

## **Total Reputation Society**

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In "Postscript on the Societies of Control", Giles Deleuze proclaimed that a shift is underway from societies operating upon disciplinary power, which functions in enclosed panoptical institutions, to what he called societies of control, which operate upon free-floating coercive training mechanisms that follow people wherever they go. China's social credit system, intended to become mandatory across the nation in 2020, is a realization of such a society of control. With social credit each individual is continually tracked, inspected, and assigned an ever-modulating point score, based upon one's adherence to party dictates of acceptable speech and behavior. Depending on the score one can either be granted access or impeded from accessing a broad array of societal goods. I argue that we are creating something similar in the West to China's "social credit" system, but through privately held means rather than through the state, as might be expected of a more decentralized capitalist society versus a centralized communist society. We are building a total reputation society where one's ever-modulating reputation online, often in quantifiable form, increasingly determines the level of access to societal goods from jobs, to college admissions, to loan rates, to being "dateable" or even having friends. Maintaining a good online reputation becomes like a license of "trustworthiness" to freely access society, with the public as the accrediting agency, and the scope of inspection unlimited. One's reputation, however, is out of one's control and subject to the ongoing surveillance and punishment capacities of a public equipped with advanced recording devices and permanent global broadcast capabilities. I conclude that the West risks developing a society of control by the public, rather than by the state, but it may become comparable in its chilling effects to China's social credit system.