

Educational progress data as an informational life form, Idil Kula

In this piece of paper, I will give an example for the informational data form then I will argue on the potential threats, possible solutions to those threats and will explain the relationship between the item I chose and the political survival.

Data on educational progression of a child can be given as an example for an informational life form. To deepen the context, it can be said that -with the help of increased digitization- the educational data of children are stored here and there both by public or private entities based on the education system. This particular informational form is not stable, but to the contrary, is actively evolving due to the development of skills, abilities and growth of a child in time. This type of information can change, cumulatively evolve and have inevitable interactions and effects on the environment in which it is being come into life, created, retained and processed.

Regardless of the entities who are collecting this type of data, it has been claimed that the collection and retention processes are on behalf of the well being of children or for the prosperity of public educational systems. However, with the lockdowns which are brought by the chances of pandemic, the abovementioned justifications for the data collection of children within the context of educational needs seem quite undermined. So to speak, there are claimants and concerns for the [Edtech companies](#) which are harvesting child educational data from schools with an intention to 'help' children and educational bodies. Furtherly, those companies use the educational data of children to train their algorithmic systems -generally predictive, suggestive AI algorithms- . Having algorithms trained merely on the data of children can have a significant impact on children's careers or educational life paths. For example, important decisions can be made based on the suggestions and predictions that are generated by those algorithmic systems. Brought in by the conclusion of those kinds of applications and being required to do develop to algorithmic systems work 'well', children can be subject to inevitable mass profiling and labelling. While the children are one of the most vulnerable groups of society, stuck into the labels and tags, it would be extremely dangerous for discovering children's deeply planted skills and abilities, thoughts and emotions. Reasonably, it would harm the agency and the authenticity of the children as a result.

There are also some cases that are at stake in terms of [collecting educational data from institutions by Big Tech companies](#). Moreover, without a profound and clear consent mechanism for the privacy of the children, [the families and children are pushed to 'click.ok.continue' to the privacy invading technologies](#) such as school issued laptops and educational cloud services. As expected, these educational services and products are subject to the terms and conditions of the contracts which are made between schools -or public ministries in some other geographies- and private EdTech companies. It is hard to see an inclusion process for families and children - who are the main objects of the discussion- in such negotiations, if any exists !

Apart from above mentioned threats in the context of privacy, consent and mass profiling by private companies, state surveillance can be another risk for the children's educational data. To this end, one can note that this scenario can be related to the political affiliations. Where strict state surveillance can be at stake, young people and children can be

pushed to make certain choices for their 'academic welfare'. This type of forcing can be occurred in mixed forms of public and private engagements. States can steer the way for private EdTech companies to provide the most 'desired and needed' educational services and devices.

To bring solution to these threats, I would suggest a formal and compulsory algorithmic audits for those who harvest and use the child data for their EdTech services and products. For the state surveillance and its potential inducement, democratic institutions should be powerful and well-structured. In a police state, the authorities do not feel themselves bound by the rule of law, democracy and universal human rights legislations and jurisprudence. Not to have a 'yellow democracy concept' with fraudulent and ineffective democratic processes which are -only- namely existent, the societal infrastructure to welcome democratic institutions must be strong. Otherwise, it would be very easy to give up on human rights on behalf of the tyrannical governments. Injustice , government oppressions and fear culture are the main three reasons not to have a say in such circumstances in which the data are handed over to the private companies or in which the state surveillance becomes an unbearable application.

With an aim to make an explanation about the relationship between political survival, educational progress data have a lifetime evolution from the very first ages of a person to the mature achievements. In any stage of this particular changing and evolving form of information , the data at stake can be manipulated, impacted by the strict surveillance or by the lack of privacy and consent. The educational survival of an individual can subtly become a tricky playground of the public and private entities for their profit concerns or more dangerously for the enhancement of certain political moves of the governments. These extreme labelling and categorization facilitations will result in an considerable increase in the agency, authenticity and the autonomy of the citizens both in parts and by individuals.

Note: There is no ample research in Turkey. The points I bring into the discussion above are almost non-existent here in the context of remote education and EdTech services and products. Even if there were some disputes or cases, they wouldn't be discussed either, under the light of suppressions and fear culture. It is even hard to make any peaceful statement of thoughts -let alone assembly and protest rights.