Abstract

AI-powered video surveillance is a heated issue in the European Union which has given rise to a very polarised debate. On the one hand, proponents advocate for its ability to make cities safer and better protect people. On the other hand, opponents are concerned about the technology's threat to fundamental rights and individual freedoms, such as the right to privacy or fear of the risk of discrimination. European institutions have started attempts at regulating the technology but have so far been struggling with the development of a broad regulation that accounts for the diversity of applications found in AI-powered video surveillance, protects citizens, and encourages innovation at the same time.

This dissertation therefore investigates how to implement responsible use of AI-powered video surveillance for predictive policing purposes. To do so, the analysis is divided into two parts which correspond to the two main branches of application of AI-powered video surveillance: object-centred and person-centred AI-powered video surveillance. It first uses securitisation theory to situate the debate. Next, it uses Document Analysis and coding to analyse the qualitative data. The qualitative data encompasses policy and technical documents to allow for a nuanced approach to the issue that accounts for the actual capabilities and limitations of the technology. For each of these case studies, the author looks at the opportunities and challenges of the application of the technology. Opportunities include technical capabilities as well as positive implications to better protect citizens. Challenges include technical limitations as well as negative implications for human rights. Understanding the opportunities and challenges of AI-powered video surveillance is a necessary step toward the development of adequate and proportionate regulation. They are also used to develop a roadmap for responsible use of AI-powered video surveillance.

Finally, this dissertation argues for the need to challenge the wider system in which AI-powered video surveillance is embedded to implement responsible use of the technology. It claims that the debate should also look beyond the technology itself and question current crime prevention and predictive policing practices. The latter is focused on the notion of pre-crime, the belief that law enforcement should work towards the reduction and elimination of crime rather than responding and investigating it. Such an approach is characteristic of the risk society in which we live, a model of society obsessed with the control of risk rather than of harm. Thus, current crime prevention practices are embedded in policing practices, sometimes to the detriment of more sustainable and long-term solutions based on broader socio-economic policies. The

responsible development of the technology cannot be done without considering alternative options that may be more appropriate.