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English 1

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The points raised by Hill in the podcast can go beyond companies such as Clearview AI and apply to governments around the world. Specifically, the application of the technology can vary wildly from government to government based on the ideologies the countries are based upon. Hill raises point that there is a lack of transparency regarding facial recognition technology. More restrictive governments could take advantage of this and be more invasive in their citizens’ privacy. Though most companies probably are somewhere in line with Hoan Ton-That’s perspective on avoiding “bad” governments, Hill’s argument of the technology being uncontrollable after a point is valid. Even if these companies somehow manage to avoid having their technology get into the hands of more restrictive governments, these countries could buy the technology from a company willing to sell to them or end up developing their own version. In general, authoritarian governments are more likely to use facial recognition technology as a tool to monitor their citizens for any unwanted activities (such as protests) while democratic governments are more likely to allow more personal privacy. There is the possibility, however, that the increased power democratic governments get from being able to constantly monitor their citizens may (slightly) turn them more authoritarian, whether it may be more monitoring/censoring or even the limitation of rights they had previously defended. This can be seen in the United States following the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Some countries (such as Belgium and Luxembourg), however, may ban the use of facial recognition technology to protect their citizens’ privacy. Even in authoritarian countries, the use of facial recognition as a form of surveillance may not be frowned upon as it is in more liberal countries such as the U.S, whose citizens value privacy more. In countries such as China (who is known for its extensive use of facial recognition surveillance), citizens may view the government as a “protective being” saving them from dangers such as crime and disease. This could lead to a discussion on whether western biases cloud judgement over authoritarian governments using facial recognition technology to monitor citizens. Overall, however, the rise of facial recognition technology gives countries the opportunity to have more power in monitoring and/or controlling their citizens. This is to the advantage of authoritarian governments who can use the technology to invade their citizens’ privacy and have a more restrictive approach to how they run their country. For example, China has been known to use facial recognition technology to publicly shame its citizens, silence protesters, and oppress minority groups living in the country. Democratic countries, however, may lean away from this technology to protect citizens’ rights to privacy, possibly even going as far as banning the technology. This may be because, on average, citizens in more liberal countries value their privacy more than people living under restrictive governments, though this always isn’t the case. There is the distinct possibility, too, that the technology may make democratic governments slightly more authoritarian in some respects, showcasing the power of the technology to shift governmental ideologies and actions over time.

[509 Words]