The dark side of surveillance technology 6

With facial recognition and video surveillance becoming rampant, the controversy about their usage gains momentum, as shown/exposed in this dossier composed of two opinion pieces - one from a Berkeley high school newspaper published in December 2020 and another from Slate.com dated January 2021 – that both highlight the threat represented by surveillance technology while the article from the Washington Post also dated Dec 2020 focuses on China’s misuse of this technology. These articles come with a cartoon released in Le Temps in Sept 2021 for the 9/11 attacks 20th anniversary.

These documents raise the following question – to what extent can facial recognition be used at our expense ? 108 – 2 = 106

As a tool intended to reinforce public security, facial recognition is supported by many. Indeed, as advocated by Berkeley police department (doc3), it can definitely help police authorities reduce crime (doc 1&3) as part of a comprehensive approach including varied sources of data (doc 1,3&4) thus contributing greatly to their investigative work, which was the case for the identification of the Capitol rioters that was made possible precisely thanks to that technology (doc 1). This idea is illustrated in the cartoon depicting Uncle Sam watching images of the 9/11 attacks and suggesting that had the surveillance robot standing by him been more developed then, this tragedy might have been avoided. 110 – 7 = 103

However, notwithstanding those benefits for public safety, all four documents warn against the threat posed by facial recognition to privacy and human rights. Be it for the significant risk of false identification inherent to this technology which is ~~prone to being~~ less reliable concerning colored people - a flaw that could reinforce the racial bias of a notoriously racist American police (doc 1&3) - or its use by some governments to implement discriminatory policies– such as the Chinese government’s use of Huawei’s facial recognition systems to hunt Uighurs (doc4), the likeliness of human rights encroachment is real. This threat of mass surveillance is clearly embodied by the impressive presence of the “Surveillance State” robot rising above the undersized figure of Uncle Sam (doc2). 122 – 10 = 112

In that context, ~~the three articles claim that~~ taking a stand/stance and calling for decisive action against ~~such abusive use of~~ surveillance technology is needed. As a matter of fact, some US cities like Berkeley have already banned facial recognition from their streets (doc3) and several tech companies call for a legal framework while other companies using it have been sanctioned (doc 4). Significantly, soccer player A.Griezman decided to break his contract with Huawei to speak out against their misuse of facial recognition and the violation of human rights it represents, as all journalists here do.

All in all, these journalists insist that facial recognition constitutes a dangerous threat all citizens should be aware of, and ~~eventually~~ conclude that all countries should ally to ban it altogether . 127 – 13 = 114

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