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Privacy and Security Essay

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In today's world, monitoring has become a usual concern in liberal and repressive societies. At this point when the media and news in UK and USA talk about China's investigative systems, it is not surprising to conclude that the government is trying to make a "techno-dictator state" to keep a track of citizen's activities and screen them. (Mitchell & Diamond, 2018) News outlets are feeling the loss of a bigger point. The main issue with China's reconnaissance is not that it is "totalizing" and "discourteous" but that it depends on a newly digitized data platform that collates observations to the data about citizen's families and relatives. (Choy, 2016) And all of this happens by authoritative checking of every person in the citizen's connection range.

Mass reconnaissance is basically led through the administration and is a system utilized by the Chinese government to administer the lives of its citizens. China screens its residents through internet and cameras just as other countries do it using social credit framework, etc. This process of mass observation has expanded in recent years. In 2019, 'Comparitech' found out that 8 out of 10 most checked urban communities on the planet are in China. (Cassiano, 2019)

Data collected from its citizens:

The rapid progress in Peoples' Republic of China's economy has put enormous pressure on the administrative structure that was by then covered by the shadow of inefficiency, corruption and political inequalities. The government had a very innovative game plan in place for e-governance and e-surveillance. They targeted adding security and solicitation to a whole new directing procedure. This concept of Mass Reconnaissance in China came into limelight in the old Maoist period around 1950. (Kluver, 2005) This instrument of control was designed to incorporate his power in the then established government. During those times when technology not so developed in China, mass observations were carried out through listening in on others' conversations. Here are the manners by which the Chinese government gathers information from its residents in today's time:

1. **Web Surveillance:** The online activities of the Chinese residents are actively and carefully monitored. One of China's most famous application: WeChat is under the careful watch by Internet Police. Any stream of messages sent through this application is monitored by the application's administrative team. Other similar applications such as WhatsApp, Messenger, etc. are shut or restricted by the Chinese government.

2. **Video Surveillance:** By 2018, the Chinese government had successfully installed nearly 200 million cameras throughout the nation, which means around 1 camera for every 7 residents. The number of cameras has kept on increasing as Chinese cities are also hiring private organizations to install cameras to increase surveillance. The Chinese government hopes to use combination of all these cameras to initiate facial recognition in the nation's reconnaissance.
3. **Facial Recognition:** Using information the installed cameras, China is building a facial recognition framework that can work in swift co-ordination with a database of 1.3 billion photographs. The government has kept a precision goal of 90%. According to the government, the framework will be used for security purposes only. However, there have been a lot of concerns over these things amongst the specialists in this field in China.
4. **Social Credit System:** The Chinese government is building a social credit framework that will calculate the dependability of its residents by bifurcating their social practices and monetary information. (sell, borrow, mortgage, etc.) The government attaches all these activities to a FICO Score to ensure data is stored in an operation-oriented manner. Residents with high FICO Score have an advantage of skipping some extra payments and have the added advantage of getting Visas earlier than others.

The company which collects data:

For national security and social sufficiency, supporting restrictions, China had developed a perception that will ensure straightforward access to any individual's national and neighborhood information. As per today, the Chinese Communist Party is continuously developing tremendous data across variety of systems for a significant period. Moreover, is it moral for private firms to hand over the data they collected to the government body without keeping in mind the user's privacy? Alibaba and Tencent are the two companies that have immense data of almost all Chinese

citizens that can provide any and almost all information about the citizens. However, Chinese companies are required by the government to help them in spying. Unlike Amazon, Facebook in USA which are not required to do so. The Chinese online applications are legally required to hold records of discussion by citizens for content checking by government scrutiny experts on demand.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Data Collection:

While it is still not evident that for what purpose will the data be utilized, investigators predict a very alarming concern regarding this framework. The credit reporting data helps institutions to determine whether to approve or not any financial account or any facility such as monetary loans, etc, depending upon whether you paid back the money or not. (Liang, 2018) The Chinese government has used this data on a whole new level, by predicting your financial capability based on the products you buy online ranging from diapers to computer games and medications. The citizen's political contribution is also counted to compute the credit score. Spreading political conclusions without consent from authorities or in any form, posting any news that may affect the government administration will reduce one's credit score. The more alarming fact is that in surveying the citizens, the state will be also be ready to think about the activities of the loved ones of any Chinese individual. For example, any anti-government post from your companion might lead to a reduction in your ratings.

Government concern with the Data:

Now if we consider who is more concerned about the data collection, then the government comes first as they want to know everything about their people, what they do, who they meet, where they go, whom they support, and who they have in their contact list. Now all this data is private to any individual and no one can use this data without the consent of the individual, but here comes the twist. The Chinese government is exempted from this issue related to privacy of individuals. Because the Chinese government wants all the data for making the country more profound and stable, as they claim. But what happens is that the citizens are scored on their privacy-related information and are then bounded by specific rules and regulations by the Chinese government.

Now it's the private company's concern as well to collect the data as they might be in trouble if they don't collect it.

Ethical dilemma showed by the government as well as the private company, for the collection of data:

The worries over information protection and cybersecurity pose future moral problems for any country. This situation of similarity versus intimidation is an integral issue. The motivation here should be to strengthen the positive practices and order some reformatory measures to discourage negative activities. Another moral issue here will be straightforwardness versus dealing. This relates to the economic wellbeing scores that show the relative position one has with others.

Policy recommendations:

Let us talk about the policies that the Chinese citizens should have in place to protect them from the government and private company's data collection methodologies. (Zhang, 2018) There must be rules to prevent both the above organizations from collecting data without an individual's consent. There are some articles in the constitution such as Article 37, 38, 39 and 40 that protect the individual related to privacy concern. (Wang, 2012) However, these rules also allow government and officials to examine, search and take useful actions against any individual whenever required. Here we need to make amendments to the laws to give fair rights to the citizens for their privacy and security. An individual should have his/her right to question the government for the actions it takes. So, in this matter, it becomes important to set up an expert panel for protection issues assurance, so it can completely ensure protection of citizens.

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