

Abstract

How does Manchu identity change across generations in an urban community? This qualitative study compares family narratives in Xincheng, Liaoyang, through semi-structured interviews. Older participants emphasize ancestry and remembered household practices. The middle generation connects identity with family stories and respect for elders. Younger participants describe a background identity that becomes visible through official forms and occasional cultural encounters. Memories of the kang, a heated household platform, suggest changes in everyday transmission as housing changes. The dog-meat taboo remains a meaningful boundary, although observance varies. These accounts suggest that ethnic belonging continues through selective memory and symbolic practices as daily traditions weaken.

Appendix

The Older Generation

1. Could you describe your upbringing, starting with your childhood? What was your family environment like?

2. During your childhood or youth, how did your family talk about family history or ethnicity?

3. When did you first become aware of being Manchu? What happened at that time?

4. When you were young, which identities did people emphasize in society—for example, social class, being a worker, work-unit membership, or ethnicity?

5. Can you recall a specific experience related to your ethnic identity?

6. How did your ethnic identity affect your life during political campaigns or within your work unit?

7. What family habits or practices do you remember that differed from those of other families?

8. Could you describe your family's food traditions, festivals, ancestor worship, or household rules in detail?

9. What do family surnames, banner affiliation, and ancestral stories mean to people of your generation?

10. When raising your children, how did you talk about your family background or ethnicity?

11. Do you think your generation did a lot or relatively little to pass on its culture? Why?

12. What do you think about young people's attitudes toward ethnic identity today?

13. Apart from the information on an identity card, what do you think could indicate that someone is Manchu?

14. In your life, has ethnic identity felt more like a culture, a label, or an emotional connection? Why?

The Middle Generation

1. Could you describe your upbringing? What was the atmosphere in your family like?

2. Did your parents talk about ethnicity in everyday life? In what situations did they usually mention it?

3. What is your most memorable experience related to being Manchu?

4. In what situations did your ethnic identity become relevant during your education or working life?

5. Could you describe an occasion when your ethnic identity had a practical impact on your life?

6. How do you understand the role of ethnic policies in the lives of your generation?

7. Which habits in your current family life have continued from the previous generation?

8. How do you explain family history or ethnic identity to your children?

9. If you had to describe a "Manchu family" in a few words, what would you say?

10. Which identity do you most often use to introduce yourself in everyday life? Why?

11. Do your different identities ever conflict, or do some take priority over others? Could you give an example?

12. Compared with your parents' generation, how has the place of ethnicity in everyday life changed?

13. Is your ethnic identification based more on emotional attachment, practical benefits, or cultural habits? Please explain.

14. How would you like the next generation to understand Manchu identity?

The Younger Generation

1. When introducing yourself, which aspects of your identity do you usually mention first?

2. In what situations do you become aware of being Manchu?

3. How do you understand the concept of "ethnic identity"?

4. Are there any discussions or stories about ethnicity in your family?

5. Do you and your parents or grandparents have different views on ethnicity? Could you give an example?

6. Are there any practices in your family life that are considered "traditional"?

7. Where do you get information about Manchu culture?

8. Do online representations of ethnic culture match your experiences within your family?

9. Do you think ethnic identity has practical significance in contemporary society? Why?

10. Do you notice ethnic differences in food, festivals, language, or social interactions?

11. How would you describe a "typical Manchu person"?

12. If identity cards no longer listed ethnicity in the future, how do you think ethnic identity would continue to exist?

13. What relationship would you like to have with your ethnic identity in the future?

14. For you, is ethnicity more a form of history, a cultural resource, or a personal choice? Why?

Changing Manchu Identity in Everyday Life

Three generations within one community in Liaoyang
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Introduction

Research question
How do three generations understand and express Manchu identity in everyday life?

Context
Ethnic identity includes belonging and cultural involvement [1]. Official classification also shapes recognition [2].

Aim
Compare family narratives in an urban community where visible cultural differences have weakened.

Results

Belonging continues as daily practices weaken

Participants connect Manchu identity with ancestry, family stories and selected customs.

An 18-year-old participant describes it as a “cultural Easter egg”: meaningful, but usually in the background.

Source: interview accounts reported in the paper.

Discussion

Emotional belonging can outlast daily practice, consistent with research on Manchu students [4] and cultural transformation [5].

Shared Northeastern foods acquire ethnic meaning through family stories. “Selective construction” helps explain this interpretation [6].

Official forms make ethnicity visible, while family memory gives it personal meaning [2].

Conclusion

Manchu identity persists through remembered ancestry, selected practices and official categories.

“Nominal identification” is this study’s term for belonging sustained mainly through labels and occasional recognition.

Limits
Relatively mall local sample, retrospective accounts and limited observation. Urbanization is an interpretation, without a causal test.

Next step
Compare more communities and observe family transmission over time.

References

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Methods

Design
Qualitative, intergenerational comparison.

Participants
Purposive sampling of Manchu families. 15 participants across three generations.

Collection
Semi-structured interviews about identity, household practices and cultural memory.

Analysis
Organize accounts by family and generation, code recurring themes, then compare patterns within and across families.

Generational comparison

Generation	Recurring emphasis
Older	Ancestry, remembered customs and family obligations
Middle	Family stories, pride and respect for elders
Younger	Forms and occasional cultural encounters

Two everyday examples

Kang: memories of shared domestic space suggest fewer opportunities for everyday transmission.

Dog-meat taboo: a remembered boundary, with exceptions during hardship.

Traditional housing and dietary change also appear in earlier research [3].