

Profiling the welfare state: upholding or updating human rights standards?

A case study of the Netherlands

ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates the use of profiling as a fraud enforcement instrument in the execution of the participation law, the law which regulates the 'bijstand' in The Netherlands, a form of social benefits. Taking a social science approach, we conducted elite-interviewing in 13 Dutch municipalities. Fraud enforcement officers were interviewed on the extent to which and the way in which they profile. We found a large amount of profiling instruments that were, have been or will be used, ranging from the most basic human profiling to very advanced Big Data systems. The way in which these instruments are applied and valued as a tool also greatly differs, though municipalities were unanimous in their disappointment in the tool. With regards to human rights the most prominent risks were found to be risks of discrimination, privacy, and the right to a fair trial, specifically the principle of innocence until proven guilty.

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