CYSE 425W Policy Analysis: Governments Weaponizing Biometric Technology

Alysia Beckles

Old Dominion University

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**Introduction**

Biometric technology is for identification and verification purposes, it provides most people who utilize this type of technology to gain access to buildings and devices. It can identify several features, such as a person's eyes and other physical features. As biometric technology progresses, some governments have been trying to incorporate it into identification procedures. When using biometric technology, there will be concerns over rights. This will persist as an issue amongst some people since the data on a person's biological attributes will be gathered as an exchange for services. Some people do not know if the government will misuse it to track or punish them. Some governments will be able to collect biometric information on those employed in the government, they can also obtain that information on their citizens and others who are seeking to live permanently or temporarily in their country too. Some governments can exploit biometric information and utilize that sensitive information for discriminatory practices and monitoring in an effort to protect their nation.

**Why the Government Choose to adopt biometric technology**

Heightened security concerns stemming from the proliferation of international crime and terrorism have given rise to more appeal and research into the prospect of adopting biometric technology (Thomas, 2006, p.377). This technology enables some governments to manage their borders more efficiently and utilize it as a counter-terrorism strategy. Biometric technology will prevent people from falsifying their identities since some biometric information will be hard to replicate. This is an alternative to standard methods utilized for border control, such as passports, ID cards, and other traditional identification methodologies to enter a country (Thomas, 2006, p.378). Some governments will require some people to carry a biometric identification card, and it will include biometric data such as fingerprints to be able to enter countries (Baldaccini, 2008, p.35). Although businesses have used biometric technology for virtual and physical entry, some governments have chosen this method to determine a person's identity while providing additional security checks on accessing their borders.

Some governments argue that the discriminatorypractices of demanding foreigners to give biometric information before their citizens are justifiable (Baldaccini, 2008, p.36). Biometric technology is a tool to detect insurgents to a country's national security. Yet, it is utilized differently by some governments. Instead of using it against an adversary, biometric technology projects some populations as potential adversaries, causing regional insecurity (Bell, 2013, p.467).

**How are governments weaponizing biometric technology against migrants?**

However, integrating biometric technology into traveling and other identification papers has a crucial consequence for refugees, migrants, and individuals tracked by their movements (Thomas, 2006, p.378). Governments in the United Kingdom and Kenya are utilizing biometric technology to track refugees and use exclusionary policies against them, infringing on their rights. The Kenyan government established a refugee database that stored the fingerprints of refugees. They collect this information by having refugees who want to obtain a national identification to submit their fingerprints (Weizberg, 2020). The Kenyan government uses this as a method to entrap those applying for it by running a cross-check on their fingerprints and denying them citizenship in the country. The hostile environment policy enacted by the United Kingdom government made life difficult for refugees. The country also collects fingerprints when processing their applications and putting them in a database (Weizberg, 2020). This deprived them of simple services, such as opening a bank account, applying for a job, and deporting them to another country illegally.

There have been instances where some governments have targeted migrants from third-world countries in this partisan climate based on their fears of possibly being terrorists with the use of biometric technology (Thomas, 2006, p.388). The Chinese state authorities used biometric data to profile those they deemed as appearing as Islamic. Chinese state authorities gather DNA, voice recording, and facial recognition to monitor the activities of the entire populace in China through voice recognition and facial recognition in 2016 (Byler, 2019). Already perceiving those who appear to be Islamic as a threat, they will try to ascertain if they are trustworthy or ordinary when their state authorities evaluate them. state authorities will also utilize facial recognition in the evaluation process and collect extra information instantly too. If they are identified as untrustworthy, they will be sent to a facility similar to prison camps that will try to indoctrinate them Chinese nationalists by educating on their ruling political party, language, and political thought (Byler, 2019).

**Conclusion**

The arguments in the paper show that, although it is good that some governments are taking precautions by using biometrics as a strategy to improve the protection of their own country, there are still some issues regarding those trying to enter it since they weaponize it. As technology progresses, some governments will plan to move away from traditional identification to verify a person’s identity, especially with international travelers. There are preconceived biases and preferential treatment. Governments using biometric technology as a tool to facilitate border control and distinguish specific groups of people as a threat without any provocation other than their appearance is inequitable.

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