**A Structural Model and Manifesto for Data Justice for International Development**

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### Abstract

With growing use of data in international development, there is growing interest in data justice. One argument is that this must best be understood in terms of structural data justice (SDJ): the degree to which society contains and supports the data-related institutions, relations and knowledge systems necessary for realisation of the values comprised in a good life. But only hypothetical models of SDJ have been proposed to date.

The purpose of this paper is to take one of the proposed SDJ models and revise it on the basis of experience with field studies of big data and other new data streams in India and Kenya. Those field studies produced three tests of a data justice model, asking whether it can encompass: the impact of social structure on data systems; the impact of data systems on social structure; and the role of datafication and related technological affordances. On the basis of the three tests, a revised and improved model of structural data justice is developed, which is commended as a conceptual frame to use in future research on data-intensive development.

The model is shown to incorporate all types of data justice, and to be of particular value to critical data studies in understanding how both “power over” and “power to” are exercised in data-intensive development. The model is also the basis for derivation of a “Data-Justice-for-Development Manifesto”, which can be used to guide development policy and practice.

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### Educators’ Guide

##### Synopsis Questions

1. What does the Heeks & Renken paper say about data justice? [Section A]
2. What field evidence is the basis for this paper? [Section B]
3. What are the three tests of a structural data justice model; and how are they used to revise the foundational SDJ model? [Section C]
4. In what ways is the revised SDJ model compatible with a critical data studies perspective? [Section D]
5. How can agency and capabilities be better-incorporated into the SDJ model? [Section D1]
6. What is the “Data-Justice-for-Development Manifesto”? [Section D2]

##### Development Questions

1. How useful is the idea of “data justice”?
2. Are the tests and revisions proposed by the paper appropriate and important to understanding data-intensive development?
3. Find a detailed study involving data and development. Can you apply the SDJ model to gain further insights? Are there further revisions to the model you feel are needed?
4. Which is more important to understanding data-intensive development: structure or capabilities?
5. Imagine you run a small rural development NGO. What might be the practical application of the “Data-Justice-for-Development Manifesto”?