

FREEDOM OR SAFETY, THE DILEMMA OF TECHNOLOGY-BASED SURVEILLANCE SYSTEMS IN THE CONTEXT OF E-GOVERNMENT APPLICATIONS

A Case Study of Citizens' Perceptions on the Surveillance in Aydın-Turkey

Ali Erdem AKGÜL

Dr.

Adnan Menderes University

alierdemakgul@gmail.com, aeakgul@adu.edu.tr

Résumé

Cet article se propose de répondre aux questions suivantes : Les technologies de l'information renforcent-elles la position des citoyens face à l'État? La société obtient-elle une gouvernance plus démocratique en raison des applications du e-gouvernement? Ou est-ce le contraire? Les personnes pourraient-elles être suivies, surveillées et reçues sous surveillance plus facilement? Lorsque la «sécurité» est en cause, l'état de «consentement» pour se défaire de la liberté personnelle et de la vie privée sera analysé.

Mots-clés

E-Government, Surveillance, confiance, liberté, sécurité

Abstract

This paper aims to assess following questions: Do information technologies strengthen citizens 'position` against state more? Does the society get a more democratic governance due to the E-government applications? Or is it vice versa? Could people be tracked, be monitored and be received under surveillance easier? Is the tendency to be able to budge from some rights and freedom seen in question of "security"? When the "security" is in question, the "consent" state for budging from personal freedom and privacy will be analyzed.

Key Words

E-Government, Surveillance, Trust, Freedom, Safety

INTRODUCTION

The emergence of informatics revolution overshadow even the current mass media's history with the development of computer technology and Internet technology has spread opportunity to communicate so that there is no period, literally millions of people at all levels in the organization are connected by a network. Such social organization of a restructuring process is an improvement that can be expected. Just as information technologies democratize the production, sharing and distribution of knowledge; in the institutionalized relationship available for hundred years and also exposed to constant change among ‘citizens with the state, directed with the managed’ can also mean drastic changes as well.

The agenda of searching new ways and methods for establishing, continuing the relations is natural. Because connecting the citizens who are getting more demanding to the system through the democratic participation is required. The usage of information and communication technology in governance has brought e-government and e-democracy applications on the agenda. In this context, important changes in the concept of citizenship are emerging.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The state is a social and political phenomenon that has been for centuries. Country, human society, power and legal-political order are the main elements of the state (Poggi, 2012: p.15). At the same time the state is undergoing certain transformations over time. Today certain changes which the state is undergoing is being observed. Today information technology has become one of the indispensable basic elements of life of individuals and society and it has resulted in the emergence and development of new managerial models. "E-government" is the most important of these models (Sanders, 2004: p.212).

Information systems have been started to be used to perform the activities under such names as e-government and e-transformation, particularly in public sector and among these activities, registration of personal data is an important issue. The usage of personal data registering based projects rises day by day in such procedures as numbering the citizens and online registration data processing under the name “MERNIS project” (Central Register Management System).

Likewise, the rise of the activities regarding the personal data registration brought the security matter into question in this issue. Accordingly, the data security problem has become a matter in practice rather than a matter in theory.

According to Lyon (1997: p.30-32), the sociologist did not take a deep interest in the discussion regarding the private life and data protection apart from a small number of exceptions. To investigate the issue is considered as the job of other disciplines. Therefore, it is essential to make sociological investigations on this field ignored. Lyon emphasizes that

there are even infiltrations into houses in today's condition. It seems that there is not even one single place left to hide in anymore and all places happen to be open to all public and transparent, invisible to us but visible to others. The protective walls of privacy are in a digitally destroyed condition. Without regard to how the privacy is perceived in the past, this conception is today closely related to avoidance from the surveillance.

As the surveillance becomes denser and denser in all fields of social life, the privacy gains importance more and more to preserve some personal information and to provide supervision for the circulation of this information without any restrictions.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study, which is based on a field survey, aims to investigate the condition regarding the 'freedom – security' contradiction of e- government practices within the scope of technology based monitoring systems. "Survey" technique was applied via face to face interviews in all neighborhoods in city center. Closed-ended, open-ended and semi-ended question types were used in the survey. In the analysis of data obtained from the surveys the SPSS 18 program (Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences) was used. Descriptive analysis for determining the current situation was done with this work.

Also, purposeful/purposive sampling technique was used in this study. For the purpose of taking advantage of the sampling techniques; to cover different segments of society, in accordance with the purpose of reaching all segments in all neighborhoods it is aimed to provide maximum variety in the city center of Aydm. Thus, the detection and resolution of the current situation is aimed to be provided. A total of 650 questionnaires were applied in this framework.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Data of General Characteristics the Participants in the Survey Application:

The survey consist of a set of sample 650 people. Considering the gender distribution of the sample set, the rate of male population is 49.5%, the rate of female population is 50.5%. Data on the age distribution of those who were included in the sample surveyed is as follows: Ages between 18-24 years 27.1%, ages between 25-32 years 31.5%, ages between 33-40 years 17.5% years, ages between 41-48 years 10.5%, ages between 49-56 years 8.6%, ages between 57-64 years 4.0% and ages over 65 years 0.8%.

Data of respondents' marital status in the sampling is as follows: 47.8% single, 47.1% married, 2.3% widowed and 2.8% divorced. Within this research, the data of respondents' education status in the sample is as follows: 0.6% illiterate, 3.2% literate, 15.4% graduated from primary school, 27.7% high school and vocational school graduates, 10.5% university students, 35.4% graduated from university or college and 7.2% post graduate .

Respondents' vocational / work-oriented data in the sampling is also as follows: 20.2% civil servants, 6.2% workers , 9.1% artisans, 6.2% self-employed, 21.8% of private sector employees, 1.1% industrial-trader, 13.2% students, 5.7% were retired, 16.6% unemployed.

Data of the participants' approach to “e-government and civic relations in the context of perceptions”:

Table-1:

Do you have any information about e-government?	Frequency	Rate (%)
Yes	464	71.4
No	186	28.6
Total	650	100

The proportion of who have any information or aware of e-government (electronic government) is 71.4% in the sample set. The rate of 28.6% is not aware of it. So those who were included in the sample survey, part of 71.4% use e-government; or even though has not used, has information about it. 28.6% have no information about the e-government or are not aware of it.

Table-2:

Do you rely on government services made on the internet?	Frequency	Rate (%)
Never Trust	42	6.5
No Trust	122	18.8
Neutral	250	38.5
I Trust	209	32.1
I Trust Much	23	3.5
No Answer	4	0.6
Total	650	100

Attitudes towards processes done on the internet of government services are as follows: "I do not trust" 6.5%, "do not trust" 18.8%, "Neutral" 38.5%, "I trust" 32.1%, "I trust much" 3.5% and "No Answer" 0.6%. According to research findings, the rate of total trust in e-government processes done over the Internet is 35.6% . In this context, the rate of those who tend not to have confidence is 25.3 % in total. Another remarkable point here is indecisives' high rate of 38.5%.

Table-3:

Do you think e-government put the security and confidentiality of personal information at risk?	Frequency	Rate (%)	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
I certainly do not think	22	3.4	4.7	4.7
I do not think	140	21.5	30.2	34.9
Neutral	104	16.0	22.4	57.3
I think	126	19.4	27.1	84.4
I certainly think	36	5.5	7.8	92.2
No idea	36	5.5	7.8	100
The cluster who shouldn't be responding to this section of the survey	186	28.6	-	-
Total	650	100	100	-

In the sample set; 28.6% have no information about the e-government or are not aware of it. For this reason, these participants can not answer to some questions in the questionnaire. Therefore, in this study, some tables presented with the valid percentage.

Answers to the question ‘‘whether e-government imperil security and confidentiality of personal information’’ are as follows: ‘‘I certainly do not think’’ 4.7%, ‘‘I do not think’’ 30.2%, ‘‘Neutral’’ 22.4%, ‘‘I think’’ 27.1%, ‘‘Definitely I am thinking’’ 7.8% and ‘‘No Idea’’ 7.8%. Findings show that the level of rates for those who think e-government imperil ‘‘security and confidentiality of personal information’’ (which is 34.9% in total) and the level of rates for those who do not think in this way (the 34.9% in total) are the same. However, it should not be overlooked that one out of every three people have anxiety in this context.

Table-4:

Do you think you are monitored because of systems based on technology?	Frequency	Rate (%)
Yes	356	54.8
No	191	29.4
No idea	103	15.8
Total	650	100

In the sample set, the proportion of those who think that they are monitored because of technology-based systems is 54.8%; the percentage of those who think they are not monitored is 29.4% and the ratio of those who had no idea about it is 15.8%. These findings show that surveillance sentiment is in high status because of the systems based on the technology.

In this context, there are many approaches and debates in the literature. ‘‘Surveillance’’ phenomenon is one of the topics discussed today. Surveillance today is not a new specific application. But it came to the fore with the development of technological tools. Today, depending on the rapidly developing trend of information technology, all the rest of everyday life and social relations within both private and public areas are affected by this process. Current dimensions of the concept ‘‘surveillance’’ is essential to be examined which has the

central character in sociological point of view and is effected by advanced information technology.

Table-5:

If you think you are monitored because of systems based on technology, how often do you feel in this way?	Frequency	Rate (%)
The cluster who shouldn't be responding to this section of the survey	294	45.2
Every Time	82	12.6
Often	82	12.6
Sometimes	141	21.8
Rarely	51	7.8
Total	650	100

The percentage of those who think they are not monitored is 29.4% and the ratio of those who had no idea about it is 15.8%. Total of them (45.2%) are the cluster who shouldn't be responding to this section of the survey.

In the sample set, among those who think they are monitored because of systems based on technology, the data that how often they feel in this way is as follows: "Every Time" 12.6%, "often" 12.6%, "sometimes" 21.8% and "rarely" 7.8%.

Table-6:

If you think you are monitored because of technology-based systems; on what issues do you feel that you are monitored?	Frequency	Rate (%)
The cluster who shouldn't be responding to this section of the survey	294	45.2
Telephone speeches	52	8.0
Internet use; social media accounts, IP addresses of e-mail and computer	53	8.2
Cameras-Mobeses (CCTV)	37	5.7
Bank account activities,issuance of TC ID to many places, tracking chips in cars and GBT (Criminal Record Check)	23	3.4
Physical follow	16	2.5
Political issues and newspaper / magazine I read	37	5.7
Security of personal information/data and privacy / confidentiality	39	6.0
That the rapid pace of technological advances also increasing the possibility of surveillance / tracking creates unease and escalates the concern of becoming a "surveillance society"	40	6.2
I fear that citizens are labelled	32	4.9
My sentiment that being monitored is in limited level, I do not think being monitored intensively I think this risk is greater in people in certain strategic locations	27	4.2
Total	650	100

The proportion of data of "Those who think being monitored because of technology-based systems, on which issues they feel this" is as follows: "Phone calls" 8.0%, "Internet use; social media accounts, IP addresses of e-mail and computer (Internet Protocol Address)" 8.2%, "Cameras / Mobeses" are 5.7%, "the Bank account activities, giving TC (Republic of Turkey) ID numbers in many places, monitoring chips in the cars and GBT (Criminal Record Check)" 3.4%, "Physical track" 2.5%, "Political issues and newspaper / magazine I read " 5.7%, "Personal information / data security and privacy/secretcy" 6.0%, "that the rapid pace of technological advances' increasing the possibility of surveillance / tracking is creating unease and escalates the concern of becoming a surveillance society" 6.2%, "I fear that citizens be labeled " 4.9%, "My feeling spied on is at a limited level, I do not think surveillance conducted intensively ; I think this risk is greater in people in certain strategic locations " 4.2%.

According to these findings, it is obvious that the citizens are being felt monitored in many areas. In fact this situation reveals what the supervision and control come to size and how they are perceived by the people. In this context, it can be argued that issues such as "the security and confidentiality of personal data, privacy" will remain on the agenda and discussed much.

They are sociologically important findings that the technological developments have increased the monitoring facilities and that the citizens state their worries about being a surveillance society. This fact shows the contradiction that technological developments have disadvantages as many as its advantages. It is of great importance that this is figured out by a number of citizens.

Furthermore, according to the Turkish Value Study carried out country wide in Turkey in 2012; the number of people worrying about a possible intrusion into their phone lines and their e- mail boxes amounts to 52% (internethaber.com, 2012: p.5). In this study, it shouldn't be neglected that the rate of the people worrying about a possible follow-up for their phone talks and e-mails has remained too high.

Table-7:

What do you think about the usage of Mobese Camera Systems etc?	Frequency	Rate (%)
I feel safe	155	23.8
I feel spied	64	9.8
I find useful	289	44.5
I consider very common use of it is intervention to private life / privacy	97	14.9
No idea	36	5.5
Other	9	1.5
Total	650	100

In the sample set, the rate of data that how the use of the systems "Mobese (Mobile Electronic System Integration) camera etc. is met" is as follows: "I feel safe" 23.8%, "I feel being watched" 9.8%, "I find it useful" 44.5%, I consider the very widespread usage of it intervention in private life / privacy" 14.9%, "no idea" 5.5% and "others" 1.5%.

Here the most striking point is that in many stages of research, while many feedbacks were taken from the critical aspect in the context of security of supervision, control and personal data, there has mainly emerged useful and positive findings in the context of the usage of the Mobese camera systems etc. (city surveillance camera systems) in this question. In "Other" category, trend that "Surveillance cameras should not be placed everywhere because it is disturbing" has come to light.

Here the emergence of trend of sacrificing certain rights was identified when it comes to security. Seeing the practical benefits of practices that contribute to safety, a positive trend has come to fore about the Mobese cameras.

Is it allowed to sacrifice the privacy, confidentiality and personal freedoms when it comes to security of the people as seen in terror events in the USA and Europe recently? A number of discussions are present in the literature regarding this issue. For instance, considering the situation after 9/11 attack as a fight against terror and later on as a state of war, the USA governance has claimed that these attacks may have an influence on the balance of freedom and security and that the civil rights may be evaluated in various ways in case of wars.

“Cross tables” created between certain questions in order to improve the comparison opportunity in research framework:

Table-8:

		How do you evaluate the use of Mobese Cameras?						Total
		I feel myself secure	I feel myself monitored	I find it useful	I consider its extensive use is intervention to the privacy	No idea	Others	
Do you think that you are monitored due to the Technology Based Systems?	“Yes”							
	Frequency	70	51	136	85	5	9	356
	Rate (%)	% 19.7	% 14.3	% 38.2	% 23.9	% 1.4	% 2.5	% 100
	“No”							
	Frequency	61	7	107	6	10	0	191
	Rate (%)	% 31.9	% 3.7	% 56	% 3.1	% 5.2	% 0	% 100
	“No idea”							
	Frequency	24	6	46	6	21	0	103
	Rate (%)	% 23.3	% 5.8	% 44.7	% 5.8	% 20.4	% 0	% 100
	Total							
	Frequency	155	64	289	97	36	9	650
	Rate (%)	% 23.8	% 9.8	% 44.5	% 14.9	% 5.5	% 1.4	% 100

We see the following when we interpret the table above: Many people think they are being monitored because of systems based on technology. However, including a large part of those who think they are watched; mobese cameras are generally found useful. This point is very important; because parallel to "when it comes to security liberty may remain in second" approach datas seem to have emerged here.

While "yes, I think I am watched" trend is mainly available to the question "Do you think you are monitored due to technology-based systems?" ; there is a noteworthy "I find it useful and I feel confident" trend answer to the question " How do you think about using the systems like Surveillance cameras etc.?"

When it comes to safety, emergence of compromising certain rights trend is one of the many discussions held over the recent situation. For example; as it is seen in some of the events like 9/11, *Charlie Hebdo* terror attacks and other crime incidents, concession to compromise individual freedom, private life or privacy can be argued when the case is "security". The results from this research support that "security" has priority.

Table-9:

		Do you think that you are monitored due to the Technology Based Systems?			Total
		Yes	No	No idea	
Do you think that e-government endangers the safety and secrecy of personal information?	“Absolutely, I do not” Frequency Rate (%)	10 % 45.5	11 % 50	1 % 4.5	22 % 100
	“I do not” Frequency Rate (%)	52 % 37.1	74 % 52.9	14 % 10	140 % 100
	“Neutral” Frequency Rate (%)	65 % 62.5	20 % 19.2	19 % 18.3	104 % 100
	“I do” Frequency Rate (%)	102 % 81	12 % 9.5	12 % 9.5	126 % 100
	“Absolutely, I do” Frequency Rate (%)	34 % 94.4	2 % 5.6	0 % 0	36 % 100
	“No idea” Frequency Rate (%)	17 % 47.2	7 % 19.4	12 % 33.3	36 % 100
	Toplam Frequency Rate (%)	280 % 60.3	126 % 27.2	58 % 12.5	464 % 100

According to the findings of the research, there is an overlap between the endangering of the personal data security and privacy by e-government and the surveillance by means of technology based systems. Those who think that e-government endangers the privacy and secrecy of personal information also think that they are monitored by technology based systems on a large scale.

Even 40% of those who are of the opinion that the privacy and secrecy of their personal information are not endangered do think that they are watched through the technology based systems. These outcomes demonstrate that surveillance, wiretapping events experienced recently have an influence on the people. The tendency or in other words the worry of being monitored, wiretapped, traced and endangering their personal data and privacy turns out to be present.

There is another part of people who think that this is a side effect of technological developments. However, their number is less when compared to others. These findings give clues about how the technological developments are assessed regarding pros and cons. It has been emphasized many times that technological developments do not bring a pure improvement and the other side of the medallion should be taken into account as well.

Table-10:

		How do you evaluate the use of Mobese Cameras?						Total
		I feel myself secure	I feel myself monitored	I find it useful	I consider its extensive use is inervention to the privacy	No idea	Others	
Do you think that e-government endangers the safety and secrecy of personal information ?	“Absolutely,I do not”							
	Frequency	9	0	11	2	0	0	22
	Rate (%)	%40.9	% 0	% 50	% 9.1	% 0	% 0	% 100
	“I do not”							
	Frequency	38	9	78	11	3	1	140
	Rate (%)	% 27.1	% 6.4	%55.7	% 7.9	%2.1	%0.7	% 100
	“Neutral”							
Frequency	19	9	52	14	4	6	104	
Rate (%)	% 18.3	% 8.7	% 50	% 13.5	%3.8	%5.8	% 100	
“I do”								
Frequency	14	17	52	39	4	0	126	
Rate (%)	% 11.1	% 13.5	% 41.3	% 31	%3.2	% 0	% 100	
“Absolutely I do”								
Frequency	9	7	10	8	0	2	36	
Rate (%)	% 25	% 19.4	% 27.8	% 22.2	% 0	%5.6	% 100	
“No idea”								
Frequency	8	5	19	4	0	0	36	
Rate (%)	% 22.2	% 13.9	% 52.8	% 11.1	% 0	% 0	% 100	
Total								
Frequency	97	47	222	78	11	9	464	
Rate (%)	% 20.9	% 10.1	% 47.8	% 16.8	%2.4	%1.9	% 100	

The findings of the research revealed that the majority of the people thinking e-government practices don't endanger the safety and secrecy of personal information consider mobese cameras useful and reassuring. The most conspicuous point here is that even almost half of those who think that e-government practices may harm the privacy of the personal data find the usage of mobese camera systems useful and reassuring. In this respect, it can be concluded that the camera existences in daily life is considered to be advantageous. The thought that mobese camera systems provide benefit and contribute to the security is quite overwhelming.

As regard to the usage of mobese camera systems, the "other" category emphasizes that placing cameras everywhere is irritating and that there might be some abuses rather than using it for absolute security. These statement and approaches indicate that there are some problems to occur on the issue of trust.

CONCLUSION

As a result, one of the effects of the information technologies on the individual and the society is their relevance to the confidentiality and private life. Electronic technology which gradually becomes more complicated and improved has started to penetrate into all dimensions of daily life. Thus, a new social structure seems to be formed and new relation kinds may also come out.

Likewise it is possible to say that individuals and societies are more vulnerable to tracing, controlling and directing through technology. The information technologies facilitate the monitoring and controlling, and they also provide great opportunities for these processes. This can result in narrowing of the privacy and secrecy. Therefore, it is necessary to make sociological surveys on the relation between information technologies and privacy.

Does internet strengthen the position of the individual and make him/her freer in this respect? Does a society become more democratic or possess a more democratic environment via Internet? Or does the other way around happen and are the societies easily traced, monitored and kept under surveillance? These kinds of discussions seem to remain and keep going on. We also encounter the finding among those coming out with this research that the measures should be taken against the negative effects of the technology as it is impossible to avoid using it completely. Nonetheless, the dimension of the worries about these negative effects of technology is in a remarkable level.

The claims that such information technology practices as e-government may harm the privacy and secrecy of personal data are one of the most important obstacles in front of the prevalence of these practices (Aydın, 2012: p.529). The findings of this research also support this idea. A number of citizens claim that they are monitored through e-government or similar technology based systems.

Another remarkable issue among our findings is that a number of participants are of the opinion that they are monitored due to the technology based systems. However, mobese

cameras are mainly considered useful even by those including people thinking that they are watched.

This contradiction is of great significance as such outcomes are revealed that people sacrifice their freedom when it comes to their security. Whereas people are mainly tend to answer the question of “do you think that you are monitored due to technology based systems?” by “Yes, I do think that I am monitored”, it is striking that they also answer the question of “how do you evaluate the usage of mobese cameras?” by “I find it useful and I feel myself secure”.

It is one of the situations about which many discussions are going on recently that the tendency occurs to sacrifice some fundamental rights when it is all about the security. As seen in the terror events and some crime occasions in the society such as the 9 /11 attacks and *Charlie Hebdo* attack, “consents” can be shown to sacrifice the personal freedoms, privacy and confidentiality if the security is in question. The outcomes of this study also support the idea that security is privileged. The opinion that mobese camera systems provide benefit for daily life and contribute a lot to the security is quite overwhelming.

In the literature, there are a great number of discussions and approaches regarding the privacy, surveillance and safety and secrecy of the personal data, and these issues become more and more up-to-date. It is evident that this condition has and also will have some sociological consequences; there is no doubt that sociological surveys are needed about the foregoing issues.

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