

AI Facial Recognition in China

In China, there is rarely such a thing as privacy. In 2020, the Chinese government launched its plan of the Social Credit System along with the implementation of AI facial recognition in over 200 million surveillance cameras. The goal is to track citizens and regulate their actions through a system of rewards and punishment. The surveillance cameras have advanced facial tracking that records citizens' appearance, location, and actions.

Lee's Argument (Pro)

This helps build a detailed profile about that person and helps determine if that citizen is "trustworthy". Most Chinese citizens approve of this system because they enjoy the perks/rewards of having a high social credit score. They have even mentioned that it pushes them to become better and trustworthy citizens. The rewards they receive are many financial and living benefits such as no deposit in businesses or hotels, lower cost of transit and bills, etc. Most citizens also see this as a way to gain information about trustworthy people and businesses and as a way to report businesses that are scamming and harming other people.

- <https://www.npr.org/2021/01/05/953515627/facial-recognition-and-beyond-journalist-ventures-inside-chinas-surveillance-sta>
- <https://www.cnet.com/news/politics/in-china-facial-recognition-public-shaming-and-control-go-hand-in-hand/>
- <https://www.wired.co.uk/article/china-social-credit-system-explained>
- <https://www.businessinsider.com/china-social-credit-system-punishments-and-rewards-explained-2018-4>

Moste's Argument (Con)

This system relies largely on unproven facial recognition technology. If the facial recognition isn't perfect, it can easily lead to someone feeling the consequences of another person's actions. While this data can certainly be used for good, it can also obviously be used for bad. The data can be used to punish citizens for minor misdeeds such as jaywalking or wearing pajamas in public. Additionally, since the algorithm isn't public, there's no reason it can't be tweaked and manipulated through corruption to target whoever the government would like to help/hurt. This could mean political dissidents and ethnic minorities could face backlash from the public for misdeeds that they either didn't commit or were blown out of proportion in the algorithm. Finally, specific people or groups of people could be tracked and watched more closely than others to target and harm a particular target/group/ethnicity. Again, ethnic minorities or persons of interest could be tracked at a disproportionate rate in order to find the specific moments in which they aren't perfect so that the government can have a public reason for punishing them.

- <https://mit-serc.pubpub.org/pub/public-debate-on-facial-recognition-technologies-in-china/release/1>
- <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-facial-recognition-idUSKBN20W0WL>
- <https://nhglobalpartners.com/china-social-credit-system-explained/>