PRODUCING AND TRANSGRESSING THE FAMILY: INTIMATE TECHNOLOGIES, STATE SURVEILLANCE, AND CHINA'S UYGHURS

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Abstract: *In China's Xinjiang Province, narratives of counterterrorism and economic development have accompanied heightened regional and national securitization, including the detainment in "re-education camps" of over one million Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities. Government language policies, technological surveillance, mass detentions, and homestay programmes intended to discipline Uyghurs into ideal political subjects enforce and transgress boundaries between the public and domestic spheres. These strategies of banal masked coercion reinforce norms of kinship and privacy while simultaneously enacting violent transgressive control over the subjects those norms produce. In this paper, I introduce the concept of "surveillance of intimate technologies" to convey how such surveillance strategies afford the creation and maintenance of the kinship relations they simultaneously betray. Intimate technologies such as smartphones become sites of sustaining both social ties and surveillance. Surveillance of intimate technologies also takes the form of government homestay campaigns to enlist over one million representatives of the Chinese state to enter Uyghur homes, act as "relatives", and monitor Uyghurs for demonstrations of apparent extremism and subversion. I assert that surveillance of intimate technologies perpetuates fantasies of a private, removed, family space while also destabilizing its logics. These apparent perversions of kinship and family structures at once affirm their "valid" and normative modalities and also maintain the state's appearance as a cohesive actor through demonstration of its reach into a constructed domestic domain.*

Keywords: *Uyghur, China, kinship, surveillance, intimate technologies*

Introduction

> 对这样的人，我们才判刑。他的这种行为，对国家安全造成了危害，党和政府为了教育他，挽救他，才对他判刑，要不然任其发展，就是死路一条、家破人亡。党和政府为了不使其走上毁灭的道路、避免伤害家庭、危害社会，挽救了他、挽救了他的家庭，家属还有什么想不通的呢？是不是应该感谢党？

> *For this kind of person, we will simply issue a sentence. His type of behaviour endangers national security. In order for the party and the government to educate him, they sentence him—otherwise, to let it go unchecked would be a road to death, with the family broken up and its members dead and dispersed. So as to not go down the path of destruction, and to avoid harming family and jeopardizing society, the party and government rescues him, and rescues his family; what is there for the family member to still not be convinced of? Should he not thank the party?*

> Manual for Chinese Communist Party cadres on homestays with
> Uyghur families in Kashgar Prefecture, 2018 (translated by author).

In China's Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, state narratives of counterterrorism and economic development have accompanied heightened regional and national securitization, including the detainment in "re-education camps" of over one million Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities. The Chinese state has utilised the rise in global Islamophobia to justify the surveillance, policing, detention, and colonization of these populations using the language of the Global War on Terror. Government homestay campaigns enlist over one million representatives of the Chinese state to enter Uyghur homes, act as "relatives", and surveil Uyghurs for demonstrations of extremism and subversion. Alongside homestay programmes, technological surveillance is at the fore of tactics the Chinese government uses to enact a sort of banal masked control in Uyghur homes and lives. Government officials acting as "brothers and sisters" as well as the spyware installed in smartphones seemingly reinforce norms of kinship and privacy while simultaneously performing violent transgressive control over the subjects those norms produce. Intimate technologies such as smartphones are essential sites of kinship maintenance for those confronting the "disappearance" of a relative. At the same time, intimate technologies are at the forefront of surveillance and thus

become sites of betrayal for their users. Such strategies perpetuate fantasies of the family and domestic sphere as private and separate from the state; likewise, affirming the existence of the private domain ontologically reinforces the state as a separate domain. Nonetheless, the coercion which accompanies state enactments of family upends the logics of family structure and privacy.

Scholars have compellingly demonstrated how technology such as mobile phones and computers maintains kinship structures and fosters new forms of kinship (Sheller and Urry 2003; Horst and Miller 2006; De Bruijn, Nyamnjoh, and Brinkman 2009; Bell and Kuipers 2018; Lipset 2013; Hobbis 2020), particularly in light of transnational migration (Horst and Taylor 2014) and in socially conservative public contexts (Costa 2016; Foster and Horst 2018; Nooshin 2018). Terms such as "affective technology" (Wardlow in Foster and Horst 2018; Lasén 2004; Silva 2012), "digital intimacies" (Costa and Menin 2016), and "family imaginary" (Robertson, Wilding, and Gifford 2016) demonstrate the ways in which scholars have sought to characterise technologies which mediate emotional experience and social relations. Others have investigated how such technologies enable surveillance, a technological affordance which is often experienced as invasive, transgressive, and even violent. Such surveillance can occur hyperlocally, as in the case of Senegalese transnational marriages, where communication technology creates the constant spectre of migrant Senegalese husbands' "virtual presence" for their non-migrant Senegalese wives, who frequently dread the suspicion and control such technologies enable (Hannaford 2014). Entire populations may experience transgressive surveillance through technology, as in state surveillance and resistance strategies in the Kurdish movement in Turkey (Çelik 2013) and when traversing digital body scanners at US and UK checkpoints (Amoore and Hall 2009).

In this paper, I contend that in Xinjiang, government surveillance strategically undermines Uyghurs' relationships to the intimate technologies they use to situate themselves in society and sustain kinship ties. Surveillance methods which utilise intimate technologies afford some degree of maintenance of social relations while also enabling their large-scale systematic subversion. I use the term "intimate technologies" to refer to tools and systems which are inextricably connected to the creation and curation of a personal self, and which afford the capacity to virtually enact and create intimacies. However, this affordance also imbues them with the ability to subvert and betray those intimacies, rendering their users susceptible to control and intimidation (what Kevin Haggerty and Richard Ericson [2000] term a "surveillant assemblage").

Intimate technologies include cell phones which maintain ties between Uyghurs in Xinjiang and in diaspora, yet also report users' "extremist" behaviour to state authorities. I also approach government homestay campaigns as a sort of intimate technology, arguing they are a systematic mimesis of often-mundane rituals of social relations and can also betray the intimacies that those rituals produce. Sharing meals and beds with government "relatives" monitoring for signs of subversion and extremism and facing the ever-looming spectre of disappearance (even on the basis of familial relation to an alleged extremist) destabilises Uyghur norms of family intimacy and kinship. Intimate technologies thus have the capability to simultaneously reify and transgress boundaries between public and domestic spheres.

Although the state may pervade everyday mundanities, a belief in its stratification from society (and spatial positionality "above" society) entrenches the perception of the state as a concrete body. Drawing on the work of scholars such as Katherine Verdery (2018), Achille Mbembe (2017), Timothy Mitchell (1999), Ann Laura Stoler (2010), and James Ferguson and Akhil Gupta (2002), I assert that surveillance of and through intimate technologies can obfuscate state and society, experienced as an invasive perversion of family norms; the state's apparent reach into the realm of the domestic renders the state a coherent, singular entity and maintaining its wide-reaching paternalistic dominance.

This exploration is grounded in the conviction that the project of state-making relies upon fixedness and partitioning of social roles to stratify the state and its subjects. John Comaroff (1987) writes that classification is a necessary condition of social existence, while in his concept of "discipline", Foucault notes that citizens gain recognition as political subjects through adhering to and replicating social processes which partition the individuals (as well as the mechanisms of production and administration) into distinct roles (Foucault 1980, in Mitchell 1999, 87). Although the state pervades everyday mundanities, such processes enable the state to appear a static, concrete entity "out there" and "on high" (Ferguson and Gupta 2002) or "statically 'regional' in character" (Sheller and Urry 2003). Mitchell (2006) finds that the production of individuals as isolated political subjects occurs via their regulation within an apparently overarching state structure; their regulation determines their legibility within a society managed by the state. For Mitchell (2006, 89), it is the particular practices of organizing bodies in time and space that creates the "metaphysical effect", the mirage of an apparatus singular and larger than the individuals who comprise it. At the level of the individual within society, then,

failure to be identified in roles which are state-sanctioned – roles that serve to reify the state as an entity in that they adhere to its logics and thus reinforce its power – incurs violent consequences.

Throughout this article, I seek to avoid reinscribing the state as a bounded entity, a singular actor "upon" society (i.e., "the state surveilled Uyghurs"). I am more concerned with how seemingly innocuous relations and rituals within the apparent realm of the domestic may at once sustain kinship while also creating the conditions for coercive systematic oppression. That everyday banalities such as conversation, music-making, and sharing food can be "two-faced" in Xinjiang – maintaining social relations while also betraying their participants by making them appear subversive to the state – renders those banalities potentially treacherous. In other words, I aim to demonstrate how the spectre of the state emerges in practices that are fundamental to kinship, even in those interactions which appear less obviously coercive. Through de-centring the state as a singular bounded agent, I hope to highlight how everyday exchanges and rituals can invoke the state as a phantom presence – as well as how transgressively invasive it can be to unexpectedly recognise the presence of the state within the home.

I have been closely following Chinese policy towards Xinjiang's Uyghurs since 2009, when I experienced first-hand the Chinese government's social media shutdown following ethnic violence between Uyghur and Han populations in Xinjiang. The news of ethnic clashes in Xinjiang as well as its censorship dismayed and fascinated me; as an American high school student studying abroad in Beijing at the time, I was shocked that a government could restrict entire social media platforms, seemingly silence an entire population, and monitor and control its citizens' ability to communicate with each other and the outside world. I remained intensely interested in Uyghur culture and politics in Xinjiang, and in 2014 I had the opportunity to study Uyghur traditional music at the Xinjiang Arts Academy in Urumqi, China, on a Thomas J. Watson Fellowship. The Uyghurs I met, studied alongside, and lived among shared their accounts of the many blatant and concealed forms of oppression and identity control they face in China. These included systematic discrimination rooted in the education system, limitations on their ability to move freely within the province, China, and internationally, and constant monitoring and routine brutality by the police. Even as a visitor, I felt the intimidation and paranoia – the military vehicles with mounted machine guns and armed police stationed behind grated barriers (so they would be able to fire without being attacked themselves) on street corners in the predominantly Uyghur neighbourhood in Urumqi where

I lived are images indelibly ingrained in my memory. Ultimately, my Uyghur music study proved very difficult to undertake, as limits on expression and congregation impeded the Uyghurs' ability to create and transmit art, music, and literature to each other; the barriers to entry for me, a Mandarin-speaking outsider with no Uyghur language skills visiting for just a few months, were even higher.

Since my time in Xinjiang, the political situation for Uyghurs and other Muslim ethnic minorities has become increasingly dire. While I, like many scholars of the region, have been unable to return to Xinjiang, I have been closely following the plight of the Uyghurs and writing on the official policies enacted by the Chinese government. Currently, my primary sources of information regarding my Uyghur friends and acquaintances as well as events in the region are the foreign scholars with whom I developed friendships during my time in Urumqi and their communication networks with Uyghurs outside of Xinjiang and China. To a lesser extent, I gained insight from Xinjiang-based missionaries as well as diasporic Uyghurs I have met abroad since my Xinjiang visit. While I do have direct experience in Xinjiang and conduct research in Mandarin and Turkish, I am limited by my lack of Uyghur language skills; thus, English and Mandarin-language scholars, advocates, and reporters mediate much of the material I draw on in this paper. I have also examined Mandarin language articles on Uyghur homestay campaigns from Chinese state media outlets and official Chinese government reports on state policies on Uyghurs in Xinjiang.

In the following sections, I first provide context for Chinese official rhetoric on ethnic minorities using the lens of internal Orientalism to demonstrate how assimilatory policies directed towards Uyghurs reinscribe their ethno-racialization and contribute to their systematic oppression. I then introduce how official discourse utilises narratives of counterterrorism and economic development to justify the disenfranchisement, coercion, and violence Uyghurs experience in Xinjiang. The following section outlines the roles and impacts of technology in surveillance in Xinjiang. Using the smartphone as a case study, I demonstrate how surveillance of intimate technologies instrumentalizes the ways in which the device serves as a tool of creating and sustaining social relations; I argue that such technologies' significant ability to foster intimacies despite geographic distance also imbues them with the ability to betray their users – a betrayal experienced as an invasion which reinscribes the seeming omnipotence of an ever-present state. I then introduce the "Becoming Family" campaigns as

a second instance of surveillance of intimate technologies. Discussing the ways in which state officials insert themselves as "relatives" into Uyghur homes while also monitoring their hosts for signs of subversion, I assert that this mimesis of kinship relations reinforces the notion of a separation between the domains of the state and the domestic; however, that these "relatives" surveil and can recommend the detention of their hosts obfuscates that apparent boundary. This reification and subsequent transgression of family dynamics perverts the social relations that underpin kinship ties, rendering practices of kinship unstable and subordinate to state sovereignty. In presenting these two case studies, I aim to illustrate how the surveillance of intimate technologies in Xinjiang perpetuates the fantasy of family as separate from the state in order to transgress the family sphere and ultimately amplify the power of the state.

Uyghurs and Chinese Government Policies on Minorities

Uyghurs (also written as "Uighurs"), one of the 56 ethnic groups officially recognised by the Chinese government, are a Muslim Turkic ethnic group related to other Central Asian ethnic groups such as Uzbeks and Kazakhs. In Xinjiang, the over 11 million Uyghurs make up around 40% of the region's population; a similar percentage (roughly 40%) of Xinjiang's population is Han Chinese, the ethnic majority which constitutes 92% of China's nearly 1.2 billion people (Toops 2016). Although in this paper I refer to the treatment of the Uyghurs in Xinjiang, their experiences frequently overlap with those of other Turkic and/or Muslim ethnic minorities in Xinjiang, including Uzbek, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, and Tatar populations in the region, to whom Chinese government policies on Uyghurs generally also extend.

In the People's Republic of China (PRC), official state discourse on ethnic minorities is assimilatory, promoting national unity and cohesion while deemphasizing distinctions between minority populations. In a speech delivered to the 19th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), President Xi Jinping repeatedly called to action "Chinese people of all ethnic groups":

> It will be an era for the Chinese people of all ethnic groups to work together and work hard to create a better life for themselves and ultimately achieve common prosperity for everyone. It will be an era for all of us, the sons and daughters of the Chinese nation, to strive with one heart to realise the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation (Xinhua 2017).

Additionally, a Chinese government report from 2017 entitled "Studying and Understanding the Essentials and Meaning of General Secretary Xi Jinping's Strategy for Governing Xinjiang" calls for heightened production and poverty alleviation so that "people of all ethnic groups will feel the care of the Party and the warmth of the big family that is the motherland" (Blanchette 2020). Such official rhetoric on ethnic minorities and the nation deliberately negates differences between ethnic groups. Indeed, over the last decade, rhetoric has shifted towards emphasizing an overarching "Chinese national identity" (*zhonghua minzu*) which supersedes separate (minority) ethnicities (*shaoshu minzu*).[1] Moreover, using the language of the family ("Chinese sons and daughters", "care of the Party", and "warmth of the big family that is the motherland") reifies the family as a visible state-sanctioned unit while also subordinating it to the state "family". Failure to observe state-sanctioned norms for creating family (as in the case of Uyghurs attempting to observe the Islamic wedding rite of nikah or expressing discontent with government-led promotion of Uyghur-Han marriage) subverts this hierarchy and thus becomes an act of treason ("illegal marriage" and "religious extremism") (Hoshur and Lipes 2020). The Chinese Dream promotes an ideal Chinese subject acquiescent in his or her non-differentiation and labour contributions and rewarded with economic and domestic stability.

Nonetheless, regulatory policies specifically directed towards ethnicities in China, particularly Uyghurs, affirm these populations' potential for difference; their ethno-racialization animates their imagined potential for subverting the ideal of a unified and assimilated nation of Chinese citizens. Edward Said's (1978) conceptualization of Orientalism asserts that the so-called West seeks to differentiate itself as ideologically and hegemonically dominant by animating the notion of an exotic, wild, and notably inferior Orient. Louisa Schein (1997) posits that the structures and ideology of Orientalism can also be duplicated within societies which are themselves orientalized by the West, a phenomenon

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[1] Following the rise of the Republic of China in 1911, its founder Chinese nationalist revolutionary Sun Yat-sen sought to unify its disparate ethnic groups into a single Han *zhonghua minzu* (Chinese ethnic group) (Attane and Courbage 2000; Ryono and Galway 2015). This national ethnic unification took inspiration from Japanese and Russian ethnic policies that sought to categorize all within their national boundaries as of one ethnic identity (Gladney 1992). The current official de-emphasis on distinctions between ethnicities in China has been termed second-generation *minzu* policy. See Leibold (2013, 2016), Elliott (2015), Tobin (2015), and Roche and Leibold (2020) for further discussion of the anthropological, sociological, and political debates that have underpinned this policy shift in recent years, as well as its implications.

she terms "internal Orientalism". Discussing the tendency of Chinese ruling elites to render ethnic minorities culturally consumable through promoting their feminised and exoticized cultural presentation, Schein (1997, 73) characterises the Chinese ruling class (primarily drawn from the Han ethnic majority) as the "'Orientalist' agent of dominant representation" of the nation's ethnic minorities. The ethnic dress, songs, and dances of ethnic minorities as presented in state-sanctioned programming (including televised cultural events, advertisements, and touristic marketing) renders those assigned to these groups as "primitive" and "anti-modern" in the national imaginary. Casting the dominant majority Chinese (Han) Self in relief to this orientalized characterization is central to the Chinese nation-state's project of national development and modernization (Gladney 1994).[2] Discourses of internal Orientalism domestically reproduce the hegemonic structures that elevate certain groups of society as normative and dominate those groups who deviate, deeming them less advanced due to their supposedly bizarre and exotic customs (Dirlik 1996). While the Chinese government vehemently asserts the national economic and security benefits of ethnic unity (*minzu tuanjie*), the minoritization of populations in China calls upon a "logic of enclosure" to divide and hierarchize its population; specifically, it uses ethno-racialization "to identify and define population groups in a way that makes each of them carriers of differentiated and more or less shifting risk" (Mbembe 2017, 35). In China, this ethno-racialization occurs between non-white ethnic groups and is premised not on legacies of slavery, but rather on Chinese internal colonization and global discourses of Islamophobia.

This is not to say that ethnic minorities are invisible in China; however, their state-sanctioned visibility frequently confines them to exoticized, feminized, and domesticized modes of representation. One of the most visible state-sanctioned performances of ethnic difference occurs on the annual New Year's Gala, an internationally broadcast four-hour national television special featuring songs, dances, skits, and speeches. Tuning into the special is a ritual for many Chinese in China and abroad, and in 2018 the special drew an audience of around 800 million (Gladney 1994, 95; Chutel 2018). Many of these performances feature

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[2] Schein (1997) describes internal Orientalism as a bidirectional process, discussing the ways in which members of the Miao ethnic minority population participate in their own orientalization as a way to exercise control over their own commodification and curation of their cultural traditions. By contrast, it is important to recognize that in the current oppressive conditions in Xinjiang, Uyghurs are unable to "constitute a distinguishable voice" to control their cultural representation in China (Schein 1197, 91–92).

heavily costumed representations of China's designated ethnic minority populations (frequently beautiful and exotic young women) singing and dancing.[3]

Writing about the presentation of Han and ethnic minority dance in the earliest years of the People's Republic, Emily Wilcox has called for scholarship on Chinese ethnic groups to look "beyond internal Orientalism", arguing that minority dance practices did not present minorities as erotic, exotic, or primitive but rather served to support official efforts towards promoting state multiculturalism and an egalitarian society (Wilcox 2016). Wilcox asserts that the treatment and reception of minority dance from 1949– to1954 demonstrates the high status awarded to minority culture and how China forged a national identity composed of many internal ethnic groups.

Looking "beyond internal Orientalism" in the current moment, however, obfuscates how colonialist attitudes animate Chinese government policies and forcibly circumscribe Uyghur identity-making practices through the intimidation and detention of their culture bearers. In addition to the detainments and imprisonments of Uyghur pop musicians and cultural intellectuals, Elise Anderson (2020) discusses the disappearance of Uyghur performing arts events and the "civil society" they enabled by creating space for Uyghur linguistic and cultural expression. She notes that well-known Uyghur performers have released songs in Mandarin praising Xi Jinping, the CCP, and China, and that "the more 'Western-style' and modern a singer is, the safer they seem to be" (Anderson 2020). The ongoing eradication of Uyghur arts spaces and detention and imprisonment of Uyghur arts practitioners starkly contrasts with the celebration of multiculturalism and promotion of equality and collaboration Wilcox observes in early ethnic minority dance practice in the PRC. Moreover, Dru Gladney (1994, 93) notes that Han Chinese objectification of ethnic minorities parallels "the valorization of gender and political hierarchies in China" and serves to de-ethnicize and empower the Han majority. As Amy Anderson and Darren Byler (2019) have compelling demonstrated, in recent years, Chinese

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[3] Internal colonialist tendencies in China may be seen to extend beyond the state's efforts to modernize and control its own domestic "frontier regions" to regions and populations abroad, where it has undertaken substantial investments in development. For instance, African nations in 2019 received $2.7 billion USD in foreign direct investment from China, and from 2000– to 2019 committed to $153 billion USD in loan agreements with Chinese financiers (Chinese Africa Research Initiative). The 2018 New Year's television special broadcast drew international criticism for featuring a Chinese actress in blackface with artificially large buttocks playing the role of an African praising China, as well as a black actor playing the role of a monkey (Chutel 2018).

official policy has shifted from exhibiting exoticized Uyghurs for public Han consumption to coercing them to deny their ethnic difference and mimetically enact rituals of mainstream Han life (a process they liken to metaphorically "eating Hanness").

Uyghurs thus find themselves caught between the rhetoric of pan-ethnic unity and the reality of political oppression (in the name of assimilation) which attempts to erase but effectively reinscribes Uyghur difference. State policies which directly target Uyghur self-presentation, language use, mobility, religious expression, and cultural practices thus contribute to Uyghurs' ethno-racialization. This ethno-racialization also fuels systematic discrimination by utilizing reductive descriptions that represent Uyghurs as primitive, traditional, dangerous Others whom the (Han) Chinese public must subdue and rehabilitate to fully realize the dream of Chinese modernity and development. As such, Uyghur ethno-racialization contributes to the central government's larger political agenda to quell forces that would compete with national ideology as a uniting factor, such as individuated ethnic minority cultural identities and religion in the political realm. Tracing legacies of colonization by Western imperial powers as well as the Japanese Empire during its "century of humiliation" (Callahan 2004 in Kaul 2020), China nurses what Nitasha Kaul (2020) terms its "moral wound". She identifies the "postcolonial error" of presuming that having been colonized renders non-Western nations too virtuous to be colonizers. She asserts that countries like China seek to exercise the same economic and political dominance they once experienced at the hands of their colonizers while also believing themselves "immune to the possibility of playing the role of colonizer in [their] own peripheries" (Kaul 2020), a phenomenon which, in the case of Xinjiang and Tibet, Dibyesh Anand (2019) deems "colonization with Chinese characteristics". Furthermore, Ann Marie Leshkowich and Carla Jones (2003, 284–85) discuss the internal encounter with the Oriental in China, writing that "the result is a sanitized encounter with an imagined Asian 'other' that serves the interests of multinational capital by both generating profit and erasing, subduing, or containing alternative, potentially more threatening, aspects of cultural and racial difference". Internal Orientalism of Uyghurs in China therefore no longer relies upon commodifying their difference for Han consumption (Anderson and Byler 2019); instead, it undergirds policies which deprive them of their autonomy. The Chinese government exploits this difference to render Uyghurs dangerous, justifying their mass detention and deriving profit from the labour they perform in re-education facilities.

Representing Uyghurs as Different and Dangerous

While Xinjiang is presently under Chinese administration, conflicts over control of regional hegemony span centuries. In 1955, following the 1949 establishment of the PRC, the CCP government established the geopolitical area today known as Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. Gladney (1998, 11) writes that the Chinese state's official recognition of a Uyghur nationality in 1954 (among 55 others currently recognized in China) cemented their minoritization, particularly as the state implemented a "practice of integration through [Han] immigration" beginning in the 1950s. The dilution of the Uyghur population has continued as Beijing has subsidized Han migration to Xinjiang (contra Chinese policies that severely limit Uyghurs' ability to move freely within and outside the region and country); in 2018, Han Chinese constituted 39.8% of Xinjiang's population (as compared to 6.7% in 1949) (Zenz 2020). The Belt and Road Initiative, Chinese national campaigns of infrastructure development and investment initiatives spanning East Asia and Europe, have fuelled increased policing of Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities in Xinjiang. Such projects have included the construction of special economic zones and railways, energy pipelines, highways, and streamlined border crossings beginning in 2014 (Steenberg and Rippa 2019). Byler (2018a, 194–195) notes the disillusionment of Uyghurs who migrated to Xinjiang cities to escape increasing forms of poverty in rural areas; these migrants discovered that urban ethno-racial discrimination inhibited their ability to find gainful employment (as Han settlers owned and staffed most private companies) and benefit from economic development enriching Han residents in the region.

State-orchestrated Han migration and assimilationist strategizing combined with uneven development favouring Hans have fuelled ethnic tensions that have been erupting in the form of violence and "terrorist incidents" since the late 1990s (Ryono and Galway 2015; Roberts 2020). In the government crackdown after a riot in the town of Ghulja, one in every ten men from the area disappeared due to officially unacknowledged arrests and executions (Roberts 2020). In September 2015, at least 50 people (mostly Han) were killed in an attack at Xinjiang coal mine attributed to "knife-wielding separatists", while in June of that year at least 18 were killed when Uyghurs attacked a traffic checkpoint with knives and bombs in Kashgar (Roberts 2018). The year prior saw a mass knife attack at the Kunming city train station in Yunnan Province, in which 29 people died and at least 130 were wounded; the event was officially

blamed on Uyghur separatists from Xinjiang and referred to as "China's 9/11" (Jacobs and Buckley 2014).

Since the September 11 attacks in the US, China has co-opted the language of the "War on Terror" to describe its management of Uyghur citizens. Narratives about securitization are fundamental to official rhetoric and state policies on Xinjiang (Goodman 2017; Harris 2018; Roberts 2020). Despite the attack, Uyghur exiles and activists contend that the Chinese state "never presented convincing evidence of the existence of a cohesive militant group fighting the government, and that much of the unrest can be traced back to frustration at controls over the culture and religion of the Uighur people who live in Xinjiang" (Goodman 2017; Harris 2018). Nonetheless, discourses of global Islamophobia gave valence to Chinese state justifications for marginalizing its Uyghur populations (Brophy 2019). The conflict in Syria and Chinese Uyghurs' participation in ISIS (up to 5,000 Uyghurs, according to the Syrian ambassador to China in May 2017) reinforced Chinese state discourse about the importance of domestic counterterrorism efforts, particularly the need for state intervention to stave rising separatism and religious extremism (Goodman 2017). Dana Carver Boehm (2009, 61) notes that assimilationism in China has paradoxically "strengthened ethnic identity and united traditionally adversarial groups" and that "China's efforts to squelch religious identity have added a religious character to the insurrection".

A vision of Uyghurs as strictly disciplined subjects of the Chinese state has emerged from various policies enacted over the last five years. Indeed, state-circulated discourses about repressive chauvinist fathers, impoverished backwards villagers, and fundamentalist jihadists, combined with systematic disenfranchisement and policing of Uyghur bodies, creates the conditions for realizing subversive alternatives to the ideal Chinese subject. Following counterterrorism legislation passed in 2015, the Chinese government introduced laws banning virtually all Islamic practices including beards, veils, certain Islamic names, marrying using religious but not legal procedures; these laws also prohibited having too many children, an offense punishable by forced abortion (Roberts 2020; Smith Finley 2020; Zenz 2020).[4] Bilingual language policies have given way to bans on Uyghur language instruction and materials in the classroom at all education levels (Qiao Long and Yang Fan 2017; Dwyer 2005).

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[4] The original text of the law passed in 2015 is available in Chinese at http://www.npc.gov.cn/zgrdw/npc/xinwen/2018-06/12/content_2055871.htm and is available in English translation at https://www.chinalawtranslate.com/en/counter-terrorism-law-2015/.

An anonymous interlocutor told me in 2018 that at the Xinjiang Arts Institute in Urumqi, the leading conservatory for Uyghur traditional arts and music (and where my interlocutor and I both studied Uyghur language and music in 2014), vocal classes teaching *muqam* (a form of Uyghur music featuring narrative songs) are now taught by Uyghur teachers to Uyghur students in Mandarin, and surveillance cameras have been installed in the classrooms to ensure compliance. Jian Ge (2016) notes that "the much greater symbolic capital that the 'legitimate language' Mandarin Chinese carries enables its native speakers to have easier access than the native Turkic speakers to jobs in the labour market", echoing sentiments I heard from Uyghur interlocutors in 2014 that they were assumed to be less linguistically competent than their Han counterparts and suffered hiring discrimination. Wenfang Tang (2015) also points out that while Western observers cite economic inequalities between the Han and other ethnic minority populations, "such inequality and the subsequent ethnic tension are a result of China's state-sponsored affirmative action programs [benefitting Han citizens], and particularly the failure of its language policy". Economic equality and prosperity are thus touted as rewards for linguistic performances in the workplace, the school, and as I will discuss later, in the family.

Perhaps the most contentious state policy on Uyghurs has been their mass detention in facilities whose existence was initially denied by the Chinese government, and then officially acknowledged as "vocational training centres". Uyghurs and foreign observers have referred to these as "concentration camps", sites of "mass incarceration", "internment camps", and "re-education centres" (U.S. Congress 2018). Chinese state media's reference to these facilities as vocational training centres speaks to a "civilizing process" of the incarcerated which disqualifies prisoners' own accounts of their treatment and creates "physical and administrative distance between public and prisoners that ... meant that the latter came to be through of as essentially 'different'" (Pratt 2011, 227–228). Substantial (albeit officially unconfirmed) numbers of Uyghurs have been sent to these facilities, with estimates ranging from 500,000 to "millions" (Human Rights Watch 2021); an estimated 15.4% of the Turkic and Hui minority populations (including Uyghurs), or roughly 1.8 million people, have experienced detention in Xinjiang (Zenz 2019). Gene Bunin (2019) notes that although re-education centres have received the greatest attention from international media outlets, policing of Uyghurs (and other Turkic ethnic minorities) extends beyond the scope of these mass detention camps; he emphasizes that local police, forced labour facilities, hospitals, prisons, community correction centres,

orphanages, and death itself render Xinjiang the "world's largest prison". Bunin (2018), a scholar formerly based in Xinjiang who created an online platform (Shahit.biz) to record volunteer testimonies of Uyghurs and other ethnic minority people who have been disappeared, writes, "Witness reports of life inside the camps and detention centres have told not only of unhealthy living conditions, but also of regular violence, torture and brainwashing" (Bunin 2018). Official and unofficial sources also report that detainees learn Mandarin, disavow religion, and memorize and recite slogans declaring loyalty to China and the Chinese Communist Party (Harris 2018). Bunin (2018) discusses the manner in which Uyghurs obscure their discussions of disappearances:

> When talking about the situation in Xinjiang, it is standard to use euphemisms. The most common by far is the word *yoq*, which means "gone" or "not around". "Do you get what I'm saying?" a friend asked me once, as I tried to figure out what had happened to a person he was telling me about. "That guy is *yoq*. He's got another home now". The phrase *adem yoq* ("everybody's gone") is the one I've heard the most this past year. It has been used to describe the absence of staff, clients and people in general. When referring to people who have been forced to return to their hometowns (for hometown arrest, camp or worse), it is typical to say that they "went back home". The concentration camps are not referred to as "concentration camps", naturally. Instead, the people there are said to be occupied with "studying" (*oqushta/öginishte*) or "education" (*terbiyileshte*), or sometimes may be said to be "at school" (*mektepte*).

The use of the phrase *adem yoq* to describe the situation in Xinjiang (alternatively translated as "there are no people") linguistically removes the agent of a person's disappearance. Describing the situation as more of an organic condition than a causal event via non-acknowledgement of any actor reveals fear of the consequences of attribution. Green (1994, 227) notes that "Fear thrives on ambiguities ... The spectacle of torture and death and of massacres and disappearances in the recent past have become more deeply inscribed in individual bodies and the collective imagination through a constant sense of threat ... Fear, the arbiter of power – invisible, indeterminate, and silent". The relatively safer solution of *adem yoq*, represents an internalized process of nominalization and passivization which avoids confronting the physical act of abduction and quells the impulse to inculpate any other besides the self. Additionally, the use of language of the everyday and domestic to hint

at a person's true whereabouts masks and normalizes state oppression, yet also implies the state's transgressions into domains imagined as boundaried. Byler's (2018a, 200) discussion of a Uyghur politics of refusal perhaps offers a more optimistic reading of "*adem yoq*", an epistemic disobedience in which "tactics of refusal are grounded in alternative epistemologies that exist prior to the knowledge system of the state". In this case, failure to attribute Uyghur disappearances to the state creates the conditions to enact a mode of Uyghur belonging and recognition, an imagination of Uyghur sociality that also maintains plausible deniability of the threat of state violence. This gives an additional valence to Haggerty and Ericson's (2000) conceptualization of the "disappearance of disappearance"; beyond technological surveillance rendering anonymity impossible, fear of retribution for acknowledging the coercive conditions of such surveillance leads Uyghurs to discursively disacknowledge ("disappear") the disappearances they confront.

Surveillance of Intimate Technologies and the State

The policing of Uyghur bodies in Xinjiang relies heavily on artificial intelligence and surveillance technologies; investment in surveillance technology in the region, including biometric data collection, CCTV cameras, and "information transmission, software and information technology", totalled 13.6 billion RMB (2.03 billion USD) in 2016 and was scheduled to reach 24 billion RMB (3.58 billion USD) in 2017 (U.S. Congress 2018). Such technologies include hand-held scanners that extract and analyse contacts, photos, videos, social media posts, and email from smartphones (Hoja 2017). Although the Chinese government already required the collection of bio-data (including blood samples and a 3D image of themselves) from Uyghurs applying for passports, under a Xinjiang-wide initiative in 2017 all of the region's residents between ages 12 and 65 were required to submit to physical collection of DNA samples, fingerprints, iris scans, and blood samples (Human Rights Watch 2017). Such efforts parallel the "digital dissection" Louise Amoore and Alexandra Hall (2009) assert that bodies undergo at body scanner checkpoints at US and UK borders. They emphasize "the violent tendencies of these technologies, which emerge from the processes of abstraction and disintegration, and the effacement of personhood" and similarly resemble "previous attempts to locate deviance in bodies" (Amoore and Hall 2009, 449). Efforts to immobilize Uyghurs greatly expanded in 2017, as that year a mandate enacted in 2016 requiring Uyghurs in

Xinjiang to turn in their passports to local authorities was extended to include Uyghurs across China (Wong 2016; Hoja 2017). Additionally, video cameras with facial recognition software track residents' movements, knives are chained and labelled with serial codes registered to their owners, vehicles are equipped with GPS trackers, and frequent checkpoints scan Uyghur residents' irises and phones (Goodman 2017; Harris 2018).

In Xinjiang, smartphones are an essential technology used for processes of location, including literal location of missing relatives, as well as situation of the self through contact lists, Uyghur language social media groups, religious texts, photos of oneself with friends and family – information that affirms one's relations to others within a society. Harris and Isa (2018) have discussed the ways in which Uyghur WhatsApp conversations about faith, politics, and identity contribute to Uyghur self-fashioning. In this context, the smartphone is a device that affirms one's own processes of identification with kinship groups, and enables the maintenance of kinship ties across great temporal-spatial distances; on the other, in this context of biometric data collection, facial recognition software, and spyware, imbuing a smartphone with personal data also transforms one's geospatial, physiological, and psychic location in an kinship group into quantifiable evidence of transgression, as these locations lie beyond the space demarcated by the state for its society.

While the smartphone may be an object inalienable from daily life in Xinjiang, it is also an object of betrayal, an intimate technology whose mediation of social relations enables the state to weaponize their articulations. Mandatory spyware installed on these devices reports to authorities Uyghurs' contact with foreigners (including Uyghur relatives just over the border in Kazakhstan, for instance) and the harbouring of supposedly subversive and extremist materials (including prayers and quotations from the Koran and seemingly anti-Chinese Communist Party statements). The brand and operating system of a smartphone also determine the extent to which it can be penetrated by software and devices that seek out unauthorized content. Apple iPhones made for the international, non-Chinese market (although notably still made in China) are equipped with an operating system that protects the user's data from such sweeps, while iPhones designed for the Chinese market and other brands of smartphone that run Android operating systems are highly susceptible to such infiltration (Byler 2020). A woman from the Kazakh ethnic minority in Xinjiang whose relatives had been taken to re-education camps recalled how her iPhone had protected her from being detained herself: "If it was a Huawei phone, they could have

found things … [The police] asked me, 'Why are you using this phone?' They said I should be patriotic and get a Chinese phone" (Byler 2020).

With more over one million Uyghur people detained in facilities that those who have been able to leave have termed "concentration camps", friends and family members of the detained rely on electronic communication devices to learn about their whereabouts and condition. Ironically, the discovery of communication with those outside China via police checks and mandatorily installed spyware is grounds for detention in such facilities. Moreover, as the Chinese state heightened smartphone surveillance, many Uyghurs opted to either solely use a non-smartphone or to strategically switch between using a smartphone and non-smartphone to thwart monitoring of their communications and data; subsequently, the current normative expectation that a person engages in social relations using a smartphone rendered not carrying a smartphone worthy of suspicion (Byler 2020; Anonymous 2021).

When technology serves as both the means for maintaining relationships as well as the means by which those relationships are betrayed, how are we to regard surveillance in the realm of the technological? Reflecting on her fieldwork experiences in Romania in the 1970s, Katherine Verdery (2018, 293) draws a contrast between the interpersonal surveillance conducted by the Securitate (the Romanian state security force) and high-tech surveillance. She notes how the former is labour-intensive and reliant on instrumentalizing human relationships in contrast to high-tech surveillance, which "does not rely on undermining people's social relationships to control them but instead simply maps those relationships to discern potentially treacherous patterns" (ibid., 293). Indeed, many aspects of high-tech surveillance rely on reducing humans to aggregated data points locating them both geospatially and in a network of social relations; in more democratic contexts, users may imbue personal technology with this information about themselves, while in the absence of human and civil rights protections (as in Xinjiang) a government may obtain personal data through systematic and coercive means.

Verdery (2018, 7) asserts that organizations such as the Securitate seek out an underlying reality of individuals based on both post-modernist conceptions which posit the self as unstable as well as modernist assumptions that initial appearances are unreliable. She finds that the surveillance state enacts control through partitioning individuals into unified roles; whether in 1970s Romania or today's Xinjiang, there is a contrast drawn between the governed and a government which surveils that society's members. It follows that delimiting the

multiple roles individuals may have in both "society" and the "state" is of paramount importance in surveillance. By contrast, Verdery calls attention to the multiple identities (researcher, spy, married woman, single woman, Romanian, foreigner, etc.) constructed for her as those around her surreptitiously observed and interpreted her appearance, actions, and discourse. One finds similar entanglements in identities in Xinjiang that complicate one's demarcation as either part of society or the state, governed or part of government, or part of the dominant or minority group, whether in the case of the Uyghur policeman who joined the force in an attempt to prevent detention, or that of the Han Chinese Uyghur rights activist detained for voicing opinions against the mass incarceration of millions of Uyghurs. Verdery (2018, 292) comments that identities ("targets and spies") are not people, but "functions", highlighting their mutability and multiplicity, and importantly, their simultaneous existence in one individual. This multiplicity resonates with Ferguson and Gupta's (2002, 991–992) assertion that the state and society are not separable, but rather that the state is comprised of "bundles of social practices"; categorizing people into separate identities is a technology of governance that produces the apparent autonomy of the state (Mitchell 1991, 84). Recognition of the numerous fragmentary identities any one individual has in relation to countless others is a move towards "unmasking", revealing the state as a performance that obscures its own abstraction (Verdery 2018, 284).

Just as people may take on multiple identities or functions in relation to others, in Xinjiang, surveillance of intimate technologies destabilizes the notion that these technologies are singular in their functions. Moreover, surveillance methods which utilize intimate technologies afford some degree of maintenance of social relations while also enabling their large-scale systematic subversion. While Verdery (2018, 293) has argued that high-tech surveillance is simply a tool of mapping and does not instrumentalize personal relationships in the same way as other means of surveillance (as mentioned above), I contend that instrumentalizing the information that one uses to locate and affirm oneself in kinship relations is an essential aspect of high-tech surveillance in China. Indeed, Verdery's characterization overlooks the ways in which interpersonal and high-tech methods may go hand in hand to strategically undermine people's relationships to the intimate technologies they use to situate themselves and uphold ties of kinship across time and space.

While the smartphone itself may not substitute for the physical presence of one's relatives and friends, as an intimate technology, it appears to mimetically

protect the kinship rituals which maintain its user's sense of belonging and connection; however, in doing so, it also creates new vulnerabilities for its user and thus sabotages demonstrations of one's loyalty to the nation. In this way, the smartphone mimics the multiple functions of an individual: the act of communication with a daughter (which enables one's own recognition as a mother) may simultaneously create the conditions for the daughter to become an unwitting informant whose act of recognition of the mother destabilizes the social order which makes the relationship meaningful. Put differently, smartphone surveillance instrumentalizes the process whereby a Uyghur's recognition of a relative as kin animates the kinship relationship, but also simultaneously renders both visible as potentially subversive to the state (and thus also subversive to the kinship relationship itself).

Just as an individual can take on multiple identities through various social relations, so too can surveillance be variously interpreted as targeting an oppressed population or protecting the populace. The multiple functions of the smartphone (its simultaneous capacities to affirm and betray social ties) recall Achille Mbembe's (2017, 23–24) discussion of surveillance and the security state given the rise of greater technological capabilities. He writes that "the citizen is redefined as both the subject and the beneficiary of surveillance, which now privileges the transcription of biological, genetic, and behavioural characteristics through digital imprints". Foreign news reports on surveillance in Xinjiang decry a security state which not only invades but destroys personal privacy; reports from China extol the work of the government in protecting its citizens from extremism (embodied in portrayals of uneducated, rural, religious, traditional, Muslim Uyghurs) and bringing them into a modern age of economic prosperity.

Moreover, in the context of Xinjiang, the overtness of high-tech surveillance simultaneously enhances the apparent strength of the state over society; however, its pervasiveness within the banality of communication practices shines a light on the "infinitesimal mechanisms" that create the spectre of the state (Mitchell 2006, 89). The "state" emerges not just in moments of overt regulation, bureaucracy, and boundary-making, but notably also in how Uyghurs experience "double consciousness" as the threat of physical displacement and violence coerces them to constantly evaluate themselves both from the perspective of minority position as well as from the perspective of the dominant power (Anderson and Byler 2019). Daily rituals and interactions in which Uyghurs must make choices about how they consume, self-present, and communicate become potent sites of experiencing the sensation of a phantom state alongside

more overt instances in which the "state" appears to be invasively entering from the outside. Here I am reminded of the Uyghurs who wished to retain religious knowledge stored on phones but feared retribution for its discovery, and so hung bags of SD cards in trees in the hopes that they could one day reclaim them (Byler 2019). "As a result, the objects of surveillance become daily life, the space of relationships, communication (notably through electronic technologies), and transactions" (Mbembe 2017, 23). Reflecting the information individuals invest in their personal technology, smartphones sustain feelings of connection and identity in spite of geospatial distance; at the same time, the self-affirming information they contain is strategically used to confirm categories of difference and enact psychic and physical violence on those outside the desired "society" of the "state".

"Becoming Family" in Xinjiang

Since 2014, the Chinese government has enacted policies to mobilize over a million Chinese civilians to conduct homestays with Uyghur and other Muslim minority families (Byler 2018b). There have been three waves of long-term homestay campaigns. The first wave of 200,000 CCP members occupying homes in Uyghur villages came in 2014 as part of the campaign "Visit the People, Benefit the People, and Bring Together the Hearts of the People".[5] In 2016, as part of a campaign called "United as One Family",[6] 110,000 civil servants (officially referred to as "relatives") occupied homes of Uyghurs whose family members had been sentenced to prison or killed by police (sometimes for durations of one year or longer). This campaign was extended in 2017 as the "Becoming Family" campaign, with over 1.1 million civilians being dispatched to conduct week-long homestays in Uyghur homes; these visits were frequently paid to the extended families of Uyghurs who had been sent to re-education detention camps (Byler 2018b; Yang and Aldak 2018), and highly mediatized on state news outlets.

Uyghur families are expected to consent to hosting the government "relatives", who may variously see their work as a patriotic duty to "civilize" their hosts or as a tedious obligation otherwise incentivized with the promise of promotions upon completion of their assignments (Byler 2018b). "Relatives" are

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5 In Mandarin, "访民情、惠民生、聚民心" (*fang minqing, hui min sheng, ju minxin*).

6 In Mandarin, "结对认亲" (*jiedui renqin).*

instructed to search for materials that signal disallegiance to the state, recording infractions and recommending detainment for those who commit them. Evidence of religious or extremist affiliations can take the form of a Uyghur questioning the origin of meat offered by a "relative" to determine whether it is halal, refusing to drink alcohol or smoke, possession of religious texts, and having foreign social media platforms or contacts in one's communication devices (Byler 2018b). In such situations, as Costa (2016, 79) notes, "It matters less what people really do, but more what people are seen to be doing". Punishments for these disloyalties to the Chinese state are not limited to their perpetrators, as detainment of those who have been found guilty of some crime frequently extends to the relatives of those who have demonstrated disloyalty; furthermore, the threat of disappearance of one's family members in Xinjiang looms over Uyghurs living abroad who do not wish to return or testify to state oppression of Uyghurs.

Nonetheless, Chinese government representatives conducting homestays with Uyghurs does not simply conflate the public and private, but rather reinforces that distinction while simultaneously transgressing the boundary. Homestay campaigns in which civil servants and civilians occupy Uyghur households with the explicit purpose of acting as "relatives" and monitoring them for misbehaviour perpetuates the notion of stratified spaces of the domestic and the state. Mitchell (2006, 88–89) notes that treating the household as an element internal to population effectively enables both the process of acquiring information and the creation of a boundary between state and society. The homestay is therefore experienced as a government official's coercive invasion into a private sphere of family life. At the same time, the obligation that both host and guest regard one another through speech and ritual as "relatives" renders these boundaries unstable and produces the conditions for their obfuscation. Reporting by Chinese state media makes clear delineations of domestic activities; articles and photographs illustrating "relatives" making food and sleeping alongside Uyghurs recall Levi-Strauss' (1969, 59) observation that strangers forced to dine together creates a "tension between the norm of privacy and a fact of community". In drawing a line between the state and the home, the Chinese government perpetuates the myth of the domestic as apolitical, thus asserting what Stoler (2010, 173) terms "a kinder, gentler colonialism" (Butler 2002). The explicit knowledge that these "relatives" are surveilling the families into which they have inserted themselves, however, indicates a purposeful perversion of family dynamics; indeed, many Uyghur parents bemoaned how the presence of government "relatives" undermined their authority in their own homes (Byler

2018). By sending party members deemed kin into Uyghur homes to act out fantasies of family life and identify disloyal elements for punishment, the power of the state is enacted through destabilizing any power that may be vested in the family, subordinating family structure to state sovereignty.[7]

Beyond material and ritual signifiers in the boundaried domestic realm that betray Uyghurs "true" loyalties, "relatives" observe whether children use Mandarin in the home and question children about the private behaviour of their family members to reveal whether the family's devotion to the state is genuine or "two-faced", reifying the idea of children as malleable innocents (Anonymous 2018; Byler 2018b). Uyghurs residing in Xinjiang have instructed their own children living outside China not to contact them lest authorities discover evidence of foreign contact (Byler 2018b). Many Uyghurs who reside outside Xinjiang find themselves facing an impossible choice: to remain abroad and avoid certain detainment may likely entail detention and harm to their kin in Xinjiang, while to return would bring that fate upon themselves (Anonymous 2018; Byler 2018b). Others with permanent citizenship outside Xinjiang face similar retribution for reporting on disappearances and abuses of Uyghurs in Xinjiang (Goodman 2017). Performing kinship ties thus not only becomes an arduous task, but also a liability for subjecthood and survival within China. Family is thus made fragile. That one's own kin can render one's freedoms as a political subject vulnerable casts each potential practice of kinship a potential betrayal.

A feature article from a Chinese state media outlet showcasing the success of re-education initiatives which place Uyghur children in state-run boarding schools vividly conveys the transgression of a state-demarcated boundary between the political and the domestic (Yue Hongbin and Cao Kun, 2018). The story centres on Ayzola, a Uyghur girl who is sent away from her rural village in Xinjiang to study in Urumqi, the provincial capital, and is paired with Communist Party cadre Liu Chenxiao. (From the article, it is not possible to confirm whether Ayzola's family voluntarily sent her to Urumqi, or, as with many Uyghur children in Xinjiang, state authorities removed her from her family and placed her in a state boarding school for "child welfare".) The

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[7] While in this investigation I am primarily concerned with the ways in which government-led homestays transgress the apparent boundaries of private family life and subvert kinship ties to oppressive effect, it is important to note that the dynamics of kinship relations and exchanges in Uyghur society in relation to Han society also undermine the success of efforts to foster inter-ethnic unity. This exploration is beyond the scope of the current article; however, I recommend the interested reader consult the writings of Byler (2018a), Steenberg (2021 & 2014), Steenberg and Rippa (2019), Tynen (2019), Grose (2020 & 2019), and Smith Finley (2013) for closer consideration of these topics.

article praises Liu for caring for Ayzola as her own daughter: she buys her shoes, comes to parent-teacher meetings as her "mother", takes her on outings with her own biological daughter, and invites Ayzola's biological family to come visit their daughter in Urumqi. Moreover, in the article Ayzola refers to Liu and her husband as "mother" and "father", commenting that when Liu invited Ayzola's biological family to visit Urumqi for Chinese New Year, she had two sets of parents around her and was very happy (Yue Hongbin and Cao Kun 2018). Towards the end of the article, the author references a letter written in Mandarin from Ayzola to her biological parents:

信中写道：爸爸，妈妈，我在学校一切都很好，请你们放心。刘妈妈经常来看望我，对我非常好。我现在还有了一个新名字，叫'杨心琪'。这是刘妈妈给我起的名字，琪的意思是美玉，寓意美好。我会努力学习，不辜负两位爸爸妈妈的期望。

She writes in the letter: Dad, Mom, everything at school is going really well, please rest easy. Mother Liu often comes to visit me, and she is very good to me. I now have a new name, "Yang Xinqi". This is the name Mother Liu gave me, qi means jade, and the implied meaning is very beautiful. I will work hard to study, and to not disappoint the hopes of my two fathers and mothers. (Translated by author.)

Ayzola represents the ideal Uyghur subject – celebratory of her new Han name and identity, celebratory of the most iconic holiday in China, and celebratory of the parentage of the Chinese state. She pledges commitment to working hard and benefits through gaining material and psychic stability. While she remains in touch with her Uyghur family, her testimony in absentia is instructional for them, a signifier of a Uyghur's greatest possible success and the omnipotence of the state in establishing its subjects' hierarchy of loyalties. This enshrinement of Ayzola reveals the Chinese state's fear of kinship originating outside its domain; it further underscores that Uyghur family structures pose challenges to state regulation and subordination of the domestic sphere it has demarcated. "Becoming Family" campaigns' mimesis of family relations tyrannizes Uyghurs' performance of them. Just as surveillance of smartphones endangers the relationships these intimate technologies sustain, homestays and re-education initiatives which imitate family dynamics instrumentalize the often-banal rituals that underpin the maintenance of kinship, ultimately destroying the intimate functionality of those rituals to the relationships they are intended to support.

Figure 1. Original caption: 阿依佐拉和'刘妈妈'的合影 ("A picture of Ayzola and Mother Liu"). Source: Tianshan Wang (Yue Hongbin and Cao Kun 2018).

Figure 2. Liu (wearing a traditional Uyghur hat and scarf) and Ayzola's biological father. Original caption: 刘春晓和阿依佐拉的父亲吾拉依木的合照 ("A photo of Liu Chenxiao and Ayzola's father Urayim"). Source: Tianshan Wang (Yue Hongbin and Cao Kun 2018).

Conclusion

In Xinjiang, ethno-racialization of Uyghur and ethnic minority populations manifests as threatened and actual physical violence enacted against supposedly subversive individuals. At the same time, surveillance strategies which both produce and transgress family dynamics reify but also obfuscate divisions between state and society as well as public and private domains. These strategies of banal and masked control reinforce norms of kinship and privacy while simultaneously enacting control over the subjects whom those norms transgress. Smartphone surveillance and state-led homestay campaigns with Uyghur families perpetuate fantasies of a private, removed, family space in contrast with a concrete state entity, which appears to invade this sphere and undermine these relations. Producing and destabilizing logics of family structure and privacy appear as perversions of kinship and family structures which at once affirm their supposedly valid and normative modalities, and also serve to maintain the state's appearance as a cohesive actor through demonstrating its reach into the domestic domain.

In this article, I have introduced the concept of "surveillance of intimate technologies" to demonstrate how the often-banal means of creating and maintaining social relations becomes a primary site for experiencing state control and intimidation. The intimacies these innocuous yet essential intimate technologies afford render their transgression particularly insidious and invasive. The fundamental role smartphones and rituals of family life play in establishing kinship contributes to the sense that surveillance of such intimate technologies is hidden or invisible; however, that this "invisible" surveillance is explicitly coupled with the overt threat of violent consequences in the case of subversion demonstrates the dual role of invisibility and visibility in producing an ever-present state. Much as Verdery (2018, 289) describes the Romanian Securitate in the 1970s and 1980s, we can understand state surveillance in Xinjiang as "not somehow 'above' society in the apparatus of the state but inside it, with tentacles that [creep] into people's social relations in generally destructive ways". The ways in which intimate technologies enable the instrumentalization of social relations to render entire populations vulnerable reveals how Chinese state authority in Xinjiang is significantly based upon a colonization of sociality (Verdery 2018, 290). While physically coercive means of control in Xinjiang have drawn the greatest international attention and outcry, this exploration seeks to expose how state power also emerges through managing and ultimately destabilizing kinship practices. As Uyghurs in China and in diaspora continue to seek ways to sustain

social ties in the current conditions, it remains to be seen how and to what extent they may adapt their use of intimate technologies to empower their own sociality.

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