CORVINUS UNIVERSITY of BUDAPEST

From Promise to Peril:

AI Risks and Opportunities for Minoritised Communities

NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF AI ON MINORITISED COMMUNITIES

AI-Powered Surveillance & Oppression

China's AI-driven surveillance recognizes Uyghurs based on ethnic markers. Coupled with other systematically collected biometric data, this system enables ethnic profiling, detention, and other targeted measures against politically undesirable individuals.

AI Blends with Social Credit Systems

China's Social Credit System monitors and punishes Uyghurs for "undesirable" behaviour. Restrictions are imposed on travel, employment, and online activities based on information gathered through AI-powered tools.

Digital Censorship & Misinformation

Chinese AI-powered chatbots deny or manipulate facts about Uyghur detention camps. They promote state narratives or conceal truth by refusing to generate answers.

Reproductive Suppression & Privacy Violations

AI-driven tracking systems allow social engineering of Uyghur women's reproductive health to enforce birth control and sterilization. Vast manpower is used to gather data on every household, e.g. through the "Pair Up and Become Family" campaign since 2013 that involves sending more than 1.6 million Han Chinese government cadres to live in the homes of Uyghur families to assess resistance to cultural assimilation, and to surveil religious and cultural practices.

Weaponization of AI for Predictive Policing

Xinjiang's IJOP (Integrated Joint Operations Platform) collects biometrics (including DNA samples, voice samples, fingerprints, iris scans, and blood types of all residents in the region between the ages of 12 and 65) and combines this information with police reports, vehicle surveillance checkpoints, banking and healthcare records, and data on online behaviour to detain Uyghurs arbitrarily in the framework of the "Strike Hard Campaign against Violent Terrorism" that began after the riots of Ürümqi in May 2014.

Image Generated by Leonardo AI

Erasure of Cultural Heritage

AI-powered tracking assists in targeting religious cultural sites and practices, including the demolition of Mosques, cemeteries, and heritage sites. "People are being detained on 'ridiculous charges', such as 'abnormally long beards' or 'wearing veils'. Detainees are not allowed to pray, forced to eat pork and drink alcohol. The Chinese authorities created a list of banned 'overly religious' names, mostly of Arabic origin. China has destroyed thousands of mosques, historical buildings and graveyards in an attempt to vanish all non-Chinese cultural heritage." - Farkhat Ibragimov, human rights activist - UN Minority Forum statement from 2023.

POSITIVE EFFECTS OF AI ON MINORITISED COMMUNITIES

Language Revitalization & Cultural Heritage Protection

AI-powered translation and speech recognition tools support endangered languages. Example: The FLAIR initiative in Canada assists Inuktitut, Ojibwe, and Cree communities in language revitalisation.

Counteracting Algorithmic Bias

Ethical AI development projects promote fairness in machine learning models and debiasing AI. Example: Montréal University's 'Bias & Discrimination in AI' course.

AI Tools Enhance the Efficacy of Existing Education Practices

AI-driven educational platforms provide learning opportunities for minoritised communities. Example: Māori Te Kohanga Reo language nest programmes can be integrated with AI for immersive language learning.

AI as a Tool for Digital Equality

Government partnerships with AI developers to improve linguistic inclusivity. Example: The Icelandic government's collaboration with OpenAI to preserve the Icelandic language.

Social Media & Gaming for Community Mobilization

Example: Minecraft Java Edition was translated to North Sámi in 2020. The effort involved translating 14,000 words and creating new terminology to allow for the enhancement of Sámi native language skills during gameplay.

Empowering Digital Participation

Examples: AI tools help minoritised communities create digital content in their native languages. Community-participation-based initiatives: The GAITU and Euskorpus project supports the creation of Basque language databases that can be used by companies to provide AI-related services in the Basque language. Projecte Aine for Catalans does the same.

AI has a Janus-faced nature. It is a neutral tool, the impact of which depends on human intentions. Consequently, AI has negative and positive use cases simultaneously based on the extent to which users respect international norms on protecting the human rights of minorities.