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### The Religious Calculus of Privacy

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# **The Religious Calculus of Privacy**

*TREO Talk Paper*

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## **Abstract**

The main types of privacies include information privacy, physical privacy, and decisional privacy. Information privacy refers to personal facts a person does not want to reveal to others. The term physical privacy is concerned with preventing intruders from interfering into physical space or properties of a person. Decisional privacy refers to the autonomy of a person in making his own decisions without interference from others. Both informational privacy and physical privacy are typical research topics in information systems research. Yet, decisional privacy has not captured the attention of information systems scholars. We describe decision-making as a system that has inputs, processes, outputs, and a feedback mechanism. An aggressor could invade into decisional privacy of another person through altering the inputs of this system, disrupting its processes, or damaging or freezing the outputs- the decisions that have been taken.

Scholars from legal studies, social sciences, information sciences, and philosophy dominate the wisdom of privacy. Very few studies addressed privacy from religious point of view. One of these scholars is Bélanger's (2011) who holds that religious traditions and culture could serve as a foundation for self-regulations, laws, code and privacy related policies. Cannataci (2009) also argues that dealing with privacy-related issues demands us to consider the larger context, diversity, culture, religion, and local social processes. The privacy calculus theory, coined by Culnan and Bies (2003), holds that people compare between the cost of disclosing personal information and the benefits they gain. Inspired by their view, we attempt to explore whether individuals consider the religious cost-benefit analysis of privacy.

In fact, all Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity, Islam) have a decent account of wisdom that disgrace espionage, gossip, rumors, backbiting, slander, and intrusions, to name a few. For instance, spreading rumors is forbidden in the bible as it says, "...if you call someone an idiot, you are in danger of being brought before the court. And if you curse someone, you are in danger of the fires of hell." (Matthew 5:22). Similarly, in Judaism peering into private space (which is a violation of physical privacy), of others is considered an act of harm (Golinkin 2020). In addition, the Jewish traditions honor confidentiality of information and disgrace intrusions. Equality, Islam has a decent a count of wisdom that honors informational privacy, physical privacy, decisional privacy, and bodily privacy.

When the legal system, organizational regulations, and physical controls fail to control privacy invasions, we should search for and deploy other systems such as morality or religious cost-benefit analysis. The religious calculus is an important regulator of the daily life affairs of many societies and a primary source of their culture as well as jurisdiction. In particular, it reshapes the values, preferences, beliefs, and judgment of the decision-maker. In addition, some religious societies may treat an individual as a persona non grata if his behavior does not coincide with their religious traditions and morality. Therefore, its members avoid espionage, backbiting, spread rumors, and infringement on others' properties for religious calculations. People may guide others or avoid influencing their decisions for the same calculus. Given the previous views, I argue once more that there is a need for interdisciplinary research to explore how religious traditions and morality improve the quality of decisions related to both routine choices and strategic decisions of consumers, workers, and managers. Data will be collected through a questionnaire.

## **References**

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