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Prob and stat

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04-22-2013

The philosophy of data and what data can’t do by David Brooks

David Brooks described data-ism as the ability to describe huge amounts of data. Unlike the human brain which constantly confuses stuff based on our mood the data is always reliable. I agree with him when he said that “data allows us to filter out emotionalism and ideology” because people always have an opinion, like with the IQ tests people started circulating rumors like the results were in favor to certain group of people. Well no one really knows, but if was based on data the answer would have been cleared and straight to the point.

I love how he pointed out that sometimes we believe stuffs that are not real and how he gave the example of the election. It’s the same thing with some companies rely on tons of advertisement to sell their products. He also gave the example about how confident speak and the liars. He stated at the beginning of the article that data “will help us do remarkable things — like foretell the future. “This may or may not be true. I don’t totally agree with that because we are the ones gathering the data and we are wrong most of the time so maybe our data are also wrong. If so then the whole thing about global warming might be false.

In his article “What Data Can’t Do”he pointed out how sometimes decided based on instinct can be better than data by giving the example of the bank CEO. He also said that we don’t really need data in our social lives. Also that gathering a lot of data can result in fallacy and after that it might hard to correct those errors even if we were to find the truth because of the power of the brain. He also pointed out that there is nothing as raw data.

The reason why I became interested in this topic is that I don’t hundred percent believe in data. Brook in his article tried to prove that but I felt like he never really told us what he personally think about data. I found some information on first of all what data and biases are.

Data: “Facts and statistics collected together for reference or analysis”.

Biases: “Prejudice in favor of or against one thing, person, or group compared with another, usually in a way considered to be unfair”

I wanted to write about biases when it comes to education, and gender and I found an articles that gave some probabilities about which ethnic group goes to school more and why, and some reasons why men are considered stronger than women. I found this article called “Gender Bias when Hiring Scientists”, by Edyta Zielinska which talks about how “women are more likely to have a harder time getting a job in the sciences when pitted against male applicants”. To prove that, an experiment was made where 127 faculty members in chemistry, biology, and physics decided to apply for lab manager position. What they did was to randomly give male or female names to the application. The result of the experiment shows that “Both male and female professors were equally as likely to grade applications with a male name higher than those with a female name. Women were also offered lower starting salaries, on average, than men with identical application”.

 Brook saying that there are biases about data in his first article relates to my topic. It’s like he was contradicting himself because he first said that “data can predict future” then went on saying that data can’t be totally trusted because biases. For example in the article “Reliability of Self-Report Data”, Chong-ho Yu, Ph.Ds. talked about how it is important to sometimes and he stated that “It is important to note that sometime the reliability of our memory is tied to the desirability of the outcome. For example, when a medical researcher tries to collect relevant data from mothers whose babies are healthy and mothers whose kids are malformed, the data from the latter is usually more accurate than that of the former. This is because mothers of malformed babies have been carefully reviewing every illness that occurred during the pregnancy, every drug taken, every detail directly or remotely related to the tragedy in an attempt to find an explanation. On the contrary, mothers of healthy infants do not pay much attention to the preceding information”

I think that data is really useful, but at the same time we can’t forget things that are going around us and focus solemnly on it. I know that data helps us with our businesses and gathering information but I don’t really see how it impacts our daily lives. I think that if we all have the choice to choose whether know what’s really going on around us or not I think that we would all choose yes (I know I will), but if one little information of the data is off the whole thing is false and I might be thinking that I know everything when in fact I know nothing.

Work citation

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3. Brooks, David. “The Philosophy of Data”. New York Times 4 Feb. 2013: A23. Web. 1 Mar. 2013. <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/02/05/opinion/brooks-the-philosophy-of-data.html>
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