

The Use of Surveillance Technology during COVID-19: A Comparative Study of Different Times and Contexts

Background

Within the past few months, the Covid-19 pandemic struck numerous countries around the world, leading to governmental reactions aiming to reduce the spread of the virus. Different types of AI-powered technologies were thus deployed, and more specifically, surveillance technologies from visual/facial recognition, to tracing/tracking apps. Some countries' populations and cultures were and are more inclined to accept these changes.

Countries of interest: China, Germany, South American country TBD, African country TBD, and Middle-Eastern country TBD.

Expected goals

Drawing upon past literature, quantitative data from already existing surveys, and qualitative data stemming from semi-structured interviews, this thesis will aim to analyse the initial technological and governmental context of one (1) country, and the changes that occurred due to Covid-19. Moreover, a thorough analysis of the public's acceptance of surveillance tech and the motivators behind it is expected. Possible research questions are:

- *Which factors impact the public's acceptance of surveillance technology in times of public health crisis?*
- *Which discrepancies can be seen between the pre-covid context, and the pandemic context in terms of surveillance technologies deployed?*

Recommended literature

Bell, G., Andrejevic, M., & Barry, C. (2020). What motivates people to download and continue to use the CovidSafe app? Rapid research brief. In *Rapid Research Information Forum, The Chief Scientist*. Canberra: Office of the Chief Scientist (Australia).

IEAI (Institute for Ethics in Artificial Intelligence). (2020, June). *Ethics and the Use of AI-based Tracing Tools to Manage the Covid-19 Pandemic*.

Floridi, L., Cows J., Beltrametti, M., Chatila, R., Chazerand, P., Dignum, V., Lütge, C., Madelin, R., Pagallo, U., Rossi, F., Schafer, B., Valcke, P. & Vayena, E. (2018). *AI4People – An ethical framework for a good society: opportunities, risks, principles, and recommendations*. *Minds and Machines*, 28(4), 689-707.

World Health Organization (WHO). (2020b, May 28). Ethical considerations to guide the use of digital proximity tracking technologies for COVID-19 contact tracing: interim guidance. https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/WHO-2019-nCoV-Ethics_Contact_tracing_apps-2020.1

Details

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Starting date: as soon as possible

Contact

If you are interested, please contact Auxane Boch (Auxane.Boch@tum.de).

We are looking forward to your application!