Question:

Green and Crawford both discuss the increasing use of data science and algorithmic decision-making by government agencies. Where do they agree? Disagree?

Answer:

**Green:**

In this chapter of the book *The Innovative City* written by Ben Green, the author argues that proponents of the “smart city” go astray when they equate innovation and technology, concluding that “reimagining cities to improve quality of life requires digital advances to transform the urban environment.” Mr. Green spends most of the chapter refuting this claim, with his main reasoning behind this refutation being: technology alone can’t solve difficult social and political problems, and for cities to even gain benefits from these technologies, cities must reform policies and practices to overcome institutional barriers. In addition to these refutations, the author also mentions many ways that smart city supporters misappropriate the role and meaning of innovation. These misappropriations include: putting innovation on a pedestal by critiquing and devaluing traditional practices, and redefining innovation to simply mean making something more technological.

**Crawford:**

In the chapter State from the book *Atlas of AI* written by Kate Crawford, the author mentions objects and events such as the Snowden archive and Project Maven to warn readers about the modern implications of an AI system that were designed to meet the priorities of the military such as command and control, automation, and surveillance. These militarized forms of pattern detection and threat assessment have moved into local services and institutions. The author also states that the U.S. seeks national and international dominance of AI to “secure military and corporate advantages.”

**Agree:**

Green and Crawford both agree that solely depending on data and technology at the municipal level can lead to many unwanted side effects. For example, in *The Innovative City,* Mr. Green brought up the story of homelessness in Seattle. In combating this problem, Seattle made many contracts with service providers to try and move as many homeless people as they could into stable housing. But due to the fact that these service providers inadequately tracked any data on how effective they were at combating homelessness, the Human Services Department realized that data about its homelessness programs was woefully incomplete. And thus couldn’t answer any questions regarding the progress of the homelessness problem. In *State,* Kate Crawford exemplifies how the use of militarized AI, such as Palantir, in the municipal domain reproduces inequality, making predominantly poor, Black, and Latinx neighborhoods subject to even greater surveillance.

**Disagree:**

The main place in which Green and Crawford disagree is to the extent in which data and technology can cause change at the municipal level. Green believes that data and technology alone cannot solve every governmental issue, instead departments must reach out beyond the realm of databases and analytics in order to gain as much contextual knowledge as possible. Green argues that this contextual knowledge is the key driver to change in a city, as without it data and its technology wouldn’t have any practical uses in combating problems in the first place. On the other hand, Crawford argues that because of the rise of secretive and militarized AI making its way into the municipal level, “Algorithmic governance is both part of and exceeds traditional state governance.“ In other words Crawford is saying that because algorithmic governance exceeds traditional state governance, it in essence “creates” this contextual knowledge that Green talks about, thus allowing technology and data to have huge impacts on the lives of people who live under this “algorithmic governance.”