

Negotiating Ethnic Boundaries

Patterns of Identity Negotiation of Ethnic Minorities in a Multi-ethnic Country: A Case Study of the Ethnic Minority Koreans in Yanbian Autonomous Region in China

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This ethnographic investigation examines how ethnic minority Koreans (Chaoxianzu) living in the Chinese-North Korean borderland negotiate their national and ethnic identities grounded in the viewpoints of the early generation of ethnic Koreans who obtained Chinese citizenship during the ethnic categorization (Minzu Shibie) programme in the 1950s. The study will provide an in-depth examination of the social processes underpinning identity negotiations of the ethnic minority Koreans in Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture from 1952 when the autonomous prefecture was established until today. Based on participant observation and in-depth interviews, the study will examine the life stories of elderly ethnic minority Koreans of Yanbian from a social constructivist perspective to offer new insights into the Chinese ethnic relations conundrum. Special emphasis will be paid to the questions surrounding being a minority in a multi-ethnic country. This research study aims to provide a new understanding of identity negotiation in a multi-ethnic country through a re-examination of individual life under a rigid ethnic categorization for decades.

Boundary and Fusion: Ethnic Identity in Practice — Jin Jiang Town in Shangri-La County as an Example

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Research about ethnic groups have been the focus in domestic sociology, anthropology, and folklore field for a long time. Traditional ethnic studies reveal that an ethnic group is a native group, and every ethnic group is connected with a culture, emphasizing cultural characteristics and emotional connections. But some scholars, headed by Fredrik Barth, proposed the ethnic boundary theory, which not just weakens the objective cultural characteristics, but also emphasizes individual initiative, namely personal belonging and identification. This represented a new milestone in the study sample. In my study, following Barth's ethnic boundary theory, I did a fieldwork in Wu Zhu Village, Jin Jiang Town, Shangri-La County, aiming to find how the ethnic boundaries change among different groups and how individuals practice identities. Due to the special local history, people of the Jin Jiang Town generally gather with their own villagers or families, rather than with those who belong to the same ethnic group. The village people share the common understanding of a specific culture and behavioral standards in this area. Both the official and the local elite discourses dually shaped the multiple ethnic characteristics, which was contained in the cultural connotation of the local community. According to different situations, the autonomic individuals selectively display different ethnic cultural connotations. On the other hand, when the local culture encounters a foreign culture (for example, Tibetan culture), both of them tend to show the process of mutual construction.

Historical Memory and Identity of Margins: A Survey of Mangdan Village

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As a Dai village, Mangdan village is located in Lujiangba of Yunnan Province, a valley of the Nu River, between Dai culture and Chinese culture. This area is described as a barbarian land in traditional Chinese historical documents, reflecting the thoughts and imagination of ancient Han Chinese elites. Now, when villagers talk about historical memory, the keywords are mostly wars and banditries in the first half of the 20th century, which is based on their own experiences and education from their families. Nowadays, this Dai village is affected by Han Chinese culture on different aspects. Actually, this process started in the Ming Dynasty, and it is still going on. At the same time, the villagers also long for a "pure" Dai culture, reflecting the "two-way" of the margins' cultural identity.

Rethinking Zongzu Segmentation Through Architecture of Kejia Tulou

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The purpose of this presentation is to reexamine the segmentation process of Zongzu (宗族) through a case study of "Kejia Tulou," which is a well-known vernacular "house" of the Hakka people in Fujian province. In previous research, such as that done by Freedman (1966), Chen (1984) and Segawa (1993), the forming or reforming process of Zongzu has typically been discussed from a point of view of segmentation, that is, the process of either division or integration. In this presentation, however, I consider the segmentation of Zongzu from a point of view of duplication and reevaluate the established theory of the segmentation process of Zongzu. Zongzu has been well studied in the discussion of the segmentation of lineage in China. For instance, it has been reported that some rich section of Zongzu tend to separate from their own lineage group and create new segment group. In this case, Zongzu is reshaped asymmetrically. At this point, most researchers analyze the process of segmentation from only two perspectives: division and integration. However, I report a different point of view with respect to the segmentation of the lineage, which is the perspective of duplication. I adopt the case of the "house"- "Kejia Tulou" to analyze how they arrange the membership of the new "house" through a process of house-moving and discuss the relationship of the architecture of the house to the situation of duplication of Zongzu.