9780197511817.

The main contribution of *Under the Banner of Islam* by Gülay Türkmen is a much-needed discussion and critical reevaluation of the competition between identity entrepreneurs who prioritize religious (Islamic) versus ethnic (Kurdish) identity combined with an examination of the normative debates over what the “authentic” or “real” Islamic approach to managing ethnic diversity is. Perhaps most importantly, the book successfully “challenge[s] the simplistic assumptions that supranational religious identities are always bound to fail in the face of ethnic differences” (19). Appealing to Islamic fraternity as the primary bond that unites the political community despite ethnocultural and linguistic diversity was the key discourse that legitimated ethnolinguistic reforms known as the Kurdish opening in Turkey since 2004. Despite its critically central role in politics and society, the discourse and the practice of Islamic fraternity is very much understudied. *Under the Banner of Islam* is a rare and precious book directly addressing this topic. The book is primarily based on impressive fieldwork in Kurdish-majority provinces, including interviews with Kurdish and Turkish, religious and non-religious actors.

Under the Banner of Islam consists of an Introduction (1–23), followed by four substantive chapters, and a Conclusion (135–144). Chapter 1 (“Green Kemalism”) lays out the critique of those who propose Islamic identity as a conflict resolution resource, but it is in Chapter 2 (“Islam as Cement”) that we read more about the proposal that is criticized in the previous chapter. Chapter 3 (“Muslim Kurds”) explicates why and how most of the Kurdish religious actors Türkmen