**Social Dilemma - Where do we draw the line.... Between the permissible and abuse?! (14 votes)**

[BenChida](https://courses.edx.org/courses/HarvardX/ER22x/2013_Spring/discussion/forum/users/1330541) a day ago

Posted by: Luis\_Castro

Is it morally permissible and just for a society that claims to be democratic and defender of human values (like the US) to build on its members fears and concerns (about Terrorism) and 'pervert' the said values with acts that are so questionable that would only be of interest to some but not to the majority? Does this mean that even the values we cherish most are subject to compromise even if the arguments for that are based on a fallacy or bias?

We are the pinnacle of modern democracy: you should do as I/We say but not do as I/We do ...

Are the defenders of freedom and values condemned to be just spies and enemies of the state when they denounce abuses being committed in the name of 'national security', a construction that is so absurd in times of peace that it can literally mean anything?

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(this post is about [Live Question and Answer Session with Professor Sandel, Part 2 / Top Vote-Getting Questions](https://courses.edx.org/courses/HarvardX/ER22x/2013_Spring/jump_to/i4x:/HarvardX/ER22x/discussion/6efbd5d53d5241b6bf99409448272104))

1. [1](javascript:void(0)) [EdSilha](https://courses.edx.org/courses/HarvardX/ER22x/2013_Spring/discussion/forum/users/1032045)

a day ago

We become puppets of the government only if we fail to actively participate in the body politic. Joining the debate, educating the public through blogs and letters to the editor or your representative, motivating others to join and vote, etc.

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* + What if that is no longer enough, because the system has vices?

–posted a day ago by [Luis\_Castro](https://courses.edx.org/courses/HarvardX/ER22x/2013_Spring/discussion/forum/users/1489478)

* + Right on!, Luis.

–posted about 17 hours ago by [GUY8SCHIKANEDER](https://courses.edx.org/courses/HarvardX/ER22x/2013_Spring/discussion/forum/users/662139)

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1. [1](javascript:void(0)) [BrianPederson](https://courses.edx.org/courses/HarvardX/ER22x/2013_Spring/discussion/forum/users/1292664)

about 18 hours ago

With respect to privacy I think that folks should understand that so called metadata is not as benign with respect to privacy as people would imagine. Many courses on EDx and other MOOC providers explain how modern data mining and data analysis techniques can strip away anonymity using mathematical and computing techniques. People don't fully understand this and it is warping the debate. We need to understand what the metadata is and how it can be used to strip away personal anonymity and privacy.

Basically it seems like the majority of Americans (and others) are in the process of giving up their right to privacy without any real fight. I find that odd...

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* + Unbiased education!: Is this avenue THE SOLUTION...?

–posted about 17 hours ago by [GUY8SCHIKANEDER](https://courses.edx.org/courses/HarvardX/ER22x/2013_Spring/discussion/forum/users/662139)

* + I agree with you Brian. If metadata is 'innocus' why is it that we find our data (personal one) end up in the hands of companies,studies and governments without us consciously and willingly giving it away? Metadata allows assuptions, even if wrong ones which then can be used to formulate models or policies that will end up putting us all under a sort of control without us knowing.

I feel so sorry, because I see many of my collegues missing the point in the arguments they are raising either in favor or against a particular case (Snowden or Gay Rights).

What is at stake here? Is it Snowden acts? I don't think so. Those are just a consequence.

To make a just assessment one must take a more scientific approach of the way we are reasoning about these issues, because as we can see, we (the people), will never get to see the big picture, but rather fragments of a more limited nature.

One can not start without considering reasoning about side issues and definitions: like 'National Security' vs 'International Security'; 'Terrorists' vs 'Freedom Fightors'; 'Privacy' vs 'Intromission'.

In a global world like the one we live today does it mean that national security has precedence over international security. I can accept the notion that if a country is at war, that might be the case, but otherwise my answer would be no.

I find difficult in understanding the reasoning behind the advocates of 'espionage' at all cost (check the definition) and then, when being targets of the same present themselves as victims !.... We find nowadays spying on everyone even on the ones that are supposed to be our allies!

Going back to the Privacy issue and metadata what would one feel and think about if at a certain point that metadata could be used against you in a court of law or to make assumptions about who you are? Would one still be comfortable? I wouldn't .

Everything is possible not everything is probable. As a human being I would rather accept that sometimes things might go wrong and that is something that is out of our control, than to surrender the values I cherish most to someone (government or institution) based on an assumption that they will be better capable of acting on my behalf without other interest than myself. This is assuming that a 'paranoia' state of mind has been installed in our minds. We live in fear not free.

We are undermining everything we have achieved as a race (human race), if we choose to follow this rationale.

–posted about 4 hours ago by [Luis\_Castro](https://courses.edx.org/courses/HarvardX/ER22x/2013_Spring/discussion/forum/users/1489478)

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