Abstract

Emerging technological trends have opened the possibilities for information manipulation across multiple platforms resulting in a power shift from the state to its citizens. This study takes on three cases as exemplars which will demonstrate how technology fabricates power in liberal states, causing a power dynamics shift. Each of the case studies will illustrate how technological vigilantism in one form or another allows for the citizen emancipation. The erosion of the relationship between the perpetrator and victim will also be discussed as private and public tracking devices becomes widespread. The initial findings suggest that the introduction of private software tracking has amplified the rate at which the state’s monopoly over security and surveillance is eroding. Representing three key sections of a society — public, private, and civil — the cases analyzed show that each section is moving towards micromanagement meaning that citizens are taking the law into their own hands, despite high police competency. Find My iPhone, Twitter, Snapchat, Facebook, as well as other social networks and tracking software help support the rise of technology vigilantes. The state’s monopoly over security and surveillance is in turmoil. Thus, this multi-case study will take on a discussion between two potential outcomes—one stating that technological vigilantism reinforces the liberal state, and the other stating that it erodes it and causes an anti-systematic empowerment of the people. Through the analyzation of multiple cases including the case studies, this study does not believe that technological vigilantism reinforces the liberal state. Rather, through the proliferation of technology, emancipation of the people leads to the erosion of what is the current basis of a liberal state.

Keywords: technological vigilantism, anti-systematic, emancipation, monopoly

Extent of study: 17 068 words, 108 311 characters