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Visualising insecurity: the globalisation of China's racist 'counter-terror' education

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ABSTRACT

This paper analyses the Chinese party-state's production of visual racism towards Uyghurs as a discursive foundation for its ethnic policy, as globally reproduced and disseminated by non-state actors. The paper draws from theoretical literature on the relationship between visual politics and affect, stressing the need for visual literacy to reflect on how images emotionally affect audiences' identities and insecurities. It focuses this analysis on education texts in China's post-2012 'de-extremification' and 're-education' campaigns, specifically on how images tell stories about life-or-death security issues that define Chinese identity. Chinese education about Uyghurs tends to frame Uyghur identities as racialised, culturally external existential threats to be defeated by state violence or teaching them to be Chinese. However, Uyghurs' own visibility strategies in global advocacy counter the party-state's imagery by centring their lives and experiences. The article shows how these strategies can be used as resources for teaching about Chinese politics and society.

KEYWORDS

China; Uyghurs; visual politics; visual analysis; education; nationalism; ethnicity; identity; state violence; genocide

中国

维吾尔人; 视觉政治; 视觉分析; 教育; 民族主义; 种族; 身份; 国家暴力; 种族灭绝


可视化不安全感：中国种族主义式“反恐”教育的全球化

本文分析了中国党国针对维吾尔人所构建的视觉种族主义。这种视觉种族主义既作为其民族政策的话语基础，又被非国家行为者在全球范围内复制和传播。本文借鉴了视觉政治与情感的相关理论，强调视觉素养需要反思图像如何在情感上影响受众的身份认同和不安全感。本文重点分析了2012年后中国“去极端化”和“再教育”运动中的教育文本，特别是图像如何讲述生死攸关的安全问题来定义中国身份。中国关于维吾尔人的教育倾向于种族化维吾尔人身份，视之为文化上存在的外部威胁，需要通过国家暴力来打倒或教育其成为中国人。然而，维吾尔人也用以自己的生活和经历为中心的视觉策略在全球呼吁中对抗党国的意象。文章展示了如何把这些策略作为关于中国政治和社会的教学资源。

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Introduction

When I first lectured on Chinese politics in the UK during 2013, not a single non-Chinese student had heard of the Uyghur people or could locate their homeland, East Turkestan, on a map. By 2023, entire classrooms have developed fixed opinions regarding ‘Xinjiang’ and ‘the Uyghurs’ from consuming media reports, state propaganda and online discussions. This new awareness is embedded in uninformed presumptions that researchers and educators must unpack, as we seek to challenge the racism towards Uyghurs that, under the shadow of China’s propaganda, has long infused English language media reports of a remote or ‘restive region’. The need for education and decoding is particularly acute with regard to the propagandistic use of visual images that can easily overwhelm an audience lacking visceral experience of the depicted society.

Following violent clashes between Han, Uyghurs and the People’s Armed Police in Ürümqi, July 2009, China’s party-state instituted compulsory, region-wide ‘ethnic unity education’ (*minzu tuanjie jiaoyu*) to ‘promote ethnic unity consciousness ... with patriotism as its core content’ (XUAR 2009, 1). Universities rounded up Uyghur students involved in protests, with ‘re-education’ texts marked for ‘internal circulation only’ used to ‘establish the correct national, ethnic, religious, historical, and cultural outlook’ (XUAR 2009, 105–107). These mass education texts, which amount to security practices for policing Uyghur identity (Tobin 2020), have been translated and promoted as ‘curriculum materials’ for educators and researchers (XEP 2009). These materials are essential for understanding China’s education system and ethnic politics, but are little utilised in China Studies programmes worldwide due to embedded Han-centrism and widespread fear of visa denial for speaking on subjects the party-state considers ‘sensitive’.

As the mass arbitrary detention of Uyghurs expanded in the late 2010s, and Xinjiang was effectively closed to foreign researchers, the latter have turned to digital remote ethnography.¹ Many have used social media in preference to peer-reviewed journals so as to rapidly communicate research findings and counter official propaganda and denial of atrocities. One leading example is Timothy Grose (2019), a social anthropologist whose longitudinal study of Uyghur identities and education, *Negotiating Inseparability in China*, shows how the party-state’s intensified attempts to teach young Uyghurs to be Chinese tend inadvertently to remind them that they are marked as culturally different and problematic. Grose regularly tweets government sources with translations and visuals that can be adapted for the classroom (Supplemental Figure 1) and provides amusing commentary on denialist’s uninformed and unreferenced claims to counter their reproduction of Chinese racism (Supplemental Figure 2).

When the present author tweeted recommended readings on Uyghur identities and Chinese policy (Supplemental Figure 3), one dismissive response featured a racist depiction of random happy Uyghur women. These exchanges coincided with horrific reports of Uyghur starvation and poisoning following Xinjiang’s rapidly enforced covid lockdown (SCMP 2022; Telegraph 2022). Similarly, a tweet about a Uyghur friend’s disappearance in 2017 elicited a barrage of racist and sexist commentary about how to ‘pick up’ Uyghur girls. To the extent that Western academic programmes (whether in China Studies, Education or the social sciences) fail to challenge falsehoods circulated by the party-state and its proxies or to support scholars facing online bullying because their research colleagues have been arbitrarily detained, they are complicit in the

party-state's disinformation project. Adequate scholarly and public understanding of contemporary China depends upon the willingness of researchers to draw attention to the life experiences of Uyghurs and other groups targeted by Chinese state violence.

In this respect, Euro-American scholarship today is often found wanting. China's party-state treats teaching and publishing on any aspect of Uyghur lives, inside or outside the PRC, as taboo. On assuming power, Xi Jinping announced that Xinjiang's governance was a top priority for national security and the 'overall situation of the whole nation' (Xi 2014, 26). But implicit acceptance of the status of Uyghur lives and 'Xinjiang policy' as niche research subjects, marginal to an understanding of 'China' as a whole, produces deeply distorted and racism-blind representations of that country. Xinjiang policy epitomises the 'security'-driven, assimilatory logic that today permeates the CCP's political discourse on ethnicity and its attempts to (re)define what it means to be Chinese. China Studies must grapple with these realities to begin to understand its own subject matter.

Despite rhetorical commitment to 'decolonising the curriculum' in many UK universities (for an apposite critique, see Tuck and Young 2012), Confucius Institutes persist in presenting a sanitised, exotified vision of China's ethnocultural diversity (Hong and He 2015, 104–105) and allegedly breach UK equal opportunities and political bias legislation (Dunning and Kwong 2022). In some cases, universities maintain policies that lectures by qualified academic staff on Chinese 'minorities' policy and related issues should not be recorded due to their 'sensitive' nature and the need for 'intercultural understanding'. One UK university received direct threats from the Chinese central government regarding an academic's work on Uyghurs, triggering an institutional review, from which the affected staff member was excluded, on whether to permit publicising of any research on 'the region' (Interview 1). Another testified that a senior Professor ordered them not to share their research or discuss Uyghurs with the UK Foreign Office (Interview 2). Professor Steve Tsang, former head of Nottingham University's School of Contemporary China Studies (and outspoken critic of Xi Jinping's policies) has testified that the university closed the School under pressure from Beijing.² Meanwhile, authors indigenous to the Uyghur homeland have offered many suggestions, along with primary resources and syllabi, capable of supporting genuine 'decolonisation' of China scholarship (Salimjan 2021).

This article argues that visual racism towards Uyghurs is produced by China's party-state as a discursive foundation for genocidal practices, which are then globally reproduced through the endorsement and dissemination of related images but countered by Uyghur advocates and public commentators. (The term 'genocide' is used advisedly, as explained in the concluding section.) While other articles in this special issue have demonstrated how the CCP uses textbooks, language policies and school curricula to shape identity and control China's restive periphery (Leibold and Dorjee 2023; Vickers and Yan 2023), I argue that visual images have been especially central to education and propaganda relating to Xinjiang and ethnic policy.

The article first outlines the relationship between visual politics and affect, stressing the need for visual literacy amongst educators and students. Reflecting on what Callahan (2020) terms 'feeling visually' enables an exploration of how images tell stories that emotionally affect audiences' identities and insecurities. The literature on emotions in politics shows how they always underpin 'objective' theory and its subject matter (Hutchison and Blieker 2017; Ling 2014; Solomon 2014). 'Visual literacy' is therefore needed

because images are not simplistic representational practices of ‘world-mirroring’ but are ‘world-making’ texts that emotionally and unconsciously affect us all (Shapiro 2004). Human memory and our ability to conceive the present are based on associative impressions in which we are emotionally invested, not the chronological ordering of verifiable, external ‘facts’. Our epistemologies must therefore be informed by awareness of how people’s perceptions of the world may be shaped more by emotive images than by rational assessment of textual evidence.

Analysing texts widely used in China’s post-2012 ‘de-extremification’ and ‘re-education’ campaigns’, I focus specifically on their use of images to tell stories that define what it means to be Chinese. How do the party-state’s ‘de-extremification’ (*qu jiduanhua*) texts teach insecurity? How do these texts teach identity and the meaning of Chinese-ness through violence and insecurity? I argue that Chinese education in and about Xinjiang pursues genocide by framing Uyghur identities as racially ‘other’, culturally external existential threats to be defeated through state violence or forcible transformation of national consciousness. The final section illustrates how Uyghurs’ own visibility strategies seek to counter CCP propaganda. I argue that these materials can be used as teaching resources to advance understanding of Uyghur experience and contemporary China more broadly. Educators should deploy images of Uyghurs authored by or in collaboration with that community when they discuss Xinjiang or construct general arguments about Chinese politics and society. Otherwise, reliance on party-state sponsored imagery risks complicity in the promotion of Han-chauvinist narratives of Chineseness.

Visualising politics

Visual methods can inform and deepen analysis of Chinese policy and its impacts on Uyghur lives. The link between media images and political action has significant history, perhaps most dramatically in the image of the anonymous child running from napalm during the Vietnam War that shocked the world but led the protagonist to stress the need to tell her own story (Singh 2022). The edited volume *Visualising Genocide* shows how Indigenous scholars document genocide and trauma in art and museums to confront narratives that are both degrading and intellectually unrepresentative of their lived realities (Chavez and Mithlo 2022). Such work prompts us to ask: How are emotion and rationality intertwined in these visual representations, and how can reflecting on this relationship help scholars critically assess the realities produced by images?

Scholars who have analysed China’s mass arbitrary detention camps since 2017 (e.g. Clarke 2022), have primarily deployed visual methods in two ways: to reveal the hitherto opaque goals of Chinese policy (Supplemental Figure 5), or to communicate non-verbal experiences (Supplemental Figure 6). Mahmut and Smith Finley’s research on textbooks in Xinjiang effectively demonstrates the genocidal intent behind China’s ‘Xinjiang policy’ (Supplemental Figure 5). This policy involves both linguistic and cultural erasure, vividly illustrated in the visual blacking-out of Uyghur script on a public notice-board, belying continued official genuflections to ‘bilingual education’ and ‘multiculturalism’. As propaganda, this powerfully affective image communicates more than written text could to its target audience, PRC citizens, but was also used in the analysis of Smith-Finley and Klimeš (2020) to highlight the neglected reality of Uyghur lived experience.

Darren Byler's (2021) *In the Camps* similarly uses visual methods to illuminate inmates' experience at the hands of police and security guards in Xinjiang's detention centres (Supplemental Figure 6). Indigenous artist and anthropologist, Mukaddas Mijit, deployed visual imagery to represent the surveillance and detention system in everyday life by co-creating a widely publicised interactive art installation in Berlin, *Everybody is Gone* (Supplemental Figure 7). The installation sought to educate the public through offering sensual and visual experiences of surveillance, to 'counteract the Chinese government's objectives by providing a platform and resource for Uyghur art and culture to be preserved, perpetuated, and celebrated' (The New Wild 2022). *Everybody is Gone* represents the intersection of image as educational representation of the reality of arbitrary detention and surveillance with the active deployment of visuals as affective experiences in themselves that produce reality.

Analyses of visual politics by China scholars often examine the meaning of images in social context to reveal lesser-known realities of those societies and to communicate non-verbal experiences. The journal *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique* regularly publishes papers analysing visual imagery, particularly in relation to issues of identity and gender. This research agenda decodes images in East Asian contexts, which is indispensable to understanding party-state representations of Uyghurs. However, many images of Uyghurs and their homeland, both 'official' and 'unofficial,' are now produced specifically for and consumed by global audiences, thus requiring attention not only to the Chinese context but also to global audiences and the circulation of ideas. Area studies expertise in language, history and culture forms only a part of the analytical toolkit required to interpret these global visual experiences.

Understanding authorial intention is frequently the focus of analysis of visual images, but is less significant than decoding their meaning and affect in a global context, because the author has no control of an image's meaning once it is in public circulation. Michael Shapiro's (2004) cultural governance framework considers how diverse genres of expression constitute and legitimise political boundaries as sets of historical practices, involving but not fully controlled by the state. David Campbell (2003) described cultural governance as a 'continual process of reproduction' through 'unofficial' sites such as art, film and literature, the field of which is now global. Images play a key role in cultural governance, especially photographs, because they are 'thought to be an unmediated simulacrum', a value-neutral representation of reality that is 'easily assimilated into discourses of knowledge and truth' (Shapiro 1988, 124). The banal, seemingly representational nature of images makes them more effective in shaping human perceptions of reality than crude or threatening written propaganda. 'Background' images are 'world-making' texts, rather than representational practices of 'world-mirroring', because their affective impact deeply shapes our underlying assumptions about ourselves and the world (Mitchell 2005, xv). In *Sensible Politics* (2020), Callahan terms this affective process as 'feeling visually', capturing how images both communicate reality *and* affect our perception of it by appealing to our senses in ways the written word does not.

The most powerful images of Uyghurs consumed by global audiences since 2017 are photographs. Unlike the unstoppable visual flow of film, photographs offer space for contemplation and critique, in which the 'observer' participates consciously or unconsciously (Sontag 1990, 17–19). Photographs require considered attention to decode the context in which they were produced and to understand their multiple affects in radically different

and uncontrollable contexts. The now iconic leaked image of detained Uyghur men in prison uniforms surrounded by security fences and armed guards ([Supplemental Figure 8](#)) played a key role in convincing external observers that Xinjiang's camps were not 'vocational training centres', as the Chinese government had insisted. The vast number of human testimonies that had already emerged needed to be supported with a photograph for people to believe their reality. But images always make some things visible while rendering other things outside the frame invisible. In this case, this photograph de-invisibilised mass detention for the first time in the eyes of global audiences, finally placing Uyghur experiences of genocide in the visual frame of global politics. Researchers, therefore, must engage with these visuals not as representational heuristic devices, because this reality had already been demonstrated with satellite images and testimonies, but as productive of reality itself.

Roland Bleiker (2018) has shown how images globally circulate and have discursive links with power that need unpacking to analyse both their intended meaning and affects. Images are constructed by social context, thus requiring a 'visibility strategy' to make sense of their meaning (Rose 2016, 2). However, the reverse is also true, and images must be considered as what WJT Mitchell (2005) calls the 'visual construction of the social', constructing new meanings in new contexts. Whether images are considered reflective or productive of social realities, visual literacy, alongside background subject expertise, is required to interpret their intention and the implications of how they affect viewers. Education in visual literacy is crucial in order for the public to make sense of 'world-making' visual depictions of societies of which they have no visceral experience, particularly in an age of 'post-truth' social media commentary. Walter Benjamin (2019) warned that although photography demystified 'high' art through endless reproduction, the subsequent aestheticisation of politics in visual performances culminates in totalitarianism, epitomised by Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will*, because political leaders can exploit widespread insecurity and anxiety through aesthetic appeals to emotion, offering safety and familiarity amidst a self-perpetuating 'crisis'.

The visual IR literature focuses on the global circulation of images as key windows into understanding international politics and the construction of our social world (Bleiker 2018; Callahan 2020). This literature shows how politics is a 'multi-sensory performance', often arresting 'rational understanding' in ways that require discursive analytical and methodological strategies (Callahan 2020, xi). Scholars, therefore, need to do more than 'add visuals and stir', considering how images construct the world and looking at international politics 'in a different register that values *both* thinking and feeling', in both written texts and images (Callahan 2020, 1). This means connecting detailed area studies knowledge to broader literatures to consider affect among different audiences. Conversely, online dismissals of Uyghur genocide with common tropes of 'it's global', or 'what about America?' reflect both intellectual apathy and an absence of empathy with difference, which China specialists can help counteract by avoiding assumptions of sameness and reductionist IR theory with no empirical basis.

Sensible Politics, one of the first books to engage with the politicisation of Uyghur lives from a global perspective, uses images from different social contexts to explore how global phenomena intersect with local and national dynamics. For example, Callahan considers fashion to be a 'site of cultural resistance in France' but a 'site of cultural governance in Xinjiang' (see [Supplemental Figure 9](#)) (Callahan 2020, 200). Another instructive

comparison is between the global reception of images related to state-enforced veiling or de-veiling. The 2022 protests by female schoolchildren in Iran who choose not to wear the veil created a visual spectacle for global audiences as whole classrooms energetically waved their removed veils, perfectly choreographed for contemporary circulations of short videos on Twitter, Tik-Tok and Instagram. Commentators, journalists and China specialists who do not comment on Uyghurs, with no visceral or educational experience of life in Iran, were among those who recirculated these videos, inserting their own hopes and dreams for a more equal and humane, but ultimately liberal, international politics.

In China, the male gaze, which demands women can only be seen in ways that represent male leadership's desire for a self-constructed image of women and conception of the nation, takes a distinct form in Xinjiang, as Uyghur women are expected to be beautiful and sexualised objects. The party-state's 'Project Beauty' campaign in Xinjiang includes fashion shows and make-up tutorials for Uyghur women, and is run by the All-China-Women's-Federation, encouraging, and even violently enforcing, veil removal. Project Beauty was announced in 2011 and sought to bring women into line with 'modern culture' through activities and education that emphasised physical beauty and loyalty to the party (Tianshan Wang 2012). The party-state's anti-veiling campaigns sought to define 'normal' female adornment while eliminating popular styles deemed un-Chinese (Leibold and Grose 2016). However, this state violence against women did not capture global attention because of an absence of empathy with the dreams of women who are different, suggesting the liberal gaze is not immune to racism (see Zamudio and Rios 2006).

Feminist IR theorists, including Cynthia Enloe (2014) and Cynthia Weber (1998) have shown that neither theory nor political performance are value-neutral because theorists select examples that move them emotionally, while leaders emotionally perform identities and ideologies in ways that affect concrete policy. Uyghur experiences of gendered violence are often overlooked by mainstream feminists because the right to wear a veil is often interpreted as contradicting the construction and self-image of women as active agents in white, liberal societies. However, Uyghur women who do not wear the veil, but support women's right to choose, are often at the forefront of campaigning to raise global awareness on genocide and family separation experienced by all Uyghur diaspora members. Dilnur Reyhan, anthropologist, feminist and President of the European Uyghur Institute, has been a pivotal figure, analysing and denouncing 'genocidal policies' that 'eradicate our nation, like family separation and sterilisation' in which 'women are the first victims', and explaining how in Uyghur activism, 'women do the work and men give the speeches' (Interview 3). Dilnur openly critiques mainstream feminism and laments that the fact that 'a whole population is in the process of being eradicated through the mass sterilisation of its women has not been enough to draw even the slightest bit of attention from feminists of the world' (Asia Art Tours 2021). Dilnur is referring to the testimonies of torture and sexual violence from women, such as Mihrigul Tursun (2018) and Gulbahar Haitiwaji (2021), which alerted the world both to the reality of China's camp system and to the activism of Uyghur women across the world that is invisibilised when these issues are addressed through the geopolitical lens of US-China relations.

Marhaba Salay (Supplemental Figure 10) was depicted holding a picture of her arbitrarily detained relative in what later became a standard campaigning method amongst Uyghurs abroad seeking information on family members who 'disappear'

without official explanation (Yang 2020). However, the image manifests Uyghurs' self-constructed visibility strategy to illustrate that they are real people with individual experiences, rather than a news story, niche research subject, or group of voiceless geopolitical pawns. The image represents Uyghur agency in the struggle for visibility and captures the diversity of Uyghur identities and life stories concealed by geopolitical debates. Marhaba who has chosen to wear a headscarf for decades, including while campaigning for the release of her sister Mayila, who chooses not to wear one. Mayila disappeared into the camp system after helping family members abroad buy a house, which was considered 'financing terrorism' (Interview 4). Mayila was interrogated by Chinese police and they used a private photograph of her wearing a headscarf out of respect while visiting an Islamic tourist site in Malaysia to charge her with 'possessing extremist items'. The final section of this paper returns to how strategies of visibility and empowerment can and should be used when teaching, writing, or tweeting about Uyghur lives. First, though, it is necessary to analyse the party-state's racialised construction of Uyghurs as threats to understand how the images it produces and disseminates promote the eradication of Uyghur-ness, and how Uyghur visibility strategies counter this very visual genocide.

Visualising insecurity

Globally circulating, binary visual depictions of Uyghurs as happy, dancing minorities or as backward, atavistic terrorists are reproductions of official Chinese propaganda. To promote critical visual literacy, it is therefore essential to analyse the production and circulation of these racialised images of security and insecurity prior to their global dissemination as components of a singular and incontestable 'Chinese perspective'. Critical approaches to security studies have shown how invoking security calls for action to deal with incontestable existential threats to a sense of self beyond politics (Campbell 1998; Weber and Lacy 2011). The CCP's security thinking revolves around confrontation with and assimilation of China's own 'domestic' frontiers, taken as defining the boundary between civilisation and barbarism (Callahan 2012; Johnston 2003). In the twenty-first century, this securitised field of cultural governance remains driven by and focused on perceived state interests, but related narratives are disseminated worldwide by CCP-supporters and atrocity-denialists who circulate these images and perpetuate online attacks on all Uyghur voices and their associates. Such attacks occur off-line, too, as when Chinese students staged a walkout at a Cornell University seminar when a Fulbright Scholar, Rizwangul Nurmuhammad, discussed her brother's arbitrary detention (Hurley 2022). (Meanwhile, scholars researching the persecution of the Uyghurs face regular online abuse, often sexualised and racialised, especially when offering personalised accounts of interaction with Uyghur friends or associates.)

These globally circulating images must be unpacked at their source to understand how Uyghur-ness is politically constructed by the party-state before being embraced and globally reproduced as a racialised security threat by a range of unofficial and non-Chinese actors. 'De-extremification' texts are part of China's official and centralised ethnic policy (*minzu zhengce*), which includes universalised 'ethnic unity education' in Xinjiang. These texts almost always feature striking visuals taken from censored state media

news reports. For example, *The 50 Whys* (XEP 2009) introduces the subjects of history, Uyghur identity and Chinese politics with portrayals of violence by Uyghurs and protection from Chinese doctors, depicting a region beset by irrational violence from one side and offered the salvation of modern medical science on the other (XEP 2009, 2). The purpose of such texts is to teach that Uyghur violence represents a 'life or death' struggle for China's existence against the 'backwardness' of their Islamic and Turkic identities (XEP 2009, 15, 47–52, 99), with the only solution being their 'ethnic extinction' (*minzu xiaowang*) or assimilation into the 'advanced', 'scientific' culture of the dominant Han (XEP 2009, 57, 94).

These texts narrate the story of a China under attack from Uyghurs in a dramatic civilisational struggle between good and evil, white and black (see [Supplemental Figure 12](#)), pitting the nation against a malign, 'hegemonic' West. The texts link this national 'life or death struggle' to images that reflect, communicate and reproduce specific official policies and narratives of Uyghur identity as a security threat. One of Xi Jinping's most significant early announcements, in 2012, widely overlooked by China scholars, was his call for the building of a 'great wall of iron' around Xinjiang, referring to the controls on information and mobility that now form the basis of family hostage taking, transnational repression and the disconnection of the diaspora from their homeland. Detaining families and then using them in calls to threaten activist relatives overseas is the core tactic of the party-state's transnational repression of the Uyghur diaspora (Tobin and Elimä 2023).

State media widely quoted Xi's metaphor of a 'great wall of iron' during 2017, referring to 'stability work' and 'long-term stability' (Xinhua 2017). In Xi's speeches, the great wall metaphor is used to explain the need to seal Xinjiang from inflows and outflows of people and ideas, leaving no space for those described as terrorists: 'We must organise and mobilise the masses of all ethnicities to strengthen joint prevention and control,³ mass defence and governance (*qunfang qunzhi* 群防群治),⁴ constructing a great wall of iron, and creating an escape-proof net, making violent terrorists become "like rats with everyone shouting kill it!"' (Xinjiang Papers 2021). The 'de-extremification' textbooks insist all citizens must be mobilised and participate in the party's 'building of a great wall of iron in the anti-terror struggle' (Xiang 2015, 220–221). Referencing the powerful national imagery of the 'great wall' that protected China from barbarians reminds citizens that participation in 'counter-terrorism' is a matter not only of loyalty to party-state policy but of the nation's very existence and cultural integrity.

The party-state officially conceives security threats in Xinjiang in deeply political, but incontestable, and racist national narratives. For example, one key 'anti-terrorism handbook for citizens' (Xiang 2015), publicly and cheaply available at mainstream *Xinhua* bookstores, depicts self-defence moves against terrorist threats on Xinjiang's streets ([Supplemental Figures 12 and 13](#)). The handbook is a component of the 'de-extremification' (*qu jiduanhua*) campaign, formally announced in 2012, and includes technical, heuristic depictions of combat without facial or racial features ([Supplemental Figure 13](#)). However, these instructional diagrams are presented alongside affective cartoon imagery of dark, racialised, shadowy Uyghurs attacking light-skinned Chinese citizens ([Supplemental Figure 14](#)). In this context, the boundaries of Chinese-ness are constructed through the crude, impressionistically racialised portrayal of a Uyghur threat to collective security.

One key 'de-extremification' text that has not yet been analysed in the literature, *'Religious Extremism Kills'* (WJC Ltd 2014) offers a visual account of extremism, counter-extremism and ethnic policy for high school and early university years students. The text begins by establishing that the region has been 'harmonious' since ancient times with Han and Uyghurs living happily together (see [Supplemental Figure 15](#)), a situation now threatened by 'the Three Evils'. These have fuelled a desire amongst Uyghurs to separate from the 'land of their ancestors' (*zuguo*), which must be countered by its binary opposite, 'training and education in scientific culture' (10). Readers are told that the 'economic and security situation' in Pakistan has declined due to the influence of extremism, that terrorists in Kashgar share and disseminate the same 'extremist religious ideology' as their Pakistani counterparts (31), and that real 'Uyghurs are an inclusive ethnic group' characterised by 'fusion with and learning from other groups' (38). Village party committees (*cun weihui*) are portrayed the source of improvements in local development, particularly health care (49), but the 'Muslim masses' are instructed to 'be clear-eyed and practice voluntary resistance' (*cailiang yanjing, zijue dizhi*) against the separatist menace (60).

The text's childlike depictions of Uyghurs and explicit political sloganeering can be dismissed as propaganda, but it offers narrative explanations of real, concrete policies that shape the visual and emotional imaginations of Chinese youth. Like all Chinese propaganda, its specifics are less important than the narrative framework it provides for understanding international relations and Chinese-ness. Propaganda cannot succeed in telling people what to believe. However, by distracting attention and reconstituting the terms of debate over issues from genocide and minority agency to geopolitics and state-centrism, propaganda does shape how people conceive the world and structure their beliefs in the first place.

The images and accompanying texts in *Religious Extremism Kills* construct Uyghurs as a racialised threat to Chinese identity that must be eradicated. Such imagery forms the emotional foundation of globalised atrocity denial, as well as the intellectual disengagement from Uyghurs and the impact of Han ethno-nationalism in their community as legitimate research subjects. Images of Uyghur women are mobilised as barometers of China's modernity and security, with *bad* women in 'Arab' headscarves obstructing 'rights to freedom, health, civilisation, and prosperous lives', and *good* women in 'traditional ethnic Uyghur clothing' revealing their 'eyebrows as beautiful as the moon' ([Supplemental Figure 16](#)). The text also refers to the notion of 'resource exploitation' by Han-led companies in the Uyghur homeland as a manifestation of 'the three evils', because these natural resources are 'a requirement of the great opening up of the land of our ancestors (*zuguo dakaifa*)' ([Supplemental Figure 17](#)). The assertion that widespread Uyghur claims of resource exploitation reflect a separatist or terrorist mentality has little to do with material reality. This story is a performative means of defining Chinese-ness through loyalty to the party-state as the rightful inheritor and protector of the 'land of our ancestors' against the threat of Uyghur separatism.

This section has shown how the party-state's construction of a Uyghur threat begins in education at home before being globally disseminated by a disparate range of actors, including social media commentators and scholars. Educators and researchers must take the productive, world-making dimensions of visual imagery seriously to avoid reproducing the party-state's racist construction of Uyghurs as a subhuman threat to civilisation, the genocidal implications and political origins of which are unfamiliar to non-Chinese audiences. Uyghur visibility strategies counter this very visual campaign of

cultural annihilation, compelling us to ask how these can and should be used when teaching or writing about Uyghur lives and the social phenomena in China that affect them.

Countering insecurity

This final section shows how Uyghurs' have sought to use imagery to counter the party-state's racist construction of their identity, and discusses how such materials can be used to promote a better understanding of Uyghur lives, Chinese society, and state policy. Visual culture studies and IR have tended to focus on deconstructing images related to Euro-American representations of security and insecurity, but as power shifts in global politics, there is a pressing need to engage with what images actually *do*, not simply how they reflect pre-existing theories of US or Western hegemony (Callahan 2020, 61). Additionally, if educators and researchers seek a critical understanding of contemporary 'Chinese society', they are intellectually and morally bound to give due consideration to images of Uyghurs authored by or authored in collaboration with that community. Otherwise, they risk reproducing the racist hierarchy that colonises Uyghurs' identity by silencing their experiences of arbitrary detention, family separation and non-citizenship inside and outside China. In the wake of the Black Lives Matter movement, Euro-American scholars widely agree that to write about 'American' identity, society, or mobility without consideration of Black experiences of slavery and racism is to be complicit in perpetuating racist and distorted visions of American reality. To theorise 'China', 'Chinese policy', or 'Chinese migrant' experiences without addressing the lives and experiences of Uyghurs and the diaspora involves a similarly racist silencing of non-Han lives and refusal to engage with the multi-layered complexity of these categories of identity. This section provides three concrete examples of how educators and researchers can address Uyghur perspectives in their work – firstly, to inform the audience of their existence, secondly, to include Uyghurs in the knowledge production process and ensure they are not simply spoken for, and finally to enable their empowerment in the knowledge production process.

One illustrative example of how engagement with scholars from communities affected by state violence is essential to counter the party-state's binary, racist visual hegemony that depicts Uyghurs as terrorists or happy dancing minorities is the cover image of Michael Clarke's edited volume, *the Xinjiang Emergency* (2022). The contributors, including myself, chose from a selection of images provided by the University of Manchester Press, with the majority choosing a dark and powerful image of a Uyghur woman with full face covering looking down in despair. The authors then consulted several Uyghur scholars for their views on how this represented their community. Their response was overwhelmingly negative, highlighting both the orientalist tone of the image ('too exotic') and its depiction of Uyghurs as dejected and broken people. Instead, they proposed the image that became the cover because it best reflected how they conceive of Chinese policy since 2009 and Chinese colonialism since 1949 – as a confrontation between a powerful state and a relatively powerless but determined people (Supplemental Figure 18). This example illustrates the importance of visual representation to unrecognised peoples affected by state violence who seek global recognition of their identity, and their very existence. However, scholarship by researchers based outside China that celebrates human-centred methods and 'decolonising the curriculum' has routinely invisibilised

the human experiences of groups targeted for 'ethnic extinction' by a non-Western colonial power.

Scholarship on China *cannot* conceptualise 'Chinese society' without considering the diversity in the construction, representation and lived experiences of its peoples. The solution, engaging with people and reflecting on how *China Studies* uses methodologically nationalist categories that can bolster state power is intellectually uncomplicated, which suggests the obstacles to doing so are largely political. Privileged scholars centre their desires for career advancement over intellectual coherence because fieldwork access and the ability to conduct collaborative research with (Han) Chinese scholars are typically dependent on silence.

Turning to three examples of practical means by which educators and researchers can avoid reproducing the party-state's racism in the classroom, the easiest involves straightforward online searches to find images authored or selected by Uyghurs affected by Chinese state oppression. When delivering a lecture on the lived experience of 'Chinese migrants' for an undergraduate module on 'Chinese society', I updated existing materials by adding images and literature sourced from Uyghurs themselves. These resources vocally and visually challenge the notion that China's 'opening and reform era' entails increased mobility for all and that migration reflects agency, when in reality it is often coercive (see [Supplemental Figure 19](#)). The lecture used materials from my research on transnational repression, but the visual affect and core storytelling was underpinned by the self-representation of journalist and campaigner, Nur'imān Abdureshid. Incorporating her visual story of transnational repression and family separation into a lecture on mobility highlighted how the party-state propagates a racist, ethnically hierarchical model of Chineseness, structuring and determining Chinese citizens' ability to move inside or outside China. Nur'imān's story challenges Han-centric accounts of the Chinese experience of migration; unlike most of her notional 'compatriots', she cannot return home, or would be imprisoned if she did so, nor can she find any information on her family who have been detained without trial. Furthermore, the images are those Nur'imān has contributed to authoring and disseminating herself, and thus represent her agency in constructing her own identity and narrating Uyghur experiences of state violence.

I offer this as one example of what Guldana Salimjan (2021) called for when she urged scholars of China to 'actively engage in decolonising Xinjiang'. I have witnessed several public seminars presented by Uyghur scholars sharing their research and personal experiences of family separation and detention who are asked by privileged educators, 'What can we do?'. This is typically a rhetorical question that transfers the responsibility to be educated and to educate to the victims of state violence. However, scholars and educators who choose to research and teach about China can and should, at the very least, educate themselves in the realities of Uyghur experience, using resources already provided by Uyghurs themselves.

The second practical means of countering globalised visual racism towards Uyghurs is to go beyond utilising Uyghur perspectives to include Uyghur experts in the knowledge production process itself. This means inviting their direct contribution to rethinking our conceptual constructions rather than simply utilising their lives to illustrate pre-existing theoretical approaches. Decolonisation in this context does not mean simply adding colonised peoples and stirring, but requires rethinking and reconstituting the concepts and methods that silence Uyghur experiences of Chinese colonialism.

As part of my own ‘Documenting Uyghur diaspora voices’ project, I gained funding from the University of Sheffield’s Faculty of Arts and Humanities to undergo training in ethnographic film-making in order to document ‘the Uyghur American Cup’. This football tournament is held annually in North America and brings together teams from across the continent formed by Uyghur diaspora men in pursuit of mental and physical health and community maintenance. The booklet produced to promote the forthcoming short documentary film, *the Uyghur American Cup*, was designed by me, but the text explaining the social significance of the tournament was written by Mirshad Ghalip, a trained Uyghur anthropologist who is the project’s co-producer.

Mirshad explains that ‘the tournament is not only a sporting event. Uyghur diaspora communities participate as an important opportunity for cultural and language maintenance while separated from their homeland’ (Tobin and Ghalip 2022, 1). The short film itself follows the fortunes and failures of Boston New York Uyghur United and will include footage of the competition interspersed with interviews with players, including Mirshad. *The Uyghur American Cup* is a co-produced film; I conducted the filming under Mirshad’s direction with the aim of reaching broader audiences unfamiliar with Uyghur experiences. Mirshad is the film editor and seeks to document Uyghur stories and reach Uyghur audiences to promote health and wellbeing and to enhance their community connections. The project’s collaborative nature enabled community input into the planning of the film and the filmmaking process. For example, participants, including Kabir Qurban (Supplemental Figure 20), helped select interview locations and viewed shots as the filming took place to ensure that the end product depicted their lives in a manner they found respectful.

The third method researchers and educators can use to counter global visual racism towards Uyghurs is to *enable* their empowerment. This does not mean speaking for them or giving them roles in our pre-existing research projects, but requires transferring power by allowing them to set agendas and drive discussion. Enabling community empowerment requires utilising one’s own power as a privileged academic to capture grant income and organise networking events and using it to transfer that power to Uyghur scholars and advocates to use as they see fit by placing them in positions of discursive authority to set agendas, shape the knowledge production process, and drive debates about research practices that affect their community.

An example of this approach was a workshop on ‘Uyghur Diaspora Voices’ held in July 2023 at the University of Sheffield. This enabled three-way knowledge exchange between scholars, policymakers and NGOs. It abandoned the tradition of senior scholars giving ‘keynote’ speeches to set disciplinary agendas, instead replacing this with a roundtable featuring different Uyghur scholarly and advocacy perspectives moderated by a Uyghur chair. This organisational method creates an atmosphere of community ownership of the issues discussed. It also allows the audience to see beyond an essentialisation of Uyghurs as victims or survivors of genocide. Instead, it means treating them as an active, diverse group of individuals deploying their agency to advance both their own research and advocacy agendas, as well as creating a space to enhance networks between the Uyghur community and researchers as guests in their space.

The ‘Uyghur Diaspora Voices’ workshop featured numerous visual experiences including a presentation on family separation by Nur’iman Abdureshid and her sister Nursiman, who were reunited after 6 years of separation due to immigration issues.⁵ A screening of

advocacy leader Rushan Abbas' film, *In Search of My Sister*,⁶ was held and stories from Kabir Qurban of efforts to build solidarity in advocacy networks beyond the Uyghur community.⁷ The final evening of the workshop featured two visual and visceral spectacles; an interactive sculpture workshop by Camilla Dilshat, an artist newly graduated from City & Guilds of London Art School,⁸ and an abstract art exhibition by Mamatjan Juma,⁹ deputy Director of Radio Free Asia Uyghur Service.

Camilla Dilshat identifies as a 'sculpture/installation artist of Uyghur ethnicity born and based in London'. Her work uses installations and interactive experiences to allow participants to engage with and *feel* both the diasporic experience she describes and the physical art form itself. Camilla draws from her own 'experiential reflections' and the visceral and affective 'body experience' from 'one's diasporic identity'. She recounts her sense of the widespread non-recognition and invisibility of Uyghur culture: 'My life has been littered with misunderstandings from others regarding my ethnicity. My body felt invisible, and my mouth was unequipped to handle the tiring task of constant self-definition'. Camilla's art responds to and uses Uyghur diasporic experiences of non-recognition and misrecognition 'as a therapeutic venture' to embrace the individual body and the collective diaspora experience. She expresses the need to both preserve and redefine Uyghur heritage in a rapidly changing world: 'I engage in sculpture-making to explore identity, memory and imagined homelands, drawing from my own or my parent's nostalgic imagery ... Led by the tug and pull of my body in comfort and discomfort, I am following a long slippery noodle towards redefining belonging to my Uyghur heritage'. This reflexive artistic perspective on how an individual body is pushed and pulled towards pain and release, and from the homeland to new homes, has been lost in a global discursive and visual landscape that has framed Uyghurs simply as geopolitical objects suffering from *or* surviving genocide.

Camilla led an interactive sculpting session, entitled 'Memory Carriers', during which attendees put their notes aside and removed their suit jackets to sit together and make handcrafted sculptures. The participants engaged in 're-remembering and retelling of visceral memory experiences' by reflecting on physical materials to 'think about how they may evoke certain emotional and bodily feelings relating to certain memories'. In this instance, participants were given *qapaq* (gourds) to act as carriers of memory and an array of physical materials to decorate them: 'by embellishing your own gourd, the sculpture you walk away with will act as your own carrier of memory and feeling'.

My own efforts ([Supplemental Figure 21](#)) may be aesthetically ugly, but Camilla's guidance encouraged me to viscerally experience and reflect on the actual process of remembering and retelling. As I began to decorate my gourd, I thought of tactile experiences in early childhood; enjoying the feeling of rope tied around a boat tied to an anchored float in my own homeland, and the wool of the many sheep in surrounding fields. However, as I continued, I realised I was redefining my heritage by remembering and forgetting elements of my past as I focused on the enjoyable experience of making new memories with Uyghur colleagues who laughed and smiled together, a rare experience in events focused on genocide. Ultimately, the experience celebrated Uyghur heritage but also redefined it by bringing it to life in the hands of a group of people in Sheffield, allowing it to transcend Uyghur-ness through shared viscosity. Scholars from around the world abandoned standard academic conference norms to physically

engage with each other, reflecting on their own memories and how they relate to a shared future working with a community that requires resources and support in pursuit of preservation and recreation. I forgot about genocide and remembered happiness, connecting my past with the present and my own identity with future projects involving the participants around me.

The final session, led by Mamatjan Juma, featured discussion of his abstract paintings, displayed in a mezzanine gallery ([Supplemental Figure 22](#)). Participants were then invited to stroll around the exhibition and discuss the affective nature of the art and the workshop experience. Mamatjan identifies himself as an abstract painter ‘born and brought up in the ancient city of Kashgar of East Turkestan’. His paintings are ‘not a strict reflection of my biography or culture ... (but) a form of personal expression, a process of finding balance and making connections between distinct elements’. Mamatjan’s art is distinctly inspired and driven by his culture and the politics of his homeland:

My art is inspired by known and unknown places: ancient Buddhist grotto paintings in my distant homeland; satellite images that I look at when I miss my childhood hometown; pictures of Earth taken from space; and images of extra-terrestrial planets and an unbounded universe ... I explore the essence of these places as a way to capture my memories, dreams, and layers of experience in two-dimensional form.

However, the medium and message of Mamatjan’s art transcends culture and even the limitations of an individual perspective to inspire stories drawing on the experience of the viewers themselves, relating their own life, death and the cosmos to each other.

Mamatjan rarely explains the meaning of his art but instead describes the broad themes and emotive experiences that shape its creation. The viewer’s visual experience is thus thematically driven but individually unique and reflective:

Each painting speaks to me in its own language, guiding my choice of colour, stroke and composition. Sometimes a painting comes together as a vision of beauty almost on its own, and my job is to complete it with a simple dot or line. Other times, I must search for the story’s conclusion myself.

Mamatjan chaired the first session of the workshop on ‘Mental health and trauma in the Uyghur diaspora’, relating the experiences of genocide and family separation in the diaspora, including the arbitrary detention of his own brothers, Ahmetjan and Abduqadir,¹⁰ to the need for healthy and productive responses, including art.

The final session of the workshop, led by Mamatjan, concluded the event by presenting stories of the horrors afflicting Uyghurs today, but in ways that encouraged participants to reflect on their own lives, identities and relationships with the community. The exhibition sought to provide a visual experience, both communal and individually specific, of how it feels to be a Uyghur separated from family and homeland. The ultimate aim was to empower the Uyghur diaspora to face the reality of genocide but also to survive and resist through personal and cultural expression. However, the exhibition transcended ethnic and national boundaries by allowing external observers to participate in and be affected by that experience in ways that incorporated their own individual identities. The workshop concluded without mention of politics, the party-state, or genocide, but with laughter, smiles and hope that the Uyghur diaspora can express both their individual experiences of family separation and maintain their cultural connections. It also showed how external observers working with the Uyghur community can engage with both despair and hope and with social death

and social survival as they construct new projects to address the dehumanisation and racism that underpins both the party-state's genocide and the silence that enables those practices.

Conclusions

This article argues that visual racism towards Uyghurs is produced by the party-state in China as a discursive foundation for genocidal practices, but is reproduced by external observers who uncritically endorse and disseminate those images, or simply ignore Uyghur experience in propagating parsimonious but distorted conceptualisations of 'China'. As the article introducing this special issue argues, much Anglophone scholarship on Chinese education is complicit in uncritically relaying distortions produced by the party-state (Vickers and Chen 2024). Researchers and educators have a responsibility to critically reassess their conceptual framing of 'China' by acknowledging how Uyghurs are excluded from cultural definitions of Chineseness in China itself; recognising the colonial pattern of governance on China's periphery; and engaging with affected communities. The party-state seeks to popularise a narrative of racialised insecurity in global politics by framing Uyghurs as a threat to humanity. Western-based scholars who claim to abhor 'coloniality' stand guilty of unthinking eurocentricism at best, or self-serving hypocrisy at worst, if they neglect to critique the violent colonial regime that confronts Uyghurs and other groups on China's periphery (Vickers and Chen 2024).

Bulag, in his contribution to this special issue, argues against the 'Western framing' of CCP policies towards minority nationalities as 'genocidal and necropolitical' (Bulag 2023). He stresses that the Communist regime requires 'minorities' not to quietly disappear, but to publicly perform a ritualistic 'self-sacrifice', celebrating their own cultural obliteration for the greater good of 'Chinese civilisation' and its 'rejuvenation'. However, the narratives used by Uyghurs to describe the impact of Chinese policy on their lives are closer to Rafael Lemkin's (1944) original definition of genocide, which does not reference physical atrocities but focuses on the intent and effect of concerted practices to weaken or annihilate group identities, some of which are dismissed as the inevitable effects of modernisation in many colonial projects. Contemporary critical genocide theorists are clear that genocide is not an event but a set of processes which prevent intergenerational cultural transmission and create what Claudia Card (2010) termed social death, as a community struggles to maintain its identity. Therefore, with regard to China's state-driven 'ethnic extinction' of Uyghurs, there is an especially strong case for insisting on the terminology of genocide. According to the UN definition, genocide can but does not necessarily involve 'imposing methods intended to prevent births within the group,'¹¹ though this is the very aim of 'coerced miscegenation' and 'forced sterilisation' programmes in Xinjiang (Roberts 2022, 116). And whereas visual manifestations of other 'minority' cultures, notably Tibetan Buddhism, are selectively incorporated into representations of 'excellent Chinese traditional culture', Islam is instead targeted by the state for annihilation or radical remodelling (Financial Times 2023).

The first section of the paper used theoretical frameworks drawn from visual analysis to show that images do not simply reflect but constitute reality. This underlines the need for visual literacy amongst educators and researchers when selecting images that purportedly represent reality and influence global audiences. The second section analysed the widely accessible educational texts produced to support China's post-2012 'de-

extremification' and 're-education' campaigns, examining how they tell stories about life or death security issues and what it means to be Chinese. It showed that the party-state represents Uyghurs as a racialised security threat in order to justify policies aimed at their 'ethnic extinction'. The circulation of China's racist imagery is now globalised as these images have been disseminated by atrocity denialists online, rendering urgent the task of countering CCP disinformation by using images authored by the Uyghur community. The final section showed how Uyghurs' own strategies for enhancing their global visibility counter the party-state's racist construction of their identity, offering examples of how educators and researchers might incorporate these stories in teaching and learning resources.

Scholars of Chinese education and society have an intellectual and moral responsibility to deconstruct racism in China and to counter it, firstly, through ensuring that their own conceptualisations of China are not simply accurate but intellectually coherent. With respect to the Uyghurs this involves acknowledging their existence when conceptualising China and their lived realities when analysing education and other practices that represent or directly affect them. It should further extend to ensuring Uyghur participation in the knowledge production process, and empowerment of Uyghur scholars and artists to set agendas and drive debates.

There is nothing outside the image. The visual means available to communicate that genocide is occurring and should be considered a humanitarian emergency in the twenty-first century, namely Instagram and Tik-Tok, are crucial parts of the genocidal problem itself. These are the very media which enable global apathy towards genocide by politicised algorithmic exclusion,¹² amplifying the superficiality that ignores and distracts attention from it (Bayamlioglu 2017), promoting the aestheticisation of politics and life that Walter Benjamin considered instrumental to the decline into fascism (Benjamin 2019), as well as the fractured depoliticisation and individualisation of social life which Hannah Arendt considered the basis of totalitarianism (Arendt 2017). These tools enable twenty-first-century violences and silences to be amplified or concealed with ease, and no amount of research, advocacy, or influencer technique can challenge those algorithms or the widespread disconnection and isolation they produce. Countering the racism in China's education system and its attempts to globally conceal or justify genocide does not equate to promoting 'anti-China' narratives. It requires scholars to adhere to a consistently anti-totalitarian and anti-colonial perspective, rather than lazily framing colonialism as a problem of nineteenth century white supremacy or 'Western hegemony'. The Chinese state is a supremely, but not uniquely, racist and colonial enterprise, and 'understanding China' requires a re-humanisation of China and our scholarly endeavours, not a retreat into narrow tribalism or cultural relativism, because genocide is a tragically human endeavour.

Notes

1. For example, see Vanessa Frangville's and Rune Steenberg's *Remote Ethnography XUAR* project: <https://www.remote-xuar.com/>.
2. As reported in the Channel 4 Dispatches documentary, 6 December 2023.
3. 'Joint prevention and control' (*lianfang liankong* 联防联控) later became synonymous with public health and disease control under the State Council's 'joint prevention and control mechanism'.

4. 'Mass defence and governance' (*qunfang qunzhi* 群防群治) is a nationwide security practice and mass propaganda campaign emphasising the need for all sectors of society to maintain stability.
5. See Nursiman's testimony to the *Uyghur Tribunal*. Available: <https://uyghurtribunal.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/UT-211117-Nursiman-Abdureshid.pdf>.
6. The full film is online and covers Rushan's daily experiences of family separation, transnational repression, and advocacy for her arbitrarily detained sister, Gulshan Abbas. Available: <https://www.jawadmir.com/portfolio/in-search-of-my-sister/>.
7. Kabir Qurban's website: <https://jokabir.com/about/>.
8. Camilla Dilshat's website: <https://www.camilladilshat.com>. Quotes below are included here.
9. Mamatjan Juma's website: <https://mamatjans.com>. Quotes below are included here.
10. For example, see: <https://edition.cnn.com/interactive/2023/02/asia/china-police-data-leak-uyghur-families/index.html>.
11. <https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/genocide.shtml>.
12. For example, see the Tiktok Uyghur makeup tutorial controversy: <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2019/nov/27/tiktok-makeup-tutorial-conceals-call-to-action-on-chinas-treatment-of-uighurs>.

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Interviews

- Anonymous interview with a UK-based academic, 14/08/23.
- Anonymous interview with a UK-based academic, 11/09/22.
- Dilnur Reyhan, May 2021.
- Nyrola Elimä (relative of Mayila). June 2021.