Neo-terrorism on the individual (NOI) in a 21st century Western liberal democratic context

Cyber-bullying and democracy-gaming deepened, in an age of encroaching #ai

A proposed PhD investigation into the visual language and communication systems of neo-terrorism on the individual, in the framework of the picture superiority effect and nudge theory, and the resulting weaponisation of a mental distress aimed at modifying democratic behaviours and discourse in Western liberal democracies and their citizens

Introduction to this research proposal

My name is Mil Williams. I have a recent MA in International Criminal Justice from Liverpool John Moores University, where I took a particular interest in UN law, crimes of the powerful, surveillance and sousveillance, and the repurposing of mental health legislation for criminal justice ends.

My dissertation discussed the relationship between the modern British state and surveillance understood in its widest sense.[1]

The four end-goals of the PhD research proposed today are:

1. to develop a body of thought and praxis which supports those who have policing responsibilities across Britain and the EU, in order that they may ultimately incorporate what this author has been recently describing as neo-terrorism on the individual (NOI) – ie cyber-bullying in the age of AI which serves to connect intimately the virtual and real worlds, to the clear

---

[1] Abstract:

This dissertation discusses surveillance by public and private sectors, presenting the concept of a God 2.0 which undermines Criminal Justice's "innocent until proven guilty". An understanding of surveillance devices used in Criminal Justice is provided. Citizens often understand surveillance as physical, the literally watched. In digital environments the physical is not everything. The research methods chosen to examine this reality, and why, in the light of thinking on the nature of creativity and thought, are explored. The three-part structure used for the data itself, the background to the participants and their inclusion, and the data-analysis and coding processes employed, are examined. As a necessarily auto-ethnographic work, researcher bias is fully explained. Through the data-analysis and coding processes used, six themes are presented. The three most salient are focussed on. Two suggested future strategies are provided, aimed at leading to a societal partnership in surveillance and tracking via open-source, open-data and citizen-located philosophies. The dissertation concludes with an appeal to Western democratic citizenry to exert its power, by challenging the theology of God 2.0's 21st century Original Sin, and negotiating a God 2.5.

Keywords: surveillance, tracking, observation, sousveillance, Criminal Justice, democracy, ideology, theology, God

detriment of sovereign subjects and their democracies – as a legal figure in legislations across the Continent, and ultimately globally.

2. alongside the above goal, gain intellectual and financial support for developing not only the still nascent philosophies of intuitive-thought capture, evidencing, and validating, but also the software tools and platforms themselves which would deliver such possiblities.[2]

3. with such tools to hand, and where legally evidenced and correctly validated, institute in the UK and the EU, and as a guiding principle at UN level, the legal figure of neo-terrorism on the individual as something properly detectable and punishable by law.

4. assuming that in order for such a case to be made to a change in the law, the relevant software tools would also first need to be developed and tested, this then would form a key part of the proposed PhD research programme.

Legal reach

The PhD would focus in the first instance on ethnographic experiences in the UK. It would be formed of two experiments (explained more fully below). The first experiment would aim to evidence the existence of covert communication systems used by networks to the detriment of ordinary experiences of Western liberal democratic citizens. The second would involve the development of software, already conceptualised and with an existing roadmap to market of ten months in the first phase, which would serve to make it possible to evidence and validate intuitive perceptions and knowledge of victims of organised crime and neo-terrorism on the individual, to the necessary satisfaction of existing criminal justice systems.

---

[2] Some practical and rigorous development roadmaps for the proposed intuition-capture software platform have already been carried out: two Liverpool-based software companies, CitrusSuite and Quanovo, have worked alongside the author of this proposal, and submitted in May 2019 to the Defence and Security Accelerator (DASA) a proposal for a counter-terrorism and customer-service situational awareness app, using AR (augmented reality) and AI (artificial intelligence as per deep neural networks). This submission obtained the approval, as gatekeepers, to submit the initial idea, from the Northern Partner for DASA and the government department funding the project. However, resubmission is now required, as there were challenges detected in the proposed project.

Methodologies proposed

This author proposes building on the ethnography used in his MA dissertation on surveillance & sousveillance and the 21st century state.

The second half of the proposed PhD experimental procedures would use intuition-capture tools and softweare platforms specifically developed to this end, whose outcomes would be validated using AI (deep neural networks), also designed and developed to this same end.

It is suggested that the same partners who have already worked together on a Defence and Security Accelerator submission for situational awareness software (to easily, inclusively and efficiently capture the feelings rail passengers have when they see something that makes them uneasy), all three including the author located already in Liverpool, would work in collaboration with an interested and academically relevant University to create the software proposed.

The overall three stages and process of the PhD are suggested to stand as follows:

1. Properly evidence, firstly, that multiple networks are communicating visually, and using other means, to prioritise their own internal agendas over those of properly constituted and functioning Western liberal democracies, by influencing covertly how citizens behave, see and understand the environments around them.
2. Develop, test and validate the software tools which would allow all citizens – some of who may already perceive what is happening to them but currently find it difficult to evidence or validate their own perceptions to the necessary satisfaction of criminal justice systems – to both capture, evidence, share, store & retrieve, and finally validate their beliefs about the criminality and neo-terrorisms they are being subjected to.
3. Achieve that the UK, the EU, and the UN eventually incorporate the figure of neo-terrorism on the individual in their legislations, charters, etc., as well as accepting the admissibility in such systems of the evidence produced by the tools and procedures.

Abstract

Terrorism aims to induce a very public fear into the masses via efficient and cost-effective acts of violent theatre. Neo-terrorism on the individual (NOI) involves terrorising concrete and discrete individuals over extended periods of time, via covert, stealthy and difficult-to-share life events, subliminally sensed experiences, and sociophysical relationships. Such relationships and exchanges, couched in the main in visual communication systems and modes, are challenging to detect and therefore properly give credence to, even for the objects themselves of such acts of neo-terrorism; but are nevertheless impactful on the individuals they are aimed at, in both their ultimate life and professional trajectories.

Research reference- and starting-points

Particular reference- and starting-points for the research will look to Edward Snowden's 2013 paradigmatic revelations into total surveillance by the US National Security Agency (NSA), the UK Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ), Western and other countries' tech companies, and other organisations both governmental and a-governmental, published by newspapers such as the UK *Guardian* ; Oliver James' assertions on selfish capitalism and mental health in English-speaking countries compared to other cultures, from his book *The Selfish Capitalist – Origins of Affluenza* (2008); Emma Bell's writings on neoliberalism and the impact it has had on the criminal justice systems in Western liberal democracies in her publication *Criminal Justice and Neoliberalism* (2011); Colin Crouch's writings on neoliberalism's impact on Western liberal democracies and economies more generally, in his Fabian pamphlet *Coping with Post-Democracy* (2001); and Pablo Torija's econometric study on voting and representational patterns across the political spectrum in OECD countries since the 1970s, *Do Politicians Serve the One Percent? Evidence in OECD Countries* (2013).

The assumptions on which this PhD is grounded

In the light of the authorities and starting-points already quoted:

1. It is assumed that neoliberalism is a fact, and exists, and has since the 1970s impacted on living standards, government policy, criminal justice, mental health, education, and security.

2. It is assumed that neoliberalism does not need to be a *de facto* conspiracy for its impact on societies' structures to deliver the same effect as if conspiracy were the structure used to implement it.

3. It is assumed that left-wing actors in particular were brought up, after Marx and social democracy more generally, to believe in a slow but sure progression towards what they saw as a better world. History turned not so much on events and individuals as on movements.

4. It is assumed that far-right actors[3] in particular have never forgotten the lessons of key individuals, their lives and deaths, and their speeches and concrete actions in the making of societies' dynamics.

5. It is assumed in all this, as a result, that it is more likely for neo-terrorism on the individual as defined above to be a tool for toxic impact on democratic societies, rather than for unpredictably benevolent effects. It would be appropriate to mention, in this respect, the recent data scandals with respect to Facebook, Cambridge Analytica, the Brexit Leave campaign, and the alleged Russian online intervention in free and democratic process in the US and elsewhere.

6. It is assumed that the most effective kind of mass terrorism combines technology with real-world effects. And similarly, it is therefore also assumed that neo-terrorism on the individual would act no differently.

The purpose of using academic diversity

The purpose of using authorities from such diverse disciplines – and authorial traditions – as starting-points for the investigation under discussion will be to lay the ground rules for a PhD that explicitly suggests it is possible to evidence in government, criminal, and corporate organisations in all sectors of Western societies, behaviours with the same overall impact as sophisticated conspiracies. It is the starting hypothesis of this PhD proposal that the criminal actors alluded to use similar – and possibly shared with the former – cyber- and street-tools,

---

[3] https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2019/sep/19/fastest-growing-uk-terrorist-threat-is-from-far-right-say-police

with the objective of degrading residually – but sufficiently to impact – the socioeconomic and sociophysical experiences of Western, notably English-speaking, liberal democracies. In particular, Snowden, Bell, and Torija help to deliver data which supports the assumptions as worthy of further study, in a academic framework.

Experiment 1, and the model of observation

The research will propose an experimental model of observation, in two parts. The first part is held in a simulation of a street environment. All participants will be advised beforehand, in keeping with current academic practice, of their participation. This participation shall be voluntary at all times, and the right to withdraw at any time shall also be maintained and guaranteed. Equally, at all times to final close of the project, they shall maintain the right to withdraw from final conclusions the data their participation generates.

In a perfect world, and with the highest ecological validity possible, real streets and unknowing participants would be observed, nudged, and mentally distressed into taking certain pathways in their lives and professional careers. However, thankfully it must be asserted, such experiments in academia (elsewhere it is not possible to confirm) should hopefully no longer be possible.

An alternative to this original idea, and of much sounder ethical standards, has been devised to address the issues raised by university authorities in early drafts of this proposal. It is now suggested that all observation take place in a street space defined specifically for the experiment over a period of three continuous months, which only participants themselves inhabit. Such participants will be signed up for the experiment, in the full knowledge that they are participating in a psychological exercise. They will not, however, know what will happen, be done, or to what purpose. This, from an ethical point of view, may still cause challenges for university ethics' boards, but in order to achieve the data this project requires, it is judged for the moment that no further information about the background of the hypothesis underlying the experiment, or even a simplified version of the hypothesis itself, could be given.

The observation will use the theory of the picture superiority effect, debated it is true but interesting and of theoretical value all the same, to inform its process, procedures and data-capture approach and analysis. In the space defined specifically for the purpose, both true

participants (individuals who have no knowledge of the nature of the experiment, only that it exists), and false participants (working for the people responsible for the PhD's exp erimental side) will be engaged by street and other socially located behaviours. These behaviours will be recorded visually, on video and via other means, and it is suggested that using AI-recognition systems and software, a post-analysis of facial cues, movements, body language and others will aim to uncover an undercurrent of highly interventionary nudge, barely perceived by most citizens in an overt sense, and yet designed to subliminally and proactively influence citizens' actions, lives, and professional trajectories, as well as their key decision-making processes, events and moments, in order to deliver actionable societal and economic outcomes beneficial to those carrying out the nudge involved.

Background to Experiment 1's design

It is argued that with the onset of profilic online social media communication, and tools such as Google Street View and Earth, it has become possible to assess, profile, and control not only the behaviours, expectations and predictable responses of discrete individuals in society, in an individualised and targeted way which mass terrorism never implemented, but also to do so in highly public spaces, without taking ownership for the actions, without becoming visible for their delivery, and without having to resort to public discourse of an easily recordable nature in any way.

Essentially, such actors use cyber-tools which leak into and have a robust impact on the real-world environments which they not only both observe and track but also both modify and intervene in, using the online and street tools alluded to. The purpose of such interventions may be to simply persuade people coming into public discourse of the virtues of not continuing such a move, especially where against the interests of those performing this covert nudge. Alternatively, it may serve the purpose of proactively and definitively driving people into the arms of severe mental distress, either permanently – or, simply, convincingly enough that not only the individual in question but, more importantly, their circle of friends and family fail catastrophically to give credence to the reality being denied. It might be argued that one reason for doing this be that the life and professional trajectories of talented and potentially society-changing individuals be impeded or redirected in some way or other useful to the actors of such nudge.

Experiment 2, and the intuition-capture software platform proposed

Were the line of thought delineated above to be evidenced, in any way, by the research that is proposed be carried out, it would be suggested, in considerable detail, that citizen-empowering software tools – designed to visualise intuitive and arational thought patterns, in the line of theories such as the already mentioned picture superiority effect – might be created, in order that people who have suffered, and are still suffering, from this kind of aggressive mental distress should find it easier to begin to read, filter and share sufficiently comfortably with others their experiences.

Background to Experiment 2's design

By promoting the practical application of intuition-capture tools, where these tools allow humans to communicate their own intuition and expertise more usefully from the inside out, rather than being intrusively engineered from the outside in, it is suggested that in situations and contexts of organised crime and neo-terrorism on the individual, it will be become practically easier and legally more admissible for victims to communicate their, to date, often intangible perceptions in concrete and validateable ways that speak the language of criminal justice systems everywhere.

This author therefore sees particular applications in the context of the policing of organised crime and gangs: that is to say, wherever the victims of mafia-like behaviours (these may occur just as much in nominally legitimate networks set up specifically for the purposes of legitimisation, as they might in those relationships more traditionally abusive of democracy) – being behaviours designed specifically to silence – are victims who may find it more difficult to evidence and validate their own more intuitive perceptions.

Put plainly: if an organisation, whether obviously criminal or apparently legitimate, controls the spontaneous development of any sovereign democratic individual, to the detriment of the individual and the benefit of the wider organisation, we are allowing one of the prime purposes of society and Western liberal democracy to be forgotten: such democracies are there to enable,

facilitate and support aspirational individuals, whatever the level of their aspirations, to deliver on their life's dreams.

The final, but primary, goal of this tool – to share intuitive and arational thought patterns captured by and from citizens, and to criminal and other systems in both inclusive *and* efficient ways – is that as a result of such evidencing and validation software processes and tools, courts, judges, lawmakers, and politicians, as well as decision- & policy-makers at wider levels of government, might be able to rationally and evidentially both give credence to and act democratically upon the same, and in so doing create a more humane, efficient, resourceful and constructively creative world.

Mil Williams, Chester UK, 24th February 2020