

Data Justice

Lina Dencik @LinaDencik

Cardiff University, UK

Data Justice Lab @DataJusticeLab



What do we do?

- Public launch: March 2017
- Situated within the School of Journalism, Media and Culture (JOMEC), Cardiff University, UK
- Directed by Dr Lina Dencik, Dr Arne Hintz, Dr Joanna Redden
- Expanding team (PhDs, post-docs, established scholars)

Projects:

- DATAJUSTICE – Starting Grant from European Research Council (2018-2023) 
- Data Scores: Investigating uses of citizen scoring in public services – Grant from the Open Society Foundations
- Data Policies: Regulatory Approaches for Data-Driven Platforms in the UK and EU (in collaboration with IT for Change) – Grant from IDRC India
- Data Harms Record

Events/workshops:

- First international conference on 'data justice' May 21/22, 2018 at Cardiff University
- Critical data literacy workshops – practitioners and civil society
- Critical data journalism / data justice journalism training

Structure of talk

- Part 1 – why ‘data justice’?
- Part 2 – what does a social justice concern bring to the study of data?

Part 1

Why data justice?



Digital Citizenship and Surveillance Society: UK State-Media-Citizen Relations after the Snowden Leaks



Managing 'Threats': Uses of social media for policing domestic extremism and disorder in the UK

The datafied society....



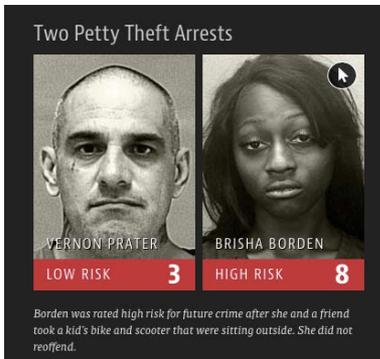
Refugee or Terrorist? IBM Thinks Its Software Has the Answer. *Defense One*



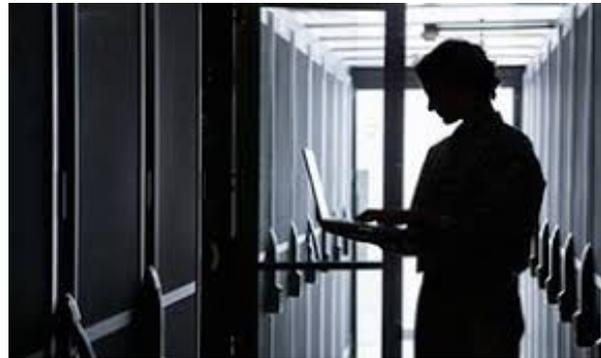
When your boss is an algorithm. *Financial Times*



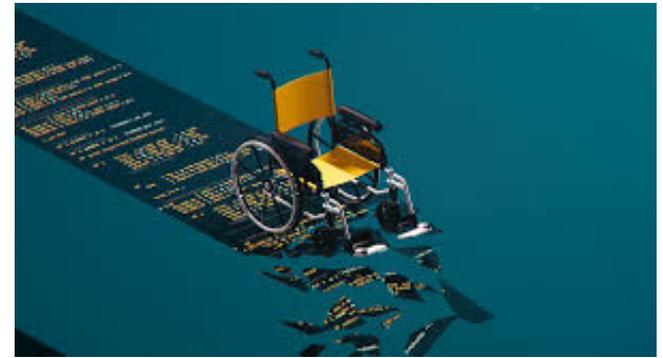
Can an algorithm hurt? Polish experiences of profiling the unemployed. *CIHR*



Machine Bias: There's software used across the country to predict future criminals. *Propublica*



New Zealand experts warn Australia data-driven welfare 'abuses and brutalises'. *The Guardian*



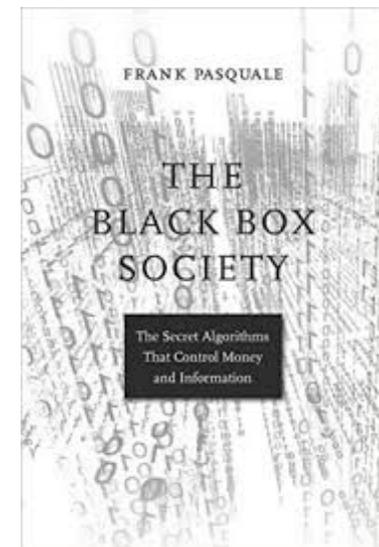
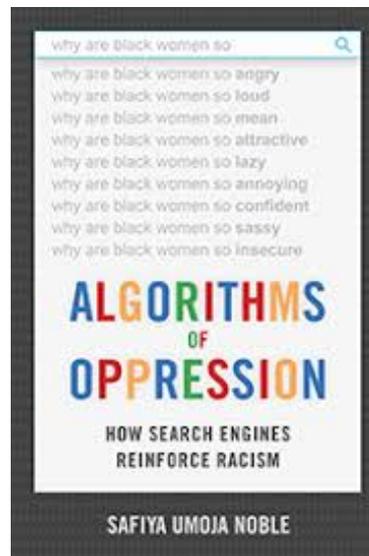
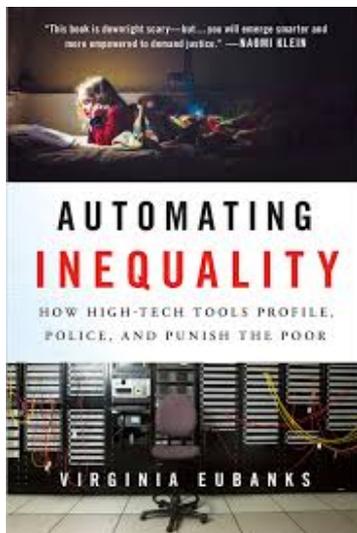
What happens when an algorithm cuts your health care. *The Verge*

What is at stake?

Dominant framing: efficiency / security vs. individual privacy and data protection

Emerging issues:

- Data processes advance prediction and preemption
- Data processes are uneven (social sorting)
- Data processes are premised on power asymmetry (data profilers vs. data subjects)
- Data processes can discriminate and exclude



Why 'data justice'?

- ➔ Implications of datafication go beyond individual privacy (social justice)
- ➔ Overcoming 'disconnect' in civil society (data as part of integrated social justice agenda)

Why the Data Justice Lab?

1. Shift the debate on the relationship between digital technologies and society
2. Broaden stakeholders in the discussion on datafication
3. Beyond US-centric research and debate

Part 2

What does a social justice
concern bring to the study of
data?

- Key themes in critical data studies
 - Epistemological and ontological assumptions
 - Ideological implications
 - Political economy
 - Democratic implications

How is (social) justice configured in data-driven systems?

- Vision of society (flat, decontextual?)
- Vision of human nature and behaviour (predictable, representational?)

Politics of social justice emerges in forms of 'dislocation' (Couldry and Hepp 2017):

- Data systems / lived experiences
- Data systems / protection of social + economic rights

Key social justice issues:

- In/visibility
- Representation(alism)
- Categorisation

Social justice approach

- Approach technology in relation to *practices* and *experiences*
- Avoid *data-centrism* in studying and understanding implications of datafication
- Situate data in the context of *social structures* and *interests*
- *Connect* critical data studies with other communities of practice and orientation

- Technology activism
- Policy activism
- Data activism
- Data ethics

What would 'data justice' as resistance mean?

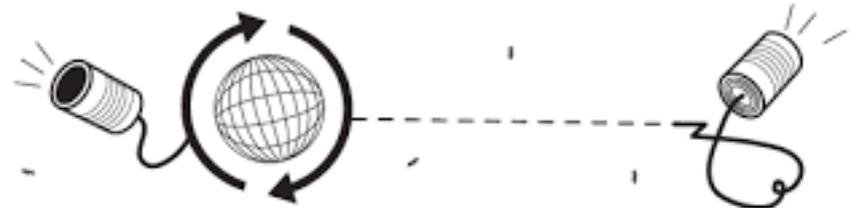
- Data justice – beyond techno-legal solutionism
- Data as a social and economic justice issue
- Systemic critique – alternative imaginations on the organisation of society
- Practical implications:
 - Collective
 - Inclusive
 - Perspective

EDGI

Environmental Data
& Governance Initiative



THE CENTER FOR
**MEDIA
JUSTICE**



**DETROIT DIGITAL
JUSTICE COALITION**

decode



•••• Data
•—• Justice
•••• Lab

Platform
Cooperativism

