A Social Numbers Game

Abstract

In an ideal world everyone is contributing to their society,crimes are low or non-extent, and everyone is happy with what they are given and have. This Utopia is what a government should be aiming for, and also provide the necessary tools for this dream. A quote from Robert V. Hine in *California's Utopian Colonies* ,"A group of people who are attempting to establish a new social pattern based upon a vision of the ideal society and who have withdrawn themselves from the community at large to embody that vision in experimental form." Findings on how China became the prime candidate for the social score concept and how the United States could potentially adapt a similar concept will be discussed in this article. The people play a big role on how far the government can go with monitoring and controlling their citizens. Overview of China's bank gave us information on how well China's economy is doing and why people in China might believe they are doing better with their new government. "GDP growth has averaged nearly 10% a year—the fastest sustained expansion by a major economy in history—and more than 850 million people have lifted themselves out of poverty."[1] People in China believe that the government is doing great and questioning the flaws would cause others to shun you. The punishment for having a lower social score in China is devastating and unfair and it affects a numerous amount of people. "In China, your social credit score determines everything from how much interest you pay on a loan to how easily you can rent a car or get a visa to travel overseas."[2] Government surveillance in the United States have already became a thing, but the government have not released or plan to use the information they gain for public use or make

public. Credit score and social scores are comparable in many ways and no system of monitoring comes without flaws. "More than one in five consumers have a "potentially material error" in their credit file that makes them look riskier than they are."[3] The government of China hasn't released a lot of info on who is monitoring their scores and how exactly they obtain certain information necessary to determine a person's social score but it error in this system could ruin a person's life and complaining or revoking a bad score might result in punishment. It also seems that China obtain a face recognition camera that is able to capture criminals. Their advancement in A.I./technology seems to help advance their agenda on perfecting the social score concept. "With millions of cameras and billions of lines of code, China is building a high-tech authoritarian future. Beijing is embracing technologies like facial recognition and artificial intelligence to identify and track 1.4 billion people. It wants to assemble a vast and unprecedented national surveillance system, with crucial help from its thriving technology industry."[4] Researching this topic has lead us to many conclusions and theories on how social score works, China's concept of social score, and how it would potentially be applied to our society in United States.

Social score is the idea that each individual person in the world would have a number defining their level of influence and/or contribution to their community. This concept in reality could lead to a better society if applied right and the punishment for having a low score isn't sever and an individual can improve their score by improving their behavior and changing their lifestyle. But when applied wrong it could lead to a society that is easily manipulated and stripped of individuality. The government should try to rehabilitate these members not punish them and trap/contain them in their own environment. The government of China or countries that

implemented the social score concept hide all their mishaps or things they wouldn't want their citizens to see(concentration camps/bombings/massacres) so that they believe their country is doing better and that they themselves are doing better. ""Our lives are getting better day by day," said Chen Liang, the local official. "For all of these good things, we really have to thank Xi Jinping and the party.""[3] China's government have already bought certain social media sites permission to block or remove information that might defame their government or historical massacre (Tiananmen Square.) We can only hope that our government does not implement these ideas into our society but for most of us we might not even realize if it were to be implemented. Our government have already collected data on our searches and may have already conjured up a list of individuals that are dangerous. We can only wait till our society feels the need to expose these certain individuals or even implement a score system.

In 2006, China started to have Credit Score from the central People's Bank of China with the same scale as the US of 300 was very poor to 850 was excellence. Inspiring from Credit Score, Chinese government thought that Credit Score could be expanded more than just in finance. As a result, in 2007, China began with the Social Credit Score prototype. Lin Junyue, a chief engineer and researcher of this system in Beijing said "We wanted to explore credit in the broadest possible sense by gathering a far greater amount of information, for instance from the ministry of state security or ministry of industry and information technology. That project was ratified by the national development and reform commission in 2012." [1] By 2020, the system will be tested in 43 cities with different names and evaluation criteria. The system will be based

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[1] Raphael, René, and Ling Xi. "Discipline and Punish: The Birth of China's Social-Credit System." The Nation. January 23, 2019. Accessed March 27, 2019.
https://www.thenation.com/article/china-social-credit-system/.

mostly from social networks, apps in smartphones and video surveillance. In 2020, most Chinese

urban public space will be installed camera with facial recognition under Skynet system.

Moreover, in many rural areas, people are able to observe the camera from the village entrance

through smartphones or television from the Sharp Eyes project [2]. After all this about how social

score is working in China, what about in America? What if we tried this social score society in

the United States, and then evental the whole world?

A social score society in the United States might actually work, well, technically it has

already started, just not emphasized enough to the point that Americans notice it that much.

What I mean by this is that we as consumers and citizens of America are already being tracked.

We are being tracked by what we buy and what sites we visit. This is how the "recommended"

things appear, because it relates back to what we viewed. "Right now, data collection companies'

main goal is selling you things. But it isn't hard to envision how a few changes in the market

could produce something like our Chinese friends' Big Brother experience."[3] Data analyzers can

actually take our information and can build a profile of what we are interested into, however,

let's say that we've moved a few years later and the social score economy has been adapted to

the United States. This means that, exactly like China, those who have high social score would

basically benefit extremely while those who do not would almost have no access to anything.

This means that even if someone is not a criminal, but they have a low credit score, they are

basically rejected from the use of anything. The worst part is that it is easy to bring down your

[2] Raphael, René, and Ling Xi. "Discipline and Punish: The Birth of China's Social-Credit System." The Nation. January 23, 2019. Accessed March 27, 2019. https://www.thenation.com/article/china-social-credit-system/.

[3] Davenport, Anthony. "America Isn't Far Off From China's 'Social Credit Score'."Observer. February 19, 2018. Accessed April 15, 2019. https://observer.com/2018/02/america-isnt-far-off-from-chinas-social-credit-score/

social credit score. " It's actually really easy to watch your SCS drop. Hang out with someone with a low score, and your own will go down. You can lose points based on spending time with your family and friends."[4]

The good thing is that America is a democracy, not a communist country. This means that the people can still try to change how the social score economy works, or maybe get rid of it entirely, if it ever comes to that. We are lucky that we have certain rights that can change the government if it is unfair to the majority of the people, but at this day and age, who knows if the vast majority would actually want a social score economy or society. In the end, based on what China is experiencing as of right now, many people in America would probably reject this whole system and try to find a better revision of the system, because at this time, the system that China has helps with crime and security, but does not help those who were born into scenarios that would put them at the lower parts of the social credit society.

The extent that these scores can affect one's life is massive and at times life ruining. Being unable to move forward in life due to a bad score or being restricted from traveling to a new place to restart or find a job seems to make it impossible to climb back up from mistakes or accidents. Most of the benefits from social scores are for loyal and law abiding citizens. There are some rules that would affect you without you knowing. "Authorities have experimented with "social credit" since 2014 in areas across China. Points are deducted for breaking the law or, in some areas, offenses as minor as walking a dog without a leash."[5] America and other countries

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[4] "China's Social Credit System – It's Coming to the United States." Katusa Research. March 1, 2019. Accessed April 15, 2019. https://katusaresearch.com/chinas-social-credit-system-coming-to-united-states/

have a score that impacts your life but our credit score system is somewhat recoverable if you are in below the average score. But social score seems to be built on only punishing offenders and not rewarding good deeds. We can see that social score is not the way to deal with troublesome individuals or non-contributing members of society and that the concept still needs to be revised or scraped. It is still up to the people whether they see the need for change and are willing to make it happen. We cannot weigh the risk that the people of China have if they were to protest against its government as the fear of another Tiananmen Square incident is very likely and maybe worse. In the end it is in the numbers that will determine how long a concept can last and it should be in the people that control what the government is allowed to do.

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https://katusaresearch.com/chinas-social-credit-system-coming-to-united-states/