



Re-education or Repression? A CDA of BBC's Coverage of China's Internment Camps

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Abstract: This article analyzes China's practices toward the Uyghur Turks in East Turkestan through the BBC World Service interview titled "Why does China put Uyghurs in 're-education camps'?" This article seeks to answer the question of how the BBC has represented the internment camps in China. In this context, it aims to contribute to the understanding of the BBC's stance towards these camps. Using Norman Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework, the study reveals that the so-called "vocational education centers" described by China are, in reality, associated with human rights violations such as forced labor, ideological indoctrination, compulsory sterilization, and mass detention. The interview frames these policies as an attempt at cultural genocide targeting ethnic identities, constructing a dramatic narrative through personal testimonies and expert commentary. China's discourses on security, development, and poverty alleviation are critically questioned by the media. The interview specifically highlights the connection between forced labor in cotton production and global supply chains. The continued surveillance of individuals released from the camps and the political barriers faced by Uyghurs attempting to flee to other countries are also discussed. The BBC discourse portrays these practices not merely as an issue of domestic security, but as a global human rights crisis and a matter of universal justice, thereby contributing to the formation of international public awareness.

Keywords: Re-education camps, Internment camps, Vocational training centers, Forced labor, Cultural genocide, Human rights violations, Media studies.

Introduction

Millions of Uyghur Turks are being held involuntarily in China's internment camps. Those detained in the camps constitute a significant portion of the Uyghur population living in East Turkestan¹. Moreover, there is substantial evidence indicating serious human rights violations within these camps. Through these facilities, China seeks to erase and eliminate Uyghur identity.

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Makale Gönderilme Tarihi / Article Submission Date: 24-05-2025

Makale Kabul Tarihi / Article Acceptance Date: 02-08-2025

Araştırma Makalesi / Research Article

DOI: 10.59305/ijvuts.1705728

Bu makaleyi şu şekilde kaynak gösterebilirsiniz:

Ertem, A.V. (2025). Re-education or Repression? A CDA of BBC's Coverage of China's Internment Camps, Uluslararası İdil-Ural ve Türkistan Araştırmaları Dergisi, 7 (2), 147-163. <https://doi.org/10.59305/ijvuts.1705728>

¹ The term 'East Turkestan' is used in this study in place of the Chinese administrative term 'Xinjiang' to reflect the cultural, historical, and ethnic identity preferred by the majority of the region's indigenous population. While the original BBC interview analyzed in this paper frequently uses the term "Xinjiang," this study deliberately employs "East Turkestan" as a more appropriate and ethically conscious alternative.

Although officially designated by the Chinese government as “vocational education centers,” these structures have been associated with mass detentions, as evidenced by independent investigations and eyewitness testimonies, ideological indoctrination, forced labor, and allegations of cultural genocide. In this context, how international media organizations, particularly Western outlets, represent these developments offers a critical field of inquiry not only for media studies but also for international relations, human rights, and the politics of cultural identity.

The overall structure of the interview can be summarized as follows: It begins by stating that nearly one million of the approximately 12 million Uyghur Turks living in East Turkestan are being detained in facilities referred to as “re-education camps.” These practices are described as constituting violations of human rights. It is noted that countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom have classified these policies as acts of genocide and crimes against humanity. In the second segment, the narrative takes on an emotional and human dimension through the testimony of Adam, a person living in Australia, who recounts the death of his father in one of the camps. This personal account enhances the legitimacy of the narrative by illustrating the victimization on an individual level.

Subsequently, the ethnic, cultural, and religious identity of the Uyghur Turks is introduced. The Chinese government's perception of this identity as a threat to “national unity” is explained, along with a historical overview of how ethnic tensions in the region have evolved into political repression. The interview then details the practices occurring within the internment camps, including forced labor, compulsory sterilization, psychological coercion, and ideological indoctrination, drawing on media reports and documentation by human rights organizations.

The issue of forced labor is further explored through the lens of cotton production in East Turkestan, highlighting its integration into global supply chains and its implications for international fashion brands. At this point, the Chinese government's justification of these practices as efforts to combat radicalism, alleviate poverty, and provide vocational training is presented. However, such defenses are characterized by the international community as “biased and politically motivated.”

The narrative emphasizes the continuity of oppression by stating that the length of internment varies among individuals, and even those released from the camps remain under intense surveillance and face the risk of re-arrest. In later sections, the interview analyzes the Uyghurs' attempts to flee China, the bureaucratic and political obstacles they encounter, and the risks of deportation in countries such as Thailand, despite escape routes leading to Türkiye, Kazakhstan, and elsewhere. Finally, the structural limitations to justice are discussed: while China's non-

membership in the International Criminal Court renders legal proceedings ineffective, an independent British tribunal has accused China of committing genocide, thereby raising critical questions about international accountability (BBC, 2025).

Thus, this interview provides a comprehensive perspective on China's internment camps. It addresses the continuum of extrajudicial practices occurring within the camps as well as the conditions faced by individuals after their release. In this regard, the interview serves as a significant effort to raise public awareness of China's repressive policies.

The primary data set of this study is derived from a testimonial interview published in 2025 on the official website of the BBC, concerning China's "re-education camps" in the region commonly referred to as East Turkestan. The content was accessed through the BBC's digital archive via open access. Additionally, a verbatim transcription of the original video was produced by the researcher to ensure analytical accuracy. As a globally influential and reputable media organization, the BBC offers a meaningful and representative sample for examining how Western media discursively frames China's policies toward the Uyghur population.

The aim of this study is to analyze how China's repressive policies toward the Uyghur Turks are represented in a BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) interview, using Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework. In this context, the interview titled "Why does China put Uyghurs in 're-education camps'?", published by BBC World Service, was first transcribed and then examined at the textual, discursive, and socio-cultural levels. Through this method, not only the linguistic strategies employed in the discourse are analyzed, but also the ideological and political contexts in which these strategies are produced are comprehensively evaluated.

This article employs Norman Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to examine how China's policies toward the Uyghur population are represented in international media. Fairclough's framework enables a multidimensional analysis by addressing discourse on three interrelated levels: the textual features, the processes of discursive production and consumption, and the broader social context in which the discourse is situated. Within this framework, the primary material selected for analysis is a BBC World Service interview titled "Why does China put Uyghurs in 're-education camps'?". The study explores the linguistic and narrative strategies employed at the textual level; how the discourse is produced, circulated, and interpreted within discursive practices; and the ideological, historical, and cultural contexts that shape its position within the broader sociopolitical discourse.

Critical Discourse Analysis extends beyond surface-level textual analysis by examining the relationship between discourse and social practices. As such, it seeks to uncover the underlying

power structures and ideological formations embedded within discourse, moving beyond linguistic forms alone. According to Fairclough's model, textual analysis involves the examination of linguistic features within the text; discursive practice analysis investigates the processes through which the discourse is produced, distributed, and consumed; and social analysis situates the discourse within its wider sociopolitical and cultural context. This model thus aims not only to reveal how discourse is constructed, but also to explore why it is constructed in a particular way and what social consequences it may produce.

The existing literature contains a substantial number of studies on China's internment camps, particularly in the context of human rights violations and the reactions of the international community. This study aims to contribute to this body of work from a different perspective by focusing on a specific interview conducted by the BBC concerning the internment camps in China. Through a discourse analysis of the coverage, the study not only seeks to reveal the BBC's narrative approach but also offers insights into how British media institutions more broadly perceive and represent the issue of East Turkestan.

One of the primary limitations of this study lies in its reliance on a single interview "Why does China put Uyghurs in 're-education camps'?" published by BBC World Service as the sole unit of analysis. This narrow sample inevitably constrains the ability to capture the full spectrum of discursive representations on the issue. Nevertheless, rather than undermining the study's overall validity, this limitation is intended to serve as a foundation for future research. The application of Norman Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Critical Discourse Analysis, with its detailed and multi-layered approach, enables the development of an analytical framework that can be adapted to a broader corpus of media texts. In this regard, the article not only contributes to a better understanding of the BBC's discursive positioning on China's internment camps, but also provides a basis for subsequent studies in the field.

China's Internment Camps

When discussions of human rights violations arise, China's "internment camps" are among the most frequently cited concerns in the international arena. These camps have remained a prominent topic on the global agenda for years, prompting pressure on the Chinese government from human rights organizations and various advocacy groups. Initially, China denied the existence of such camps; however, subsequent documentation has confirmed their reality.

The harsh realities of China's internment camps initially denied by the government but later exposed through documentation and eyewitness accounts are most vividly conveyed by those who were forced to endure them. One such individual is Gulbahar Haitiwaji, a former detainee who has spoken out about her experiences without hesitation. In her book *How I Survived a*

Chinese “Re-education” Camp, she provides a detailed and harrowing account of life inside the camps. According to her testimony, detainees were confined to dormitories covered with iron curtains, deprived of sunlight, and monitored around the clock by surveillance cameras. Even the slightest lip movement could result in solitary confinement. Prisoners were sometimes chained to their beds for days. Military-style ideological indoctrination sessions began at dawn and extended late into the night, where even blinking at the wrong moment was prohibited. Detainees were subjected to forced sterilization injections, endless interrogations, and a constant state of anxiety as names were called out daily—those summoned often never returned. Days passed under the unrelenting fear of sudden execution (Haitiwaji, 2021, p. 9).

Another key figure who has provided firsthand testimony about China’s internment camps is Sayragul Sauytbay. Unlike many detainees, Sauytbay was assigned to one of the camps as a teacher. There, she was forced to spend long hours morning to night teaching Chinese language, culture, and political ideology to Kazakh and Uyghur detainees. The conditions in the camp were inhumane: alongside brainwashing, torture, and sexual violence, detainees were also subjected to the forced ingestion of unidentified substances drugs that either sedated or potentially poisoned them. The details of Sayragul Sauytbay’s experiences are documented in her book *The Chief Witness: Escape from China’s Modern-Day Concentration Camps*, which provides an in-depth account of her harrowing ordeal (Sauytbay & Cavelius, 2022).

The existence of internment camps in the 21st century is, at first glance, a reality that is difficult to comprehend. However, Adrian Zenz has contributed to rendering this phenomenon more tangible and comprehensible by constructing models based on the narratives of eyewitnesses. Through this approach, he systematically illustrates the presence and structure of these camps (Zenz, 2019a):



Figure 1. 3D model of the teaching building with classroom, metal fencing and female security guard outside the classroom door. The witness saw the interior of the classroom through the iron bar doors. Source: anonymous informant.



Figure 2. The eyewitness saw a group of women who were learning Chinese. Source: anonymous informant.

The visual models developed by Zenz reveal the profoundly disturbing nature of the internment camps.

The 2009 Urumqi Riots marked a critical turning point in the lead-up to the establishment of the internment camps (Roberts, 2023, p. 180). The tensions between Uyghur Turks and Han Chinese culminated in violent clashes during that year (Peler & Ertem, 2025). The Urumqi incident was followed by a stabbing attack at a train station in Kunming in March 2014 and a market bombing in Urumqi during Xi Jinping's visit in April 2014. In response, Beijing implemented intensified security measures. Under the leadership of Chen Quanguo, East Turkestan became one of the

most heavily securitized regions in the world (Ertem, 2025). Despite isolated incidents of violence, there has been no substantive threat posed to China. Chinese leadership has never truly regarded “Uyghur separatism” as a serious threat. Rather, it has been employed as a pretext to suppress national separatism before it could pose any real challenge (Shichor, 2005, p. 124).

Some reports from Chinese state media indicate that re-education efforts among the Uyghur population began in late 2013 and gradually evolved into a more institutionalized system (Zenz, 2019b, p. 103). Notably, after 2014, China initiated large-scale detention campaigns. Beginning especially in the spring of 2017, the authorities began collecting personal data to assess citizens' “trustworthiness” and categorized individuals based on specific criteria. This phase led to the establishment of a systematic profiling mechanism, through which individuals were evaluated against a predefined set of indicators. Individuals were labeled as “untrustworthy” if they met certain conditions, such as being between the ages of 15 and 55 (i.e., of military age), being of Uyghur ethnicity, being unemployed, possessing religious knowledge or performing the five daily prayers, holding a passport, having visited one of 26 “sensitive” countries or having overstayed a visa, having family members living abroad, or homeschooling their children (Smith Finley, 2019, pp. 3-4). Since 2017, China has launched a campaign of extrajudicial mass internment targeting Uyghur Turks and, more broadly, other members of Turkic ethnic groups. According to research conducted by Zenz, it is estimated that between one and two million individuals belonging to these ethnic groups have been detained in internment camps (Zenz, 2025, p. 328).

In 2017, the Chinese government declared that no incidents of violence had occurred. However, by the end of that year, it was reported that up to 10% of the population in various cities with a majority Uyghur population had been detained. In Kashgar alone, at least 120,000 individuals were taken into custody (Raza, 2019, p. 493). Despite growing media attention toward the end of 2017, the Chinese government continued to deny the existence of “re-education camps” in East Turkestan. In May 2018, in response to a press inquiry, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that it was “unaware” of any such developments. *The Global Times*, the English-language mouthpiece of the Chinese Communist Party, reported that over one million residents primarily in southern East Turkestan had been placed in “state-organized vocational education programs” as part of poverty alleviation efforts. Subsequently, another article described the training of “religious extremists” detained to suppress extremism. However, neither of these reports acknowledged the existence of a large-scale, extrajudicial detention system designed to ideologically reprogram the broader population (Global Times 2017, as cited in Zenz, 2019b, pp. 102–103).

Indeed, since 2017, East Turkestan has witnessed an unprecedented campaign of re-education. According to media coverage and eyewitness accounts, thousands of Uyghur Turks and other Muslims have been and continue to be held in secret political indoctrination facilities. Under the administration of Chen Quanguo, detention quotas were reportedly issued to regions with dense Muslim populations, resulting in the mass incarceration of Muslim communities without any form of judicial process (Zenz, 2019b, pp. 102–103).

In August 2018, international media reported that “education authorities” had banned the use of the Uyghur language in schools and that families were required to surrender copies of the Qur’an or other religious items to the authorities or risk facing punishment (Amnesty International, 2018, as cited in Raza, 2019, p. 492).

In the internment camps, large-scale and arbitrary detentions have particularly targeted Muslim Turks, who are subjected to torture and other forms of ill-treatment. China’s conduct in this regard constitutes a violation of fundamental human rights principles. In other words, the government’s control measures in East Turkestan infringe upon international legal prohibitions against discrimination, primarily affecting Uyghur Turks and subsequently other ethnic minorities. Detainees have reported being subjected to torture or other forms of coercion during interrogations in order to extract confessions or information. In addition, reports indicate that detainees were beaten and suspended from ceilings or walls while in custody (Human Rights Watch, 2018). Those held in the camps referred to as “students” are forced to learn the Chinese language and the “dangers of religious radicalism.” They are also required to memorize “legal provisions and patriotic songs” and to write “self-criticisms,” which are used to determine whether they have learned enough to be considered for release (Amnesty International, 2018, as cited in Raza, 2019, p. 494).

A substantial body of documentation clearly demonstrates that individuals held in the so-called vocational education centers were not there voluntarily; on the contrary, these “students” were forcibly detained. No official document has been found indicating that individuals entered these facilities of their own free will, signed any form of consent, or had the opportunity to request release. In fact, the centers are guarded by large and specialized police forces, suggesting that they function more as high-security detention sites than as voluntary educational institutions. In 2016, approximately 10% of the adult population in regions with a predominantly Uyghur demographic was placed in such re-education facilities. Official documents repeatedly and explicitly confirm that the vocational education centers in East Turkestan implement coercive and abusive forms of political indoctrination. Indeed, websites belonging to at least five different

local governments or educational institutions in the region explicitly describe these facilities as institutions dedicated to brainwashing (Zenz, 2019a).

Authorities in East Turkestan appear to have adopted the concept of “transformation through education,” now subjecting large segments of the Muslim population to a sweeping, extrajudicial process of ideological indoctrination without distinction. China’s re-education campaign is regarded as the most intensive form of coercive social engineering the country has undertaken since the Cultural Revolution. It represents the apex of the security-centered strategy that China has employed in its “restive minority regions” in the western part of the country. These new forms of re-education, equipped with high-tech surveillance systems, may appear more “refined” and advanced compared to the crude methods currently imposed on the Uyghur Turks. Just as East Turkestan has become a testing ground for advanced surveillance technologies, the Chinese state may also incorporate the lessons learned from re-educating this large Muslim minority into broader efforts aimed at nationwide social restructuring (Zenz, 2019b, pp. 123–124).

“The practices within the internment camps have been systematically designed to eradicate the Uyghurs. Those detained have been subjected to acts incompatible with human dignity” (Ertem, 2025, p. 193). The primary objective of the internment camps is to erase the notion that Uyghurs in East Turkestan constitute an independent nation, while instilling the belief that they are an integral part of the Chinese nation. For this reason, internment camps represent the most radical and extralegal mechanism employed to ensure East Turkestan remains an eternal part of China (Karluk, 2022, p. 142). The re-education campaign has expanded beyond adult populations to include children, with the aim of severing the younger generation’s cultural ties. Children whose parents are both detained have been labeled by the state as “double detainees.” Ultimately, China seeks to suppress the political, cultural, and economic agency of the Uyghur Turks (Raza, 2019, pp. 494–498).

At this point, China’s relations with Türkiye, the United States, and European countries concerning the issue of the Uyghur Turks are particularly noteworthy. Türkiye has sought to advocate for the Uyghur cause and demonstrate solidarity with the Uyghur Turks. China, on the other hand, has aimed to strengthen its ties with Türkiye primarily through the expansion of economic and trade relations. Meanwhile, most Muslim-majority countries have remained largely silent on this matter. This situation is critically addressed in The Wall Street Journal’s article titled “The Horrors of Xinjiang”, which states: “Let’s see if the world’s Muslim nations will vote to condemn Chinese treatment of fellow Muslims, or if they’ll sell out for a Beijing-financed bridge.” (The Wall Street Journal 2022) The United States has imposed certain sanctions on China in response to the Uyghur issue, whereas European countries have

occasionally brought the matter to the agenda but have failed to produce any substantial outcomes. In conclusion, although Turkey, the United States, European countries, and Muslim-majority nations have taken certain steps toward addressing the Uyghur issue, a comprehensive resolution has yet to be achieved. Uyghur Turks in East Turkestan continue to face severe human rights violations.

Method

In this article, Norman Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) model is used to understand how China's practices toward the Uyghur Turks are represented in international media. This model offers a multi-layered analysis by addressing the textual level of discourse, the processes of discursive production and consumption, and its social context together. As the material for analysis, the interview titled "Why does China put Uyghurs in 're-education camps'?" published by BBC World Service has been selected. The analysis focuses on the linguistic strategies through which the discourse is constructed at the textual level, how it is circulated in discursive practice, and how it is positioned within an ideological context in social practice.

Critical discourse analysis focuses on social problems. Therefore, it can be described as the analysis of the linguistic and semiotic aspects of social processes and problems. On one hand, it establishes a connection between social and cultural structures and processes, and on the other hand, between texts (Sözen, 2017, pp. 140–142). In the introduction of Fairclough's book *Critical Discourse Analysis*, the fundamentals of his approach are expressed as follows: Critical discourse analysis is considered as a three-dimensional method. The first of these is the analysis of written and spoken texts, the second is the analysis of discursive practice, that is, how the text is produced, distributed, and read/interpreted, and finally, the examination of discourse events in a social and cultural context (Fairclough, 1995, p. 2). As a result, Fairclough's three-dimensional discourse analysis consists of three main stages (Ercan & Daniş, 2019, pp. 545–546):

Textual analysis: It examines the linguistic features of the discourse. At this stage, elements such as the words used in written, spoken, or visual texts, the mode of expression, and the choice of terminology are analyzed.

Process (production/consumption) analysis: It investigates how the text is produced, published, and how it is read or understood. In other words, it examines the context in which the discourse emerges, by whom, and through what kind of communication process.

Social analysis: It explains the social, historical, and ideological conditions that influence and shape the discourse. This dimension shows how the discourse is connected to society and power relations.

Findings

The interview featured in the program *What in the World*, broadcast by BBC World Service, presents a significant media discourse regarding the systematic oppression faced by Muslim Uyghur Turks living in East Turkestan. In this article, a comprehensive analysis has been carried out using Fairclough's three-dimensional critical discourse analysis. The details of the analysis are as follows:

Textual Analysis:

Textual analysis examines the linguistic features of the news discourse, including word choice, metaphors, and the concepts used.

In the introduction of the interview, the host states that approximately 12 million Uyghur Turks live in East Turkestan. It is mentioned that one million of them are being held in facilities that China refers to as "re-education camps." International human rights organizations describe these practices as a state policy aimed at systematically eliminating Uyghur identity and culture. Both the United Kingdom and the United States accuse China of violating human rights. Allegations of forced labor, forced sterilization of women, and the deliberate separation of families have caused significant international public outcry. The Chinese government, however, denies these accusations and claims that the practices are aimed at combating extremism. In this context, the interview includes both testimonies and expert opinions.

At the beginning of the interview, the BBC host's use of the phrase "what China calls re-education camps" establishes a distanced relationship with the discourse of the Chinese state. When considered at the textual level, this expression indicates that the concept of "re-education" is not legitimized; on the contrary, it is used to establish a critical distance. At the same time, expressions such as "internment camps," "forced labor," and "women being sterilized" are directly linked to the key terms of international human rights discourse.

The interview also includes an individual testimony. Adam, who lives in Australia, stated that her father died while being held in a camp and expressed that the Chinese state was responsible for this process with the following words:

"I strongly believe the Chinese government tortured him to death because he was 79 when he was taken away and he died at the age of 80. Apart from his age, he never had any health issues.

So I've got his photos before and after the camp — like before he was detained and after he was released — so I guess there's a huge difference between these two photos of him” (BBC, 2025).

Such personal narratives strengthen the dramatic expression and enable the reader to empathize. Expressions such as “impossible to travel” and “imminent threat of being sent back” emphasize the severe victimization, threat, and atmosphere of pressure faced by individuals.

At the textual level, through the concepts and expressions used, China’s practices are explicitly described as a human rights violation. The events in the internment camps are dramatized and presented as a social issue.

Discursive Analysis:

Discursive practice analysis addresses how the text is produced, structured, and presented, as well as which actors and discourses are emphasized.

The BBC’s interview presents a polyphonic structure by including the voices of various actors (victimized individuals, experts, state representatives, human rights organizations). In the overall flow of the narrative, victim testimonies and human rights violations are emphasized. Through the host’s guidance, the questions generally focus on human rights-based issues, highlight dramatic stories, and reinforce the intellectual foundation of the narrative through expert opinions.

The fact that a Western-centered media outlet like the BBC broadcast this interview contributes to the shaping of the discourse within the framework of Western liberal values, individual rights, minority identities, and human rights. The interview gives considerable space to both victim testimonies and the statements of international human rights organizations and Western states; this indicates that the discourse is constructed to raise awareness and provoke a reaction in Western public opinion.

In the structure of the interview, the inclusion of personal testimony about Adam’s father first, followed by the discourses of state actors such as the United States and the United Kingdom and then expert opinions, enhances the credibility of the report and creates a strong emotional and intellectual impact on the audience.

Socio-Cultural Practice Analysis:

The socio-cultural practice analysis addresses the social, historical, and political context of the discourse, as well as its ideological background.

The interview approaches China’s policy toward the Uyghur Turks not only as a matter of national security, but also as an international human rights violation and a global issue. With

concepts such as “genocide,” “crimes against humanity,” and “erasing identities,” China’s practices are questioned within the framework of universal norms, and the reactions of international legal institutions along with calls for sanctions are emphasized.

Details in the report such as “global supply chains,” “cotton,” and “tomatoes” have brought the economic dimension of the repressive policies in East Turkestan and their connection to the global capitalist system to the agenda. The host’s question, “At what cost?” questions China’s legitimacy discourse based on security, development, and poverty reduction in the context of human rights violations.

Moreover, individual victimizations and social problems are drawn into a universal platform of discussion in the context of international justice, ethical responsibility, and human rights. The interview also emphasizes, at the international level, the migration issues faced by Uyghur Turks seeking to flee China, the difficulties of crossing borders, and the danger of forced return. Finally, it is stated that these crimes cannot be prosecuted because China is not a member of the International Criminal Court, and the limitations of global justice are also criticized.

All these elements show that the discourse is positioned within the framework of international power relations, human rights, minority identity, and legal norms. The media discourse assumes the function of generating international public awareness and fostering a sense of global ethical responsibility.

Results and Discussion

China’s internment camps point to a serious human rights crisis that has drawn the attention of the international community. Initially denied by China, the existence of these camps has become an undeniable reality through witness testimonies, leaked documents, and the work of independent researchers. Adrian Zenz’s analyses and visual models have concretized the scale and function of these facilities, while the testimonies of witnesses such as Gulbahar Haitiwaji and Sayragul Sauytbay have revealed the systematic psychological and physical violence practiced in the camps. Arbitrary detentions, brainwashing activities, forced sterilizations, and severe inhumane treatment are widespread in the camps. This campaign, carried out under China’s “re-education” discourse, constitutes a systematic assimilation policy primarily targeting Uyghur Turks and other Muslim communities.

In this process, advanced surveillance technologies have been used, individuals have been profiled based on their ethnic, religious, and social characteristics, and masses of people have been placed in camps without judicial proceedings. China’s practices contain serious human

rights violations from the perspective of international law and continue to provoke global reactions.

This article focused on the representation of China's policies toward the Uyghur Turks in media discourse through the interview titled "Why does China put Uyghurs in 're-education camps'?" published by BBC World Service, and carried out an analysis using Norman Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Critical Discourse Analysis method. The findings revealed that the repressive policies implemented through the structures China refers to as "re-education camps" are represented in international media discourse as a human rights violation, a cultural genocide, and a global justice issue.

The textual analysis of the interview shows that the BBC adopts a critical language; by maintaining a distance from the term "re-education camps," it avoids legitimizing the concept. Through expressions such as "internment" and "forced labor," which refer to international law, China's practices are defined as systematic and severe human rights violations.

Moreover, the metaphor of "pomegranate seeds" is used as a striking symbol reflecting China's homogenizing national identity ideology, which rejects multiculturalism. Pomegranate seeds are seen from the outside as homogeneous and similar elements. Each seed is part of the same fruit and shows similarities in shape and color. However, such homogeneity does not naturally exist within Chinese society, especially between ethnic groups such as Han Chinese and Uyghur Turks. Xi Jinping's use of this metaphor symbolizes an assimilationist ideology aimed at suppressing ethnic differences and uniting everyone under a single, uniform "Chinese nation" identity.

In this context, the "pomegranate seeds" metaphor illustrates a state mentality that excludes multiculturalism, threatens cultural diversity, and attempts to dissolve ethnic identities under a "central" identity. The historical, cultural, and religious distinctiveness of communities like the Uyghur Turks does not conform to the homogeneous structure implied by this metaphor. Therefore, the Chinese state defines these differences as a "security issue" and seeks to eliminate them through various ideological tools. Thus, although this metaphor appears to call for unity, in reality it represents an ideological discourse of denying and suppressing ethnic differences.

At the level of discursive practice, the BBC interview establishes a polyphonic structure by including victim testimonies, expert commentary, and official state statements; however, it places narratives of victimhood—woven with individual traumas and dramatic effects—at the center of the narrative. This structure does not solely aim to inform. It also seeks to evoke a sense of ethical responsibility in the audience. Questions posed by the host, such as "at what cost?", reflect a position that challenges China's development- and security-based discourse.

In the socio-cultural context, the discourse highlights a global clash of values by juxtaposing China's sovereignty and security policies with the West's principles of human rights and ethical responsibility. This contrast becomes particularly evident in the sections where forced labor is linked to global supply chains. The fact that cotton from East Turkestan accounts for one-fifth of the world's production shows that the issue is not limited to China alone, but is also directly related to the ethical dilemmas of the global capitalist system. In this context, the media discourse brings into question not only China's domestic policy but also the responsibility of international corporations.

The final sections of the interview reveal that the repressive practices have transcended national borders and produced global consequences, by highlighting the escape processes of Uyghur Turks abroad, their fear of being returned, and the limits of international justice. China's non-membership in the International Criminal Court makes it nearly impossible for victims to access justice through legal means, while the media discourse makes this structural injustice visible.

All these analyses comprehensively present the BBC's discourse regarding China's internment camps, yet some limitations of the study should also be taken into account. In particular, focusing on a single interview prevents a full reflection of discursive diversity. However, rather than diminishing the value of the study, this limitation presents a potential starting point for future research that can be expanded through comparative analyses of different media sources. Indeed, this study is intended to provide a foundation for future scholarly work.

In conclusion, the BBC's discourse does not address China's policies toward the Uyghur Turks merely as a national issue. Instead, it presents the matter as a global human rights crisis and a universal issue of justice, thereby assuming an active role in shaping international public opinion.

Suggestions

This study, by focusing on a single interview broadcast by BBC World Service, has provided an in-depth analysis of how China's Uyghur policies are represented in international media discourse. However, future research may consider the following suggestions to enrich and diversify the current findings:

Comparative Discourse Analysis: Future studies could include a comparative analysis of media discourses from various countries (e.g., U.S., Türkiye, China, or Muslim-majority states) to reveal differing ideological constructions and representations of the Uyghur issue.

Expanded Data Sets: Analyzing a broader corpus that includes news articles, documentaries, and social media content would allow for a more comprehensive understanding of the discourse dynamics and shifts over time.

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