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THE HUI MUSLIM AND ISLAMIC JOURNALISM DURING THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA

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Abstract:

This study investigates the emergence and development of Islamic journalism among the Hui Muslim community during the Republican era in China (1912–1949). It addresses the research problem of how Hui Muslims used media as a religious strategy in response to modernity, nationalism, and identity challenges. The objective is to reconceptualize Hui journalism not as secular ethnic expression but as a purposeful Islamic project rooted in da'wah and revivalism. Using a qualitative methodology based on historical and textual analysis of key publications—especially *Yue Hua (The Moon Light)*—the article identifies four interrelated dimensions of consciousness: religious, political, technological, and transnational ummatic. The findings reveal how Hui reformers strategically employed print media to assert Islamic identity, engage with nationalism, and connect with global Muslim movements. This study contributes to Islamic and media studies by restoring Hui Muslims' religious agency and re-situating their journalistic activities within the broader context of 20th-century Islamic revivalism and minority religious media.

Keywords:

Hui Muslim, Islamic Journalism, Islamic Revival, Republic Of China, Religious Agency

Introduction

The Hui constitute one of China's major minority groups and its largest Muslim ethnic community. Official historical accounts trace Hui ancestry to Arab and Persian Muslim merchants who arrived in China during the Tang-Song dynasties (618-1279 CE), as well as war captives from Central Asia and the Middle East brought to China by Mongol forces in the thirteenth century. Immersed within a predominantly non-Muslim Han Chinese society, Hui

Muslims have confronted enduring challenges throughout their more than 1,300-year history in China: the dual imperative of integrating into mainstream Han society while simultaneously preserving their distinctive Muslim identity.

The emergence of Islamic journalism among China's Hui Muslim community in the early twentieth century represents a compelling case of religious media innovation amid profound social transformation. As the Qing Dynasty collapsed and the Republic of China emerged, Hui Muslims encountered unprecedented opportunities for public expression alongside persistent threats to their religious identity and cultural continuity. Within this dynamic context, Islamic newspapers and journals transcended their role as mere information vehicles, evolving into sophisticated instruments of Islamic *da'wah*, identity formation, and community mobilization that would fundamentally reshape how Hui Muslims conceived of themselves, their faith, and their position within the Chinese nation.

This paper examines the emergence, development, and socio-religious impact of Islamic journalism among the Hui Muslim community during an era characterized by political upheaval, rapid modernization, and intense intellectual dynamism. Moving beyond previous scholarship that has predominantly analyzed Hui publications through the secular framework of China's New Cultural Movement—thereby marginalizing their primary religious character and the Hui Muslims' own religious agency—this study investigates how Hui Muslim *da'wah* practitioners, including prominent intellectuals, reformist scholars, and religious activists, strategically deployed print media as essential tools for Islamic revival, identity preservation, social-political integration and transnational ummatic connection. Rather than treating these publications as mere "Hui people's press" focused on ethnic concerns, this research recognizes them as fundamentally "Islamic press" designed to revive religious consciousness and Muslim identity after centuries of discrimination.

Through analyzing Islamic journalism as an integral component of a broader Islamic revival movement initiated by the Hui Muslims themselves, this study examines four interconnected forms of consciousness that emerged during this period: religious consciousness (the revival of Islamic faith and practice), political consciousness (engagement with Chinese nationalism and state power), technological consciousness (adoption of modern printing and media technologies), and transnational ummatic consciousness (connection with the global Muslim community and Islamic reform movements). By restoring religious agency to the center of analysis, this research contributes to broader scholarly discussions concerning Islamic *da'wah*, minority religious media, and the complex intersection of faith and modernity in Chinese Muslim history, while challenging the dominant secular interpretative frameworks that have obscured the primarily religious motivations and goals of Hui Islamic journalism.

Methodologically, this research adopts a qualitative historical and textual analysis approach. Primary sources include Hui Muslim newspapers, journals, and archival materials published during the Republican era, with particular attention to *Yue Hua* and related periodicals. The study also draws upon secondary scholarship in Islamic studies, Chinese media history, and minority religious identity. This framework enables a nuanced understanding of how Hui Muslim reformers articulated religious agency through media during a period of socio-political transformation.

Literature Review

The study of Islamic journalism among China's Hui Muslim community during the Republican era (1912-1949) represents a relatively underexplored area in both Islamic studies and Chinese media history. This literature review examines the existing scholarship on Hui Muslim publications during this transformative period, analyzing both Western and Chinese academic contributions while identifying key gaps in current research.

Western scholarship on Hui Islamic journalism during the Republican period remains limited, with most studies treating the topic peripherally within broader examinations of Chinese Islamic communities. Marshall Broomhall (1987) provided one of the earliest treatments in *Islam in China: A Neglected Problem*, offering a brief introduction to *Awakening the Hui* (*Xin Hui Pian*), one of the earliest Hui Muslim magazines. While groundbreaking for its time, Broomhall's work represents more of an introductory survey than comprehensive analysis.

Building on this foundation, Françoise Aubin's (2006) research on Muslim intellectuals in Republican China provides more substantial insights into Hui journals, though her primary focus remains on intellectual rather than media history. Aubin's work valuably contextualizes the publications within broader Hui intellectual development, but journalistic aspects remain secondary to her main concerns.

More recent Western scholarship has continued this pattern of peripheral treatment. Michael Dillon's (1999) comprehensive studies of Chinese Islam have contributed significantly to understanding Hui communities, though his work primarily focuses on political and social developments rather than examining Islamic journalism specifically. Similarly, Jonathan N. Lipman's (1997) influential scholarship on Hui history and identity formation provides crucial context for understanding the cultural movements that gave rise to Islamic publications, but his analysis of the publications themselves remains limited. Both scholars' foundational work reflects the broader tendency in Western scholarship to treat Islamic journalism as a secondary rather than primary subject of investigation. This scarcity reflects broader patterns where Chinese Islamic communities have received less attention than their counterparts elsewhere, and media history has often been subordinated to political and social history.

Chinese scholarship has been more extensive but fundamentally shaped by a particular conceptual framework that has significantly influenced—and arguably constrained—scholarly understanding of Hui publications. The dominant paradigm, established by influential non-Muslim historian Gu Jiegang, characterizes Hui publishing efforts as part of a "new cultural movement" (*xin wenhua yundong*) embedded within China's broader New Cultural Movement and national revival (Gu Jiegang, 1928). This conceptualization has had profound and lasting effects on Chinese scholarship, leading virtually all scholars to refer to these publications as "Hui people's press" (*huizu baokan*) rather than "Islamic press," thus emphasizing ethnic over religious identity. Remarkably, among all available Chinese sources, only one article by Lei Xiaojing (1997) mentions the term "Islamic press" (*visilanjiao baokan*) even once, demonstrating the overwhelming dominance of Gu Jiegang's secular, culturalist framework.

The implications are far-reaching. By situating Hui publishing within China's secular modernization and national revival movements, this approach has systematically privileged social and political factors while marginalizing Hui Muslims' religious agency. The framework

obscures what may have been the primary motivation: the desire to revive Islamic faith among their communities and regain recognition of their identity as a Muslim ethnic group by the majority Han Chinese population, particularly after centuries of religious and ethnic discrimination dating back to the Ming and Qing dynasties.

Despite these conceptual limitations, Chinese scholarship has produced valuable thematic analyses. Lei Xiaojing's comprehensive examination of Hui newspapers and journals reveals Islamic revivalism as the dominant theme across publications during the Republican era. Her research identifies key functions these publications served: propagating Islamic doctrines, promoting educational reform, disseminating community information, and strengthening inter-community relationships. This functional analysis provides crucial insights into how these publications operated not merely as news sources but as instruments of community building and religious renewal.

Complementing this thematic work, Jin Jun (1998) examines the causal factors behind the emergence and development of Hui Islamic press, identifying both internal motivations – the new cultural movement and increased religious activities and external pressures – China's national survival crisis. This framework helps explain why Islamic journalism flourished during this particular historical moment, connecting media development to broader transformations.

Moving from general themes to specific examples, several scholars have provided detailed examinations of individual publications. Masumi's (2006) study of *Yue Hua* (*Moon Light*), described as the most influential and longest-lasting Hui journal of the Republican period, analyzes its dual role in promoting patriotism and nationalism while introducing Middle Eastern Islamic revival and reform movements to Chinese Muslim audiences. This analysis demonstrates how Hui publications served as conduits for transnational Islamic discourse while simultaneously promoting Chinese national identity. Similarly, Li Xiwen's (2000) examination of *Qingzhen Xueli Yizhu* (*Journal of Islamic Studies and Translations*), published by the Chinese Islamic Mutual Progress Association, illuminates how major Hui organizations used publications to advance their institutional agendas. Such organizational studies reveal the relationship between publishing and institutional development within the Hui community.

Beyond institutional analyses, some scholars have focused on specific themes addressed by Hui publications. Liu Li's (2015) analysis of marriage issues in Hui Muslim journals reveals how these publications addressed practical concerns affecting community life. Meanwhile, Zhong Yinmei's (2017) examination of reports on the Islamic world demonstrates how Hui publications connected Chinese Muslims with global Islamic developments. These specialized studies illuminate both the diversity of topics covered and the publications' dual role in local community building and global Islamic awareness.

The most significant limitation in existing scholarship stems from the overwhelming influence of Gu Jiegang's conceptual framework. By embedding these publications within China's secular New Cultural Movement, this approach has systematically obscured their primary religious character and motivations. The near-complete absence of the term "Islamic press" in Chinese scholarship—appearing only once in Lei Xiaojing's work—reveals how thoroughly this secular, culturalist paradigm has dominated the field. This analytical bias has led to a crucial oversight: the marginalization of Hui Muslim religious agency. While existing studies

extensively analyze social and political factors, they have largely ignored or minimized the Hui Muslims' fundamental goal of reviving Islamic faith among their communities—a gap that overlooks what the publications themselves explicitly stated as their primary purpose.

This literature review reveals the need for fundamental reorientation in understanding Hui publications during the Republican era. Rather than viewing Islamic journalism as merely part of China's secular modernization, it should be understood as integral to a broader Islamic revival movement initiated by the Hui Muslims themselves. The revival of religious consciousness and Muslim identity—and their struggle to regain recognition as a Muslim ethnic group after centuries of discrimination—represents the most important aim of Islamic journalism during this period. Such a reframing would analyze Islamic journalism through four distinct but interconnected forms of consciousness that emerged during this period: religious consciousness, political consciousness, technological consciousness, and transnational ummatic consciousness.

Theoretical Framework: Four Dimensions of Consciousness in Hui Islamic Journalism

This study employs a multi-dimensional analytical framework to examine how Hui Muslim *da'wah* practitioners strategically utilized Islamic journalism during China's Republican era (1912-1949). The framework identifies four interconnected dimensions of consciousness that guided and shaped Hui journalistic endeavors. Rather than characterizing Islamic journalism merely as a cultural movement of the Hui ethnic group, this framework foregrounds the deliberate religious agency of Hui *da'wah* practitioners who consciously engaged with modernity, politics, and transnational Islamic solidarity through modern journalistic practices.

Religious Consciousness

Religious consciousness refers to the awareness of Hui people's Islamic identity and their active pursuit of religious renewal, education, and *da'wah*. For Hui Muslims living within a predominantly Confucian and increasingly secular Chinese society, Islamic journalism became a vital vehicle for reaffirming Islamic faith, transmitting religious knowledge, and countering both internal spiritual decline and external cultural assimilation pressures. This religious consciousness manifested in the sustained efforts of Hui Muslim journalists to actively promote Islamic teachings and principles to both Muslim and non-Muslim audiences through the Islamic press. This dimension of consciousness underpinned the central mission of Islamic journalism as an instrument of faith revival within Hui communities.

Political Consciousness

Political consciousness demonstrates Hui Muslims' growing recognition of the importance of political participation and their evolving perception of the relationship between Islamic religion and the Chinese nation-state during the Republican period. This dimension emerged from their understanding that religious survival and flourishing required active political engagement and influence. During the Republican era, a fundamental attitudinal shift occurred among Hui intellectuals and Islamic scholars—from political detachment to active participation and engagement.

The political consciousness of Islamic journalism during this period manifested primarily in the active promotion of Hui Muslims' national or citizen consciousness (*guomin yishi*) and the propagation of patriotic spirit to support the national government's efforts in nation-building

and resisting imperialist aggression through the Islamic press. In this context, political consciousness signaled a fundamental redefinition of Hui identity—from a marginalized religious minority wary of state entanglements to a civically engaged and nationally conscious community seeking both recognition and integration within the emerging framework of the Chinese republic.

Transnational Ummatic Consciousness

The third dimension, transnational ummatic consciousness, reflects the Hui Muslim community's deliberate cultivation of intellectual, spiritual, and solidarity connections with Muslims worldwide, highlighting their profound sense of belonging to the global Muslim *ummah*. Through the translation of foreign Islamic works, reporting on global Islamic and Muslim affairs, and fostering intellectual exchanges with other Muslim countries, Hui journalists demonstrated both acute awareness of and substantive engagement with global Islamic revival movements. This dimension reveals their understanding that local Islamic renewal could be strengthened and enriched through active engagement with global Islamic movements and scholarship.

Technological Consciousness

Technological consciousness encompasses the Hui Muslim community's recognition of modern communication technologies as powerful instruments for religious and social transformation. This dimension reflects their strategic adaptation to and mastery of modern mass media technology to advance Islamic cause and community objectives.

These four dimensions of consciousness—religious, political, transnational, and technological—constitute a comprehensive theoretical framework for analyzing Hui Islamic journalism as a multifaceted strategy encompassing *da'wah*, identity preservation, and cultural engagement. This analytical model facilitates systematic interpretation of both the manifest content and underlying purposes of Islamic publications during this transformative historical period, while simultaneously illuminating the broader intellectual dynamism and spiritual agency that characterized Hui Muslim responses to the profound social, political, and cultural transformations of twentieth-century China.

Through this theoretical lens, Hui Islamic journalism emerges not as a merely reactive phenomenon but rather as a proactive and intellectually sophisticated response to both the challenges and opportunities presented during the Republican period. The framework reveals how Hui journalists strategically employed modern media to navigate the complex terrain of religious preservation, political integration, global Islamic solidarity, and technological innovation, demonstrating remarkable adaptability while maintaining their distinct Islamic identity within the evolving Chinese national context.

Historical Context: The Rise of The Hui Islamic Journalism

The socio-political environment of the Republican era fundamentally transformed the position of Hui Muslims within Chinese society, creating unprecedented opportunities that provided fertile ground for the development of Islamic journalism. Several key factors converged to create a favorable climate for Hui intellectual and media expression.

The collapse of the Qing Dynasty in 1911 and the establishment of the Republic of China marked a revolutionary transformation in the social and political status of Hui Muslims. The first democratic constitution in the history of China by the republican government proclaimed fundamental freedoms for all people in China including freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and freedom of association. As part of its nation-building efforts, the Chinese Nationalist government promoted the unity and equality of five major races in China, i.e. the Han, Mongol, Manchu, Tibetan and Hui under the slogan of "wuzu gonghe" (The Republic of Five Races) (Wang, 2016, p38). These new constitutional guarantees laid the legal foundation for the Hui Muslim community to publicly express and preserve its religious identity within the broader framework of the Chinese nation-state.

Meanwhile, the newly established Republic faced acute internal and external challenges that elevated the strategic importance of the Hui in national politics. Internally, the rise of regional warlords during the Warlord Era (1916–1928) fragmented central authority and gave rise to multiple power centers across China. Several prominent Hui military commanders, who controlled strategically significant territories, became pivotal actors in the Nationalist government's efforts to consolidate power (Yu, 2012). In its bid to unify the country, the government actively courted Hui Muslims, offering them platforms for political participation in national discourse and representation within the state apparatus.

Externally, foreign imperialism—particularly Japanese aggression—posed existential threats to the Republic's sovereignty. In its expansionist drive, Japan exploited China's ethnic diversity by promoting separatist movements and specifically encouraging the Hui to establish an independent Islamic state (Qiu, 2012). Recognizing the critical need of unifying all ethnic groups in China to present a unified front against Japanese invasion, the nationalist government advocated and actively promoted the concept of Chinese Nation (*zhong hua ming zu*) which encompasses all ethnic groups in China (Qiu, 2012).

Moreover, the Nationalist government strategically sought to utilize the Hui's Islamic identity to strengthen China's international diplomacy. Hui Muslims were viewed as potential cultural and religious intermediaries to the wider Muslim world, particularly the Middle East, which could provide diplomatic support and financial aid in China's resistance against Japanese aggression (Bodde, 1946).

The radical transformations in the political landscape of Republican China fundamentally reshaped Hui Muslims' attitudes toward the relationship between religion and politics. Historically, Hui Muslims had remained largely apolitical, a stance shaped by centuries of ethnic and religious persecution, suppression, and discrimination. However, in the context of the Republic, they came to recognize the strategic necessity of active political participation as a means to protect their religious identity, safeguard Islamic practices, and promote Islamic teachings. More critically, Hui Muslims also came to understand the urgency of demonstrating loyalty to the Chinese nation-state in order to secure their integration into mainstream society—rather than being perceived as outsiders, traitors, or a potential fifth column within the country.

The technological revolution of the early 20th century provided Hui Muslims with powerful new tools for religious expression, education, and community building that proved crucial to the emergence and growth of Islamic journalism in China. China's rapid adoption of modern printing technologies—including rotary presses, photomechanical printing, and advances in

paper manufacturing—created the essential infrastructure for sustainable and wide-reaching journalistic endeavors. These innovations enabled Hui publishers to produce and disseminate religious materials far more efficiently and at significantly lower costs than traditional methods allowed. Particularly transformative was the importation of printing techniques from Egypt, which allowed Hui publishers to print Arabic texts locally, dramatically reducing costs while increasing the availability of Islamic literature throughout China. This technological self-sufficiency empowered the Hui community to educate itself and assert its religious identity with unprecedented autonomy.

The printing revolution coincided with equally significant advances in transportation technology. The introduction of steamship technology revolutionized maritime travel, drastically shortening journey times between China and other parts of the Muslim world. This transportation breakthrough facilitated an unprecedented level of contact and exchange, particularly among Islamic scholars, enabling Chinese Muslims to establish direct relationships with renowned centers of Islamic learning and maintain ongoing correspondence with institutions abroad. Prominent Hui scholars and reformers such as Wang Haoran, Wang Jinzhai, and Ma Songting undertook scholarly visits to countries like Turkey and Egypt (Qiu, 2012, p 680), reestablishing direct intellectual and religious ties with the broader Muslim world, resulted in a more rapid transmission of Islamic texts, periodicals, and contemporary religious discourse back to China, fundamentally transforming the intellectual landscape of Islam in China.

These connections were further strengthened by the reciprocal arrival of foreign scholars from Egypt and Turkey to China, as well as the establishment of Islamic educational institutions that sent Hui students to study at prestigious centers like Al-Azhar University in Cairo (Qiu, 2012). These overseas-educated students became instrumental figures in the Hui Islamic press, serving simultaneously as correspondents, writers, translators, and cultural mediators. They functioned as vital bridges between global Islamic thought and Chinese Muslim communities, contributing significantly to the internationalization of Chinese Islamic publications.

Through these dynamic technological and intellectual exchanges, a truly transnational network of Islamic discourse emerged that transformed the scope and ambition of Hui journalism. This transnational ummatic network enabled Chinese Muslims not only to remain informed of global developments in the Muslim world but also to participate and contribute actively to international Islamic conversations.

All these converging factors created an exceptionally favorable environment for the flourishing of Hui Islamic journalism during the Republican period. According to Ma Bozhong, Hui Muslims published 270 newspapers and periodicals during this time (Bozhong, 2008). However, Ma Jing argues that the actual number of Hui and Islamic publications was likely much higher (Ma, 2017). Most of these newspapers and journals were established by Hui Islamic organizations and educational institutions. For instance, *Qingzhen Duobao* (Islamic Alarm) was founded by the Yunnan branch of the China Islamic Mutual Progress Association (CIMPA); *Mingde Yuekan* (Mingde Monthly) was published by the Tianjin United Islamic Association; and *Yue hua* (The Moon Light) was initiated by the renowned Chengda Normal School. Hui intellectuals and Islamic scholars played a central role in editing, publishing, and distributing these periodicals.

The content and mission of these publications reflected a clear commitment to Islamic revivalism, which Lei Xiaojing identifies as the most common and manifest theme across all Hui newspapers and periodicals (Lei, 1997). These publications aimed to propagate Islamic doctrines, promote new forms of education for Hui Muslims, report on developments within Hui communities, and strengthen relationships among scattered Hui populations across China. Notably, many of these periodicals featured bilingual or trilingual titles—typically in Chinese and Arabic, with some even adding English—reflecting their Islamic identity and transnational aspirations.

These publications frequently featured articles and research papers on Islamic theology, sharia, and fiqh. Many included dedicated columns for Qur’anic studies and tafsir. Important research on Hui and Islamic civilization was serialized across multiple volumes, while comprehensive studies examining the current situation and history of mosques and Hui communities in different regions were regularly conducted and reported. Special issues or columns were often devoted to topics such as fasting, youth, women and children, and prominent Hui Muslim figures and scholars. In addition to domestic content, nearly all Hui Islamic journals included columns covering global Islamic affairs, under titles such as *Islam in and Outside China*, *News from Other Countries*, and *News about Islam*. (Lei, 1997)

The political dimensions of Hui journalism became particularly pronounced during periods of national crisis. While these publications consistently covered Chinese politics and political activities, their coverage intensified dramatically after the Sino-Japanese War began. All Hui newspapers and journals provided extensive coverage of China's political and military situation, but more significantly, the Islamic press actively mobilized Hui Muslims to support the National government in resisting Japanese aggression.

Among all the newspapers and periodicals published by Hui Muslims during the Republican period, *Yue Hua* emerged as the most influential and prominent publication.

Yue Hua (The Moon Light)

The *Yue Hua* began to be published in October 1929 in Beiping, as a bulletin of the Chengda Normal School, the most famous and influential Islamic school in the Republic of China. The initial founders of *Yuehua* included Ma Fuxiang, the prominent Hui warlord in Ningxia; Tang Kesan, the principal of Chengda Normal School; Sun Shengwu, the principal of Beiping Islamic Middle School; and Ma Lingyi, the Hui politician who served as a high-ranking official in the Nationalist government (Qing, 2004).

Deeply concerned about the situation of Hui communities in China, the founders unanimously agreed during their first meeting that launching a Hui periodical was crucial to promote religious teachings and foster intellectual awakening among the Hui Muslims in China. This recognition of print media's potential for community mobilization reflected their strategic awareness of modern communication methods.

On November 5, 1929, the first *Yuehua* newspaper was published. In its inaugural issue, the editor introduced six founding principles of the newspaper (Yue Hua, 1929):

1. to promote Islamic doctrines compatible with modern trends;
2. to introduce news about Muslim communities around the world;

3. to enhance the knowledge and status of Chinese Hui Muslims;
4. to clarify the misunderstandings between the new and old Muslim sects in China;
5. to strengthen the national consciousness of the Hui Muslims in China, and
6. to promote education and improve the livelihood of Hui Muslims in China.

Beginning with the third volume in 1931, Yuehua transformed from a newspaper to a magazine and adopted trilingual titles in Chinese, Arabic and English. From 1929 to 1948, the publication lasted nearly twenty years, making it the longest-running publication among all Hui newspapers and journals during the Republican period (Qing, 2004). It was also the most influential and widely circulated journal published by Hui Muslims, selling more than ten thousand copies at its peak.

Starting from the third volume, Yuehua began reaching overseas readers and circulated across Southeast Asian nations, India, Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Egypt, the United Kingdom, France and the United States. Twenty-two foreign Islamic journals in various languages—English, German, Arabic, Malay, and Turkish—established exchanges with Yuehua (Qing, 2004), positioning it within a global network of Islamic intellectual discourse.

The editorial team comprised distinguished Ahongs and Hui Muslim scholars of the time, including Ma Songting Ahong, head of Chengda Teacher's Academy; Wang Jinzhai Ahong, one of the four most famous Ahongs in the Republic of China; Ma Jian, professor and translator of the Quran into Chinese; and renowned Hui Muslim historians Bai Shouyi and Jin Jitang (Qing, 2004). The topics covered by Yuehua encompassed the history of Islam and the Hui Muslims in China, Quranic tafsir, Hadith, Islamic Sharia and Fiqh, Islamic education, Chinese mosques and Muslim communities, and Islam and Muslims worldwide.

Matsumoto Masumi (2006) outlined the contents of Yuehua since 1931 as follows:

1. commentary of the Quran and the Hadith, tafsir;
2. translation of Arabic and English books and criticism;
3. critiques of religious questions in China, of Hui education, Hui organization, economy, and current issues;
4. re-evaluation of Hui history in China and discussions of its intermingling with Chinese culture;
5. research on various mosques and Hui communities across multiple provinces including Anhui, Guangxi, Chahar, Suiyuan, Jiangxi, Shandong, Henan, Jiangsu, Shanxi, and Gansu;
6. introduction of Muslim personalities from around the world, which entailed introducing Islamic revivalist trends and current issues in Egypt, Afghanistan, Turkey, Syria, Algeria, India, Yugoslavia, and Iran; and
7. literature.

Beyond articles by Chinese writers, Yuehua also featured contributions from prominent foreign Islamic scholars, primarily from Egypt. The journal regularly published articles on various topics from Al-Manar and Al-Fath, two renowned Egyptian journals, translated by Hui Muslim students studying in Egypt (Benite, 2014). In 1933, Risalah al-Tawhid by famous Islamic modernist Muhammad Abduh was translated into Chinese by Ma Jian and serialized in Yuehua until the end of 1934. Another Azhari graduate, Pang Shiqian, translated The History of Islamic

Law by Professor Muhammad Khuzuli of the University of Egypt and began serializing it in 1933 (Benite, 2014).

The Yue hua case study exemplifies the four distinct yet interconnected consciousnesses that characterized Islamic journalism during the Republican period. The religious consciousness manifested through the publication's commitment to promoting Islamic doctrines, clarifying sectarian disputes, and featuring extensive coverage of Quranic commentary, Hadith interpretation, and Islamic jurisprudence. The editorial leadership of distinguished religious scholars further reinforced this doctrinal authority. The political consciousness emerged through the explicit goal of strengthening national identity among Hui Muslims while simultaneously addressing their educational and economic advancement within the Chinese state structure. The transnational ummatic consciousness was perhaps most dramatically demonstrated through Yuehua's extensive international circulation, its exchanges with twenty-two foreign Islamic journals, and its systematic coverage of Islamic revivalist movements across the Muslim world, thereby connecting Chinese Hui Muslims to broader currents of Islamic reform and modernization. Finally, the technological consciousness was evident in the founders' strategic recognition of print media's transformative potential, their evolution from newspaper to magazine format, their adoption of trilingual titles to reach diverse audiences, and their sophisticated use of translation projects to bridge local and global Islamic intellectual traditions. Together, these four consciousnesses operated synergistically through Yuehua, making it not merely a publication but a powerful instrument of religious, political, and cultural transformation within the Chinese Muslim community.

Conclusion

The emergence and flourishing of Hui Islamic journalism during the Republican period (1912–1949) represents a profound moment of religious, intellectual, and cultural revitalization for China's Muslim minority. Far from being mere ethnic or cultural publications, the newspapers and journals produced by Hui Muslims constituted a deliberate and dynamic expression of Islamic revivalism. These publications were not peripheral byproducts of the New Cultural Movement, as conventional scholarship has often suggested, but central instruments in the Hui community's struggle to reclaim religious identity, assert socio-political agency, and engage with both national transformation and global Islamic discourse.

This study has argued for a paradigmatic shift in interpreting Hui Islamic journalism—not as a subset of ethnic minority media aligned with secular nationalist projects, but as a strategic project of Islamic *da'wah*, undertaken by religiously conscious intellectuals, scholars, and reformers. The fourfold analytical framework—religious consciousness, political consciousness, transnational ummatic consciousness, and technological consciousness—provides a comprehensive lens through which to appreciate the multifaceted role of Islamic journalism in Republican China. It reveals how Hui Muslims simultaneously deepened religious learning, fostered national integration, expanded transnational networks, and embraced modern communication technologies to serve their faith and community.

The case of *Yue Hua* (The Moon Light), in particular, exemplifies this convergence of consciousnesses. As the most influential and enduring Hui Islamic journal of its time, *Yue hua* stood at the intersection of traditional Islamic scholarship and modern reformist thought, Chinese patriotism and global Islamic solidarity, as well as grassroots activism and elite intellectual engagement. Through *Yuehua* and similar periodicals, Hui Muslims articulated a

uniquely Chinese form of Islamic modernism—one that did not see religious identity and national loyalty as mutually exclusive, but rather as mutually reinforcing.

Ultimately, Hui Islamic journalism during the Republican era was both a response to and a product of historical transformations: the collapse of empire, the rise of nationalism, the threat of imperialism, and the opportunities of modern technology. In harnessing the power of the press, Hui Muslims claimed their place as active participants in shaping China's future, while simultaneously reaffirming their place within the global *ummah*. This remarkable convergence of faith, media, and modernity not only transformed the Hui community's internal dynamics but also left a lasting imprint on the trajectory of Islamic thought and identity in modern China.

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I extend my sincere gratitude to the pioneering scholars who have laid the foundation for understanding Islam and Muslims in China. Their dedicated research has illuminated the rich history, diverse communities, and complex dynamics of Chinese Muslim life, providing invaluable insights that continue to inform contemporary scholarship. This work builds upon their scholarly contributions and commitment to cross-cultural understanding.

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