Leading Communitarian Takes Shot At Technocrats

Amitai Etzioni is the modern academic father of Communitarianism, which elevates the 'common good' over individual rights. It stands diametrically opposed to liberalism and libertarianism. Etzioni does not grasp that Technocracy also preaches the same common good, except that it is Technocrats who decide what is good for the majority of society. Communitarianism was first used in 1841 by John Goodwin Barmby who led the Chartist movement; it referred to utopian socialists and those who were experimenting with communal lifestyles. Communitarianism is also used to describe authoritarian societies like Malaysia, Singapore and China.

Just as Communism has been a natural enemy of Technocracy since the 1930s, Communitarianism likewise opposes Technocracy for the same reason, ie, how will the common good be determined and by whom? ⁂ TN Editor

Speech is too important for technocrats to control. Elected officials and

the courts should be the main controllers—and they should control only when there is a clear and present danger to our security and to our democratic process.

Strong voices from both ends of the political spectrum have called on tech companies to be more responsible, to remove from their platforms any material that offends community mores and that manipulates elections. Actually, as I see it, over the last few years the tech corporations have blocked or deleted staggering amounts of messages and ads, including material which, if removed from offline publication, would lead even moderate defenders of free speech to go ballistic. Moreover, each tech corporation is making its own rules about which speech it allows and which it blocks. These are not subject to public review and often impossible to figure out. Protecting speech—and figuring out the rare occasions people should be denied voice, should be censored—is too important to leave to Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg and his fellow tech tycoons.

Some argue that because tech corporations are private companies, they cannot censor, only the government can. Some who are legally-minded hold that the First Amendment states that Congress shall make no law abridging the freedom of the press, not that private companies cannot control messages. Also, given the differences in policies among the various companies, if one closes a door, there is likely another that leaves that door open. Only the government can prevent access to all mediums and thus truly censor.

One must note, though, that these companies control a very large amount of the communication space and that exercise control over many subjects. Hence, if they restrict someone's access, that person's speech is greatly limited. Anyone denied a voice by Google, Facebook, and Twitter will find it very difficult to reach the masses through social media.

For many years, the tech companies avoided responsibility for the content that people posted on their social media sites, claiming that they are merely platforms, not publishers. However, more and more public leaders have begun to argue that tech companies should control content.

These views reached a high point following the revelations about Russia's meddling in the 2016 U.S. elections and its drive to sow social discord through coordinated social media misinformation campaigns. The tech companies responded by hiring tens of thousands of moderators to review posts and remove material they consider too violent, lewd, hateful, or misleading. Typically, moderators have as little as ten seconds to review a post. They can hardly take much longer, given the astronomical number of posts that must be reviewed. No wonder their judgment is often highly arbitrary and always rushed. The companies are also increasingly using artificial intelligence algorithms to deny speech. Artificial Intelligence seems to incorporate the biases implicit in the mass media, for instance favoring men over women in gaining access to ads about high-paying jobs.

While conducting research on the misuse of social media platforms for a journal of the National Academy of Sciences, I was stunned at the sheer amounts and the wide range of grounds that the tech companies can use to justify removing social media posts. For example, in three months, between July and September of 2019, YouTube removed over 8.75 million videos. Of the videos removed, over 4.75 million were removed for being spam or misleading. Well, by this standard, I would block one news network and its followers would likely block the news network I am following. Over 1.35 million videos were removed for violent or graphic content and over 1.25 million were removed for nudity or sexual content, however, what is considered graphic and sexual varies a great deal from one community to another. Hence, the courts by and large have allowed such speech to be made offline. Why are tech companies being more pious?

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Behavior Modification: Medications Can Change Who We Are

What is the cumulative societal effect of drug saturation by Big Pharma? It's big part of why our nation is dysfunctional: Statins, anti-depressants, asthma drugs, vaccines, ad infinitum. Big Pharma blatantly refuses to take any responsibility. ⬜ TN Editor

"Patient Five" was in his late 50s when a trip to the doctors changed his life.

He had diabetes, and he had signed up for a study to see if taking a "statin" – a kind of cholesterol-lowering drug – might help. So far, so normal.

But soon after he began the treatment, his wife began to notice a sinister transformation. A previously reasonable man, he became explosively angry and – out of nowhere – developed a tendency for road rage. During one memorable episode, he warned his family to keep away, lest he put

them in hospital.

Out of fear of what might happen, Patient Five stopped driving. Even as a passenger, his outbursts often forced his wife to abandon their journeys and turn back. Afterwards, she'd leave him alone to watch TV and calm down. She became increasingly fearful for her own safety.

Then one day, Patient Five had an epiphany. "He was like, 'Wow, it really seems that these problems started when I enrolled in this study'," says Beatrice Golomb, who leads a research group at the University of California, San Diego.

Alarmed, the couple turned to the study's organisers. "They were very hostile. They said that the two couldn't possibly be related, that he needed to keep taking the medication, and that he should stay in the study," says Golomb.

Ironically, by this point the patient was so cantankerous that he flatly ignored the doctors' advice. "He swore roundly, stormed out of the office and stopped taking the drug immediately," she says. Two weeks later, he had his personality back.

Others have not been so lucky. Over the years, Golomb has collected reports from patients across the United States – tales of broken marriages, destroyed careers, and a surprising number of men who have come unnervingly close to murdering their wives. In almost every case, the symptoms began when they started taking statins, then promptly returned to normal when they stopped; one man repeated this cycle five times before he realised what was going on.

Antidepressants may not just lighten moods, they may also reduce expressions of neuroticism, research suggests (Credit: Getty Images)

According to Golomb, this is typical – in her experience, most patients struggle to recognise their own behavioural changes, let alone connect them to their medication. In some instances, the realisation comes too late: the researcher was contacted by the families of a number of people, including an internationally renowned scientist and a former editor of a legal publication, who took their own lives.

We're all familiar with the mind-bending properties of psychedelic drugs – but it turns out ordinary medications can be just as potent. From paracetamol (known as acetaminophen in the US) to antihistamines, statins, asthma medications and antidepressants, there's emerging evidence that they can make us impulsive, angry, or restless, diminish our empathy for strangers, and even manipulate fundamental aspects of our personalities, such as how neurotic we are.

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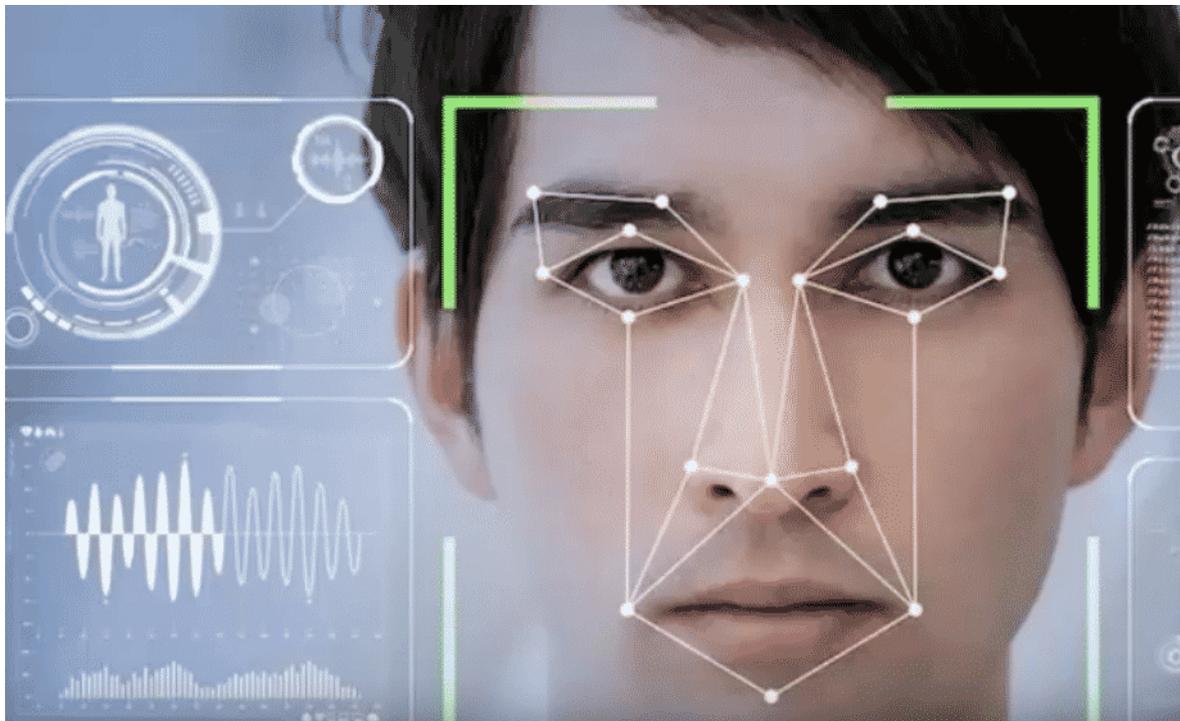
Shock: U.S. 4th Worst Abuser Of Biometric Privacy Rights

The Chinafication of America is well underway. The only three countries with a worse record than the U.S. are China, Malaysia and Pakistan. This should be a massive wake-up call for all Americans to demand that this madness be stopped. ⊕ TN Editor

Does anyone really believe America is still the land of the free?

Collection and storage of biometrics by country
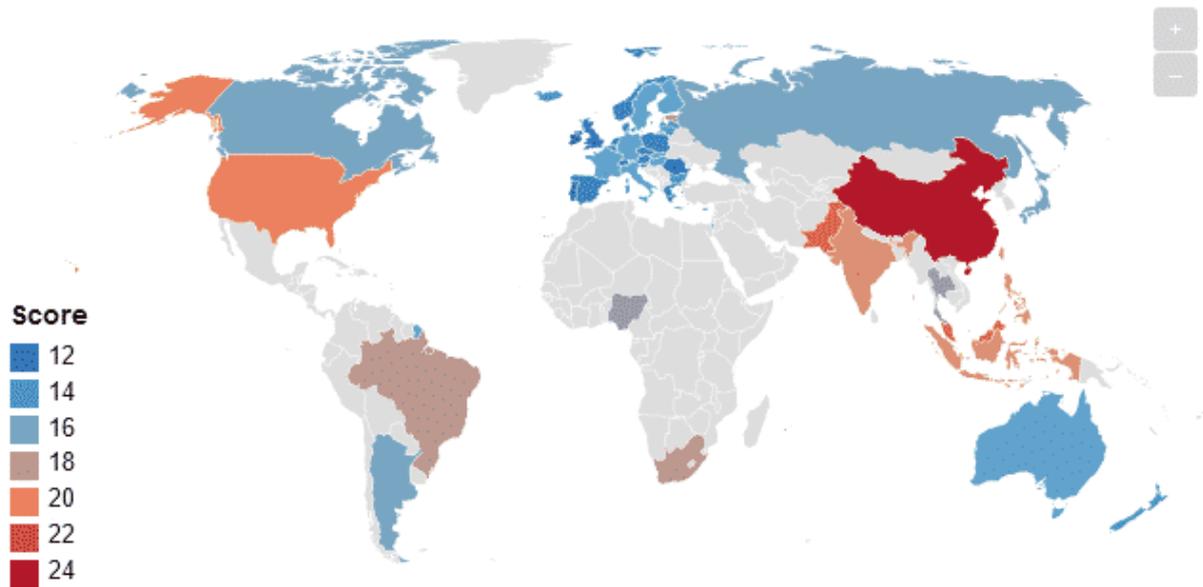
Since 9/11, DHS, the FBI, the CIA, and countless other alphabet soup agencies have turned the United States into a public surveillance monstrosity.

In 19 years, one terrorist attack has done what no one else could have dreamed of: turn America's freedoms into a distant memory.

Abusing citizen's rights and privacy used to be the hallmark of dictatorships and police states like the CCCP or North Korea.

A recent study conducted by Comparitech, rated 50 countries from best to worst at protecting citizen's biometric data.

The study found that America is one of the world's worst abusers of citizen's biometric privacy.

"While China topping the list perhaps doesn't come as too much of a surprise, residents of (and travelers to) other countries may be surprised and concerned at the extent of biometric information that is being collected on them and what is happening to it afterward."

This really should not come as a surprise, because last year Comparitech

[revealed](#) that American and Chinese cities lead the world in spying on their citizens. Last week, I wrote an article explaining how 2019 would go down as the year that [facial recognition and corporate surveillance](#) became commonplace in America.

Comparitech's recent study on biometric privacy compared how 50 countries collect and use data to identify innocent people:

- Many countries collect travelers' biometric data, often through visas or biometric checks at airports
- Every country we studied is using biometrics for bank accounts, e.g. fingerprints to access online app data and/or to confirm identities within the banks themselves
- Despite many countries recognizing biometric data as sensitive, increased biometric use is widely accepted
- Facial recognition CCTV is being implemented in a large number of countries, or at least being tested
- EU countries scored better overall than non-EU countries due to GDPR regulations protecting the use of biometrics in the workplace (to some extent)

The USA is the 4th worst abuser of citizen's biometric privacy

Rank	Country	Score
#1	China	24/25
#2	Malaysia	21/25
#3	Pakistan	21/25
#4	USA	20/25
#5	India, Indonesia, The Philippines and Taiwan	19/25

Comparitech warns, "these 5 countries show a concerning lack of regard for the privacy of people's biometric data." That's right, the former ["land of the free"](#) has become the land of the surveilled and tracked.
How can that be you ask?
According to Comparitech, the United States scores highly in most areas due to:

- Having biometrics in passports, ID cards, and bank accounts.
- Having a biometric voting system (optical scan equipment used

in a large number of states).

- Not having a specific law to protect citizens' biometrics. While there is a handful of state laws that protect state residents' biometrics (as can be seen in our state privacy study), this does leave many US citizens' biometrics exposed as there is no federal law in place.
- Implementing the widespread use of facial recognition cameras with law enforcement pushing for further use in the identification of criminals. For example, the FBI and ICE have recently been criticized due to their use of facial recognition technology to scan drivers' license photos without gaining the citizens' consent beforehand. Equally, some city-level bans have been put in place with San Francisco (CA), Oakland (CA), Berkeley (CA), and Somerville (MA) banning government use of facial recognition technology.
- The growing use of biometrics in the workplace. Many companies use employees' biometrics for certain actions, e.g. using a fingerprint to gain access to a work computer. Again, some state laws offer a little more protection but this still leaves many employees' biometrics exposed.
- Fingerprints being required for most American visas and everyone's fingerprints being collected upon entry to the country.

Curiously, Comparitech failed to elaborate on DHS's national Real-ID program which forces everyone to provide biometric information to drive or fly in America. If they had included Real-ID in their study it is my opinion that America would be 2nd only to China in abusing citizen's biometric privacy.