

# Important issues on the use and abuse of data

David Zetland

LUC, FGGA

Data Science and Good Governance, Wijnhaven  
27 Jan 2017

# My background

- ▶ Grew up in Silicon Valley
- ▶ Worked a few years designing, merging, managing databases
- ▶ Research focus on government failure, monopoly and regulation (mostly via water)
- ▶ Data matters, e.g., “how much groundwater is left?”
- ▶ Focussed on “social welfare” (i.e., no advertisements)

# Governments and data governance I

Government of India's Aadhaar ("foundation") program started as private initiative. It uses a biometric identification card with a national number that can confirm identity via an open-API.

- ▶ Reduced fraud in benefits
- ▶ Stimulated innovation ("credit" rating)
- ▶ May be part of leap-frog strategy (cashless society)
- ▶ Cost \$900 million. Saved 2x that on LPG fraud *in one year*
- ▶ Already debates over privacy, crime-fighting, exclusion

## Governments and data governance II

- ▶ G of China planning “social credit score” to control citizens online/offline
- ▶ G of US “do not fly” lists have false positives. G loses lots of important data. Trump wants names of “climate workers”
- ▶ G of TR arresting “disloyal Gulenists” (a là Jews in NL)

**Bottom Line:** Governments can manage data via democratic means or abuse their power. Independent checks, transparency, etc. are necessary.

## Companies and data governance

Advertising is systematic lying.

“If the product is free, then you are the product”

- ▶ Google search manipulation can swing votes by 20 percent
- ▶ Facebook can manipulate “feelings” via feed
- ▶ Fake news persists longer than science, in echo-chambers (<http://www.pnas.org/content/113/3/554.full>)
- ▶ Facebookistan’s 1.8b “citizens” lack rights or data ownership

Network effects give market power (eyeballs) that is sold to advertisers. Algorithms (WMDs) distort what we see, who we meet, and our environment.

**Bottom Line:** Ad-supported platforms are harmful and more harmful when they are bigger in terms of non-accountable damages. Regulation is necessary (but not sufficient!)

Thank you!

Dr. David Zetland  
Leiden University College  
Anna van Buerenplein 301, Den Haag  
[d.j.zetland@luc.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:d.j.zetland@luc.leidenuniv.nl)