

PhD Proposal

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Introduction

For most people exchanging data, even personal data has become essential to their day to day life. We exchange messages, store data about our health, and use apps where the exchange of our coordinates on this earth are accurate up to about 1-2 meters. As we do not pay for these services and these companies thrive on the use of our data and tracking our every move, serious concerns are being raised about the risks on an individual and societal level (Rathenau Instituut 2025). From a government perspective biometric data is collected for refugees registering to seek asylum (Farraj 2010) and we have seen a surge in digital health passes during and after COVID-19 (Mithani et al. 2022). Haiti saw one of the most effective participation in crowdsourced mapping through Ushahidi (Norheim-Hagtun and Meier 2010). Some of these efforts are well intended and do a lot of good Organisation (n.d.), but this tracking of biometric and social data is also used for the creation of economic value and has lead to something more than just a phenomenon of capitalism; it's a manifestation of colonialism (Couldry and Mejias 2019). With new developments in AI this becomes more prevalent as data and AI "entrench power asymmetries and engender new forms of structural violence and new inequities between the global South and North" (Madianou 2024). The quest for more users and ever larger expansion has led Big Tech (e.g. Google, Meta) to look for areas where internet usage is not as widely spread as it is in "the West" and offer programs providing a limited set of Internet services (e.g. Project Loon ("Introducing Project Loon: Balloon-powered Internet Access" 2013) and Free Basics ("Meta Connectivity" n.d.)). There is little to no protection or privacy for private consumers unless government regulation explicitly makes it so, like the GDPR program (Arora 2019).

Research Questions

In what way can power asymmetries between the majority world and the minority world be limited by effective legislation towards protecting personal data of citizens?

How can privacy literacy be increased that respects a cultural tradition without using a Euro-centric view of individual privacy but including a collective privacy?

What does privacy mean in rural areas

Methodology

- Qualitative investigation of policy, laws in different countries
- Questionnaire on usage of internet and awareness of privacy concerns..

References

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