

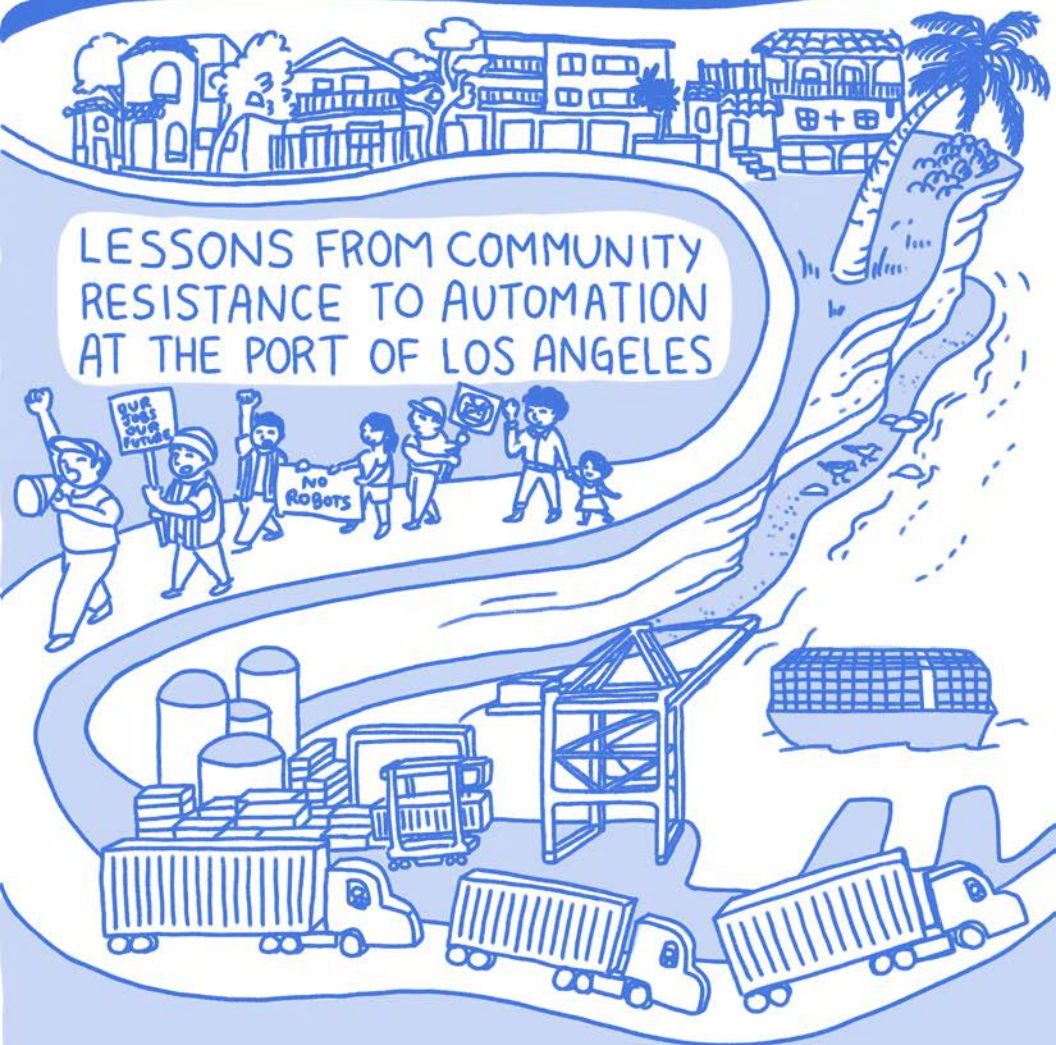
$$M\ddot{x} - mg\theta =$$
$$\ddot{x} + l\ddot{\theta} + g\theta$$
$$\omega = \sqrt{\frac{Mg}{M + ml}}$$

$$\rho \frac{\partial^2 w(y,t)}{\partial z^2} - \frac{\partial}{\partial y} \left( P(y,t) \frac{\partial w(y,t)}{\partial y} \right) =$$
$$M \frac{\partial^2 w(y,t)}{\partial z^2} - P(0,t) \frac{\partial w(0,t)}{\partial y}$$
$$P(y,t) \approx mg + pg$$

# AI FOR

# WHOSE GOOD?

LESSONS FROM COMMUNITY  
RESISTANCE TO AUTOMATION  
AT THE PORT OF LOS ANGELES



BY SOPHIE WANG AND TAYLOR M CRUZ





THIS IS A STORY ABOUT

COMMUNITY  
RESISTANCE

AGAINST

ARTIFICIAL  
INTELLIGENCE,

HOW THE EXISTING NARRATIVE  
RENDERED IT 'INVISIBLE', AND

HOW THE COMMUNITY  
WROTE THEIR OWN  
STORY INSTEAD.

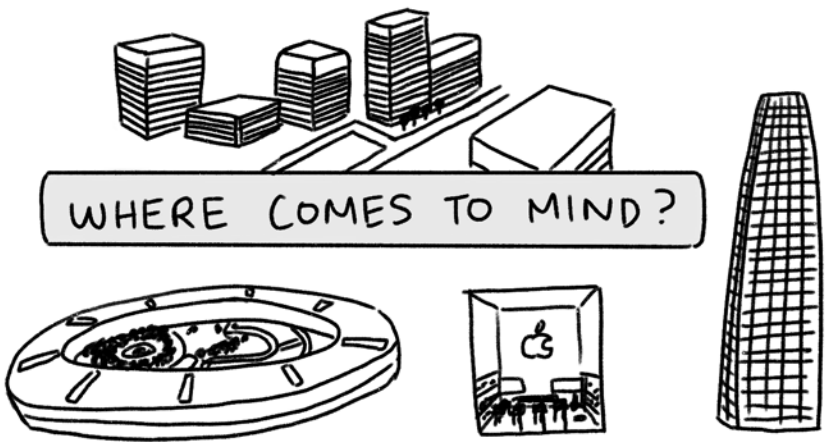
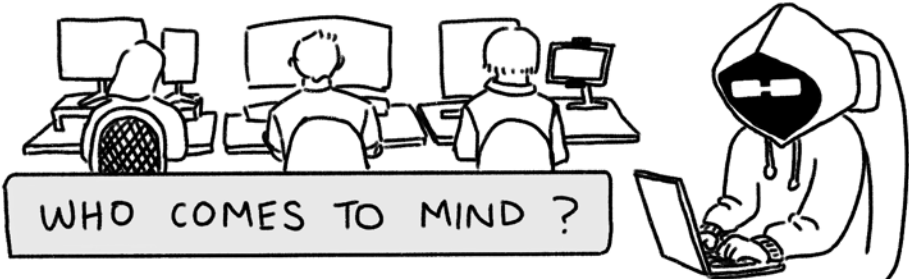
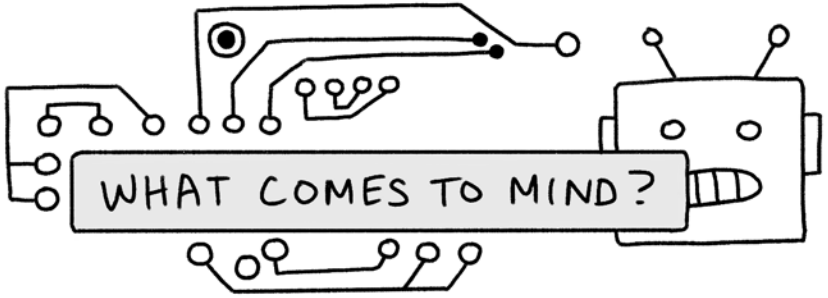


IT CONCERNS THE INTEGRATION OF AI,  
ALGORITHMS, AND MACHINE LEARNING  
INTO LOGISTICS WORK, SOMETIMES  
SIMPLY REFERRED TO AS

**AUTOMATION.**



WHEN YOU THINK OF AUTOMATION,



CONVERSATIONS AROUND AUTOMATION  
AND AI CAN OFTEN BE ABSTRACTED,  
ESPECIALLY WHEN WE GET INTO  
QUESTIONS OF ETHICS AND EQUITY.

THE ANSWERS  
SEEM TO...

ETHICS

... ALWAYS SORT  
OF EXIST...

EQUITY

... UP THERE.

JUSTICE

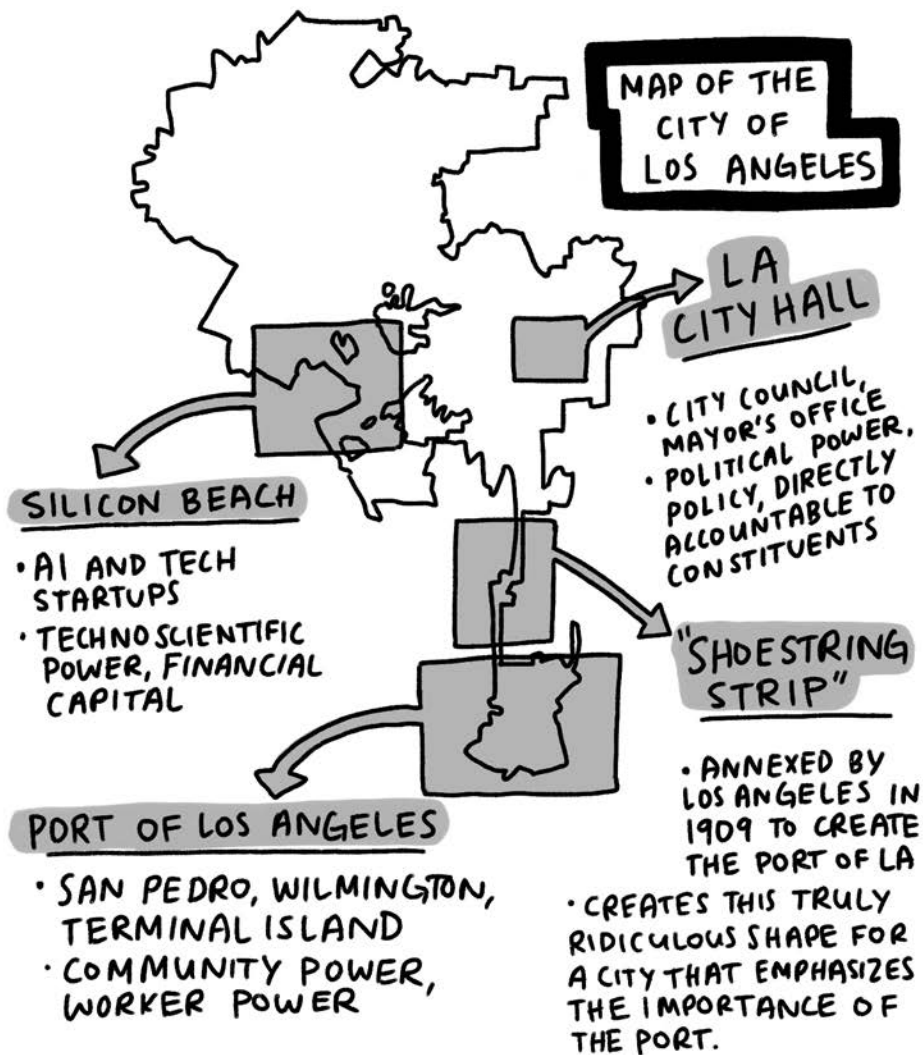
BUT AUTOMATION INVOLVES  
REAL SITES OF PRODUCTION AND,  
EVEN MORE IMPORTANTLY,  
REAL SITES OF USE.

SO LET'S MAKE THIS A REAL STORY,  
WITH A REAL PLACE - A REAL  
WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE,  
AND WHY.



THIS IS A STORY ABOUT LOS ANGELES.

IT'S A STORY ABOUT HOW ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE APPEARS IN MANY DIFFERENT PLACES IN MANY DIFFERENT WAYS ACROSS LA.



IT'S A STORY ABOUT HOW POWER APPEARS IN DIFFERENT PLACES AND DIFFERENT WAYS ACROSS LA.

IT'S ALSO A STORY ABOUT



# INFRASTRUCTURE:

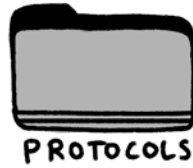
PEOPLE AND TECHNOLOGIES THAT OTHER THINGS RELY ON, BUT THAT OFTEN FADE INTO THE BACKGROUND.

IT INVOLVES MANY CHARACTERS...





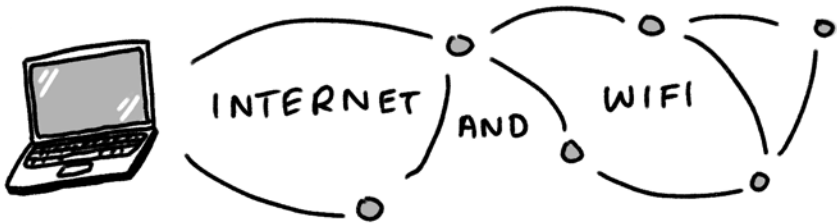
... ARTIFACTS...



AND



AND



... AND OFTEN TAKEN-FOR-GRANTED  
ARRANGEMENTS.

WHO COUNTS AS AN  
"AI EXPERT"?

WHO SETS THE TERMS  
OF THE DEBATE?

WHO SPEAKS FOR WHOM?

WITH SUCH A CAST OF CHARACTERS  
TO CHOOSE FROM, HOW DO WE DECIDE  
WHERE TO START THIS STORY OF AI +

# AUTOMATION?

LET'S LOOK TO 2 SCHOLARS WHO PROVIDE  
USEFUL INSIGHT INTO HOW KNOWLEDGE IS  
MADE, WHO WE BELIEVE AND TRUST, AND  
WHERE TO START RESEARCH AND INQUIRY -  
SCHOLARS OF FEMINIST EPISTEMOLOGY, -

→ THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE



SANDRA  
HARDING

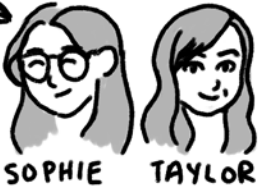
THE PRODUCTION OF KNOWLEDGE  
IS NOT VALUE-FREE, AND USUALLY  
RESPONDS TO AND REPRESENTS  
THE INTERESTS OF DOMINANT  
GROUPS. STARTING INSTEAD  
FROM THE LIVES OF THE  
OPPRESSED + EXPLOITED CAN  
PRODUCE LESS PARTIAL +  
DISTORTED BODIES OF KNOWLEDGE.



PATRICIA  
HILL  
COLLINS

KNOWLEDGE FOR KNOWLEDGE'S  
SAKE IS NOT ENOUGH. CRITICAL  
SOCIAL THEORY MUST BE  
COMMITTED TO JUSTICE FOR  
ONE'S OWN GROUP AND OTHER  
GROUPS.

SO FOR US, STARTING FROM THE LIVES OF THOSE WHO HAVEN'T BEEN DOMINANT IN THIS STORY OF AI AND AUTOMATION IS A POLITICAL STARTING POINT-



SOPHIE TAYLOR

IN OUR PERSONAL VALUES OF SOLIDARITY AND WORKER JUSTICE, AND RESPECT FOR HUMAN DIGNITY AND WELLBEING, AND OUR COMMITMENT TO BUILDING A WORLD WHERE EVERYONE CAN THRIVE.

SO LET'S BEGIN THERE, WITH THE COMMUNITY MEMBERS SITUATED IN A WORKING-CLASS, RACIALIZED AREA WHO ARE PART OF KEY INFRASTRUCTURE FOR ALL OF SOCIETY...



...YET ARE OFTEN MADE WITHIN

PUBLIC DISCOURSE

INVISIBLE

ON AI + MACHINE LEARNING.

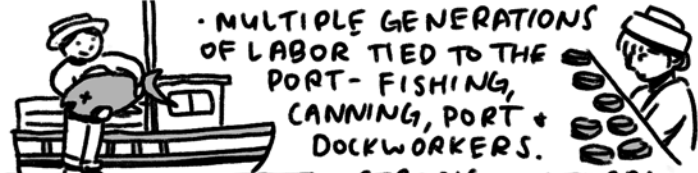
PART 1 : CENTERING COMMUNITY  
IN THE LA HARBOR

LET'S  
GO TO  
THE

# PORT of LOS ANGELES



# THE PORT OF LA IS IN THE LA HARBOR AREA. WHO IS THIS COMMUNITY?



• MULTIPLE GENERATIONS OF LABOR TIED TO THE PORT - FISHING, CANNING, PORT + DOCKWORKERS.

• STRONG CULTURAL IDENTITY + BLUE-COLLAR PRIDE TIED TO WORK.



• A STRONG ILWU PRESENCE + COMMUNITY ALIGNMENT, BOTH IN MEMBERS OF THE UNION AND NON-UNION PORT WORKERS, AS WELL AS OTHER NON-PORT WORKERS (LOCAL SHOPS, RESTAURANTS, ETC)



• A COMMUNITY OF IMMIGRANTS - HISTORICALLY JAPANESE, ITALIAN, MEXICAN, CROATIAN, NORWEGIAN, SWEDISH



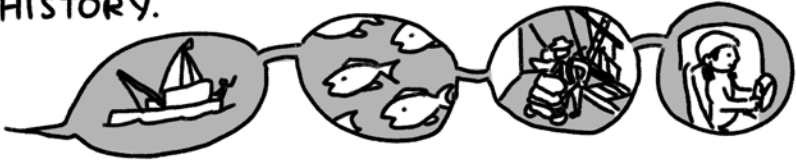
• ACTIVE ADVOCATES FOR THEIR SCHOOLS, CHILDREN, COMMUNITIES, PUBLIC SPACES SURROUNDING THE COAST, ENVIRONMENT AND WILDLIFE



• SPATIALLY ISOLATED FROM THE REST OF LA

YOU'LL HEAR MORE ABOUT THEM IN THEIR OWN WORDS IN A MOMENT.

THIS IS A COMMUNITY THAT REMEMBERS  
AND MEMORIALIZES (AND LIONIZES) ITS  
HISTORY.



THESE NARRATIVES ARE NOT ONLY IN THE  
PAST THAT CURRENT WORKERS COME OUT OF,  
BUT KEPT ALIVE TODAY.

AND A BIG PART OF THESE STORIES IS HOW  
PREVIOUS PROMISES KEPT AND BROKEN BY  
DISTANT POLICYMAKERS AND EXPERTS HAVE  
IRREVOCABLY CHANGED  
THE PEOPLE AND  
LANDSCAPE OF THE  
LA HARBOR REGION.



THOSE DECISIONS HAVE BROUGHT INDUSTRY  
AND THUS JOBS AND INCOME TO THE COMMUNITY...



ONE KEY SITE FOR THE LA HARBOR COMMUNITY IS THE PORT OF LOS ANGELES, AN ECONOMIC POWERHOUSE WITH OVER

\$276 BIL  
OF CARGO

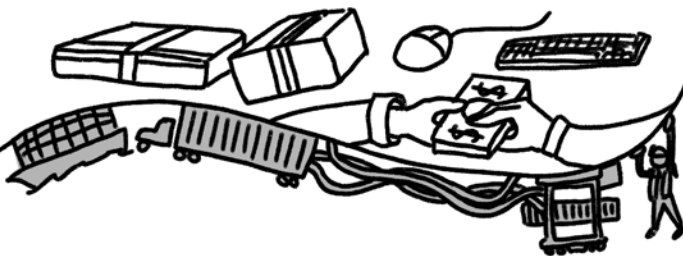
MOVING THROUGH IT IN 2019,  
AND A MAJOR EMPLOYER OF  
LOCAL COMMUNITY MEMBERS.

AND WHAT THE PORT SUPPORTS AND CREATES IS, WELL, COMPLICATED -

IT'S LIVELIHOODS AND COMMUNITY,



COMMERCE AND CONSUMPTION,



POLLUTION AND OVERDEVELOPMENT -



- OPPORTUNITY AS WELL AS HARM.

IT WAS IN THIS CONTEXT THAT WORKERS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS CONFRONTED THE THREAT OF AI, OFTEN SIMPLY DESCRIBED IN THIS CONTEXT AS

# AUTOMATION.

IN 2016, THE PORT OF LA STARTED WORKING WITH DANISH SHIPPING CONGLOMERATE MAERSK TO UPGRADE CONTAINER SHIPS AND THE PORT TERMINAL, CONTRACTING WITH FINNISH AUTOMATION COMPANY, KALMAR GLOBAL TO INTRODUCE AUTOMATED STRADDLE CARRIERS.



TRADITIONALLY DRIVEN BY LONGSHORE WORKERS. AUTOMATION WOULD REMOVE HUMAN WORKERS FROM THIS JOB.

THIS AUTOMATION IS ALREADY HAPPENING AT PORTS AROUND THE WORLD, AS PART OF THE INTERCONNECTED GLOBAL SUPPLY CHAIN.

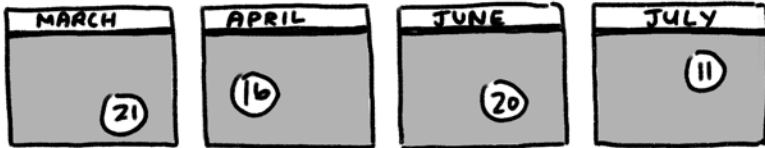


SO IT'S A GLOBAL STORY...



... AS WELL AS A LOCAL ONE.

IN RESPONSE TO PERMIT APPROVAL REQUIREMENTS AND LOCAL COMMUNITY RESISTANCE, THE PORT OF LA HELD A SERIES OF PUBLIC HEARINGS -



- WHERE HUNDREDS SHOWED UP WITH PREPARED STATEMENTS, PETITIONS, AND LETTERS OF SUPPORT TO SPEAK OUT AGAINST AUTOMATION.



THE COMMUNITY ASSERTED ITSELF BY PARTICIPATING IN THE PUBLIC HEARINGS AND REFRAMING THE TERMS OF THE DEBATE.

HERE'S WHAT THEY HAD TO SAY :



1

AUTOMATION IS  
NOT JUST LEGAL  
OR TECHNICAL,  
BUT MORAL.

THE PUBLIC HEARINGS APPEARED TO BE ABOUT PERMIT APPROVAL REQUIREMENTS FOR SPECIFIC TECHNOLOGICAL UPGRADES. IN THIS FRAMING, APPROVAL OF AI INTEGRATION MIGHT BE LIMITED TO TECHNICAL/LEGAL PERMISSIBILITY OF AUTOMATED STRADDLE CARRIERS.

PORT OFFICIALS REPEATEDLY EMPHASIZED THERE WAS NO LEGAL JUSTIFICATION FOR BLOCKING AUTOMATION.

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WORKERS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS CHALLENGED HEARING PARTICIPANTS TO BROADEN THE ISSUE TO INCLUDE CONCERNS OF PUBLIC MORALITY, VALUES, AND PRIORITIES IN AUTOMATING LOGISTICS WORK.

BECAUSE COMMUNITY MEMBERS ANTICIPATED HARM TO EVERYDAY PEOPLE, APPROVAL OF AUTOMATION FROM PORT OFFICIALS WOULD REFLECT DEEPLY IMMORAL VALUES FROM THE INSTITUTIONS EXPECTED TO STAND FOR THE PUBLIC.

# IN THEIR OWN WORDS :



ISN'T THERE A CONTRACT AGREEMENT IN WHICH THE TERMINAL OPERATOR HAS THE RIGHT TO AUTOMATE?

I'M NOT HERE TO SPEAK ON THE CONTRACT- THE ISSUE OF AUTOMATION IS BIGGER THAN THE CONTRACT.



I'M SPEAKING ON THE EFFECT IT'S GOING TO HAVE ON MY COMMUNITY AND WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN IN THE FUTURE FOR OUR KIDS, THE PEOPLE THAT LIVE HERE...

IT IS NOT THIS BOARD'S RESPONSIBILITY TO NEGOTIATE OUR CONTRACT. YOUR RESPONSIBILITY IS TO THE CITIZENS RIGHT HERE IN OUR COMMUNITY.

I AM HERE AS A COMMUNITY ACTIVIST, AND THIS IS GOING TO BE DEVASTATING TO OUR COMMUNITY IF IT HAPPENS.

2

AUTOMATION IS NOT  
JUST ABOUT

RECONFIGURED

WORK TASKS, BUT

CONTEXTUALIZED  
LABOR




AI PROMOTERS AND  
INDUSTRY ACTORS  
TEND TO APPROACH  
AUTOMATION AS THE  
RECONFIGURATION OR  
REPLACEMENT OF  
ROUTINE WORK TASKS,  
WITH COMPUTER  
TECHNIQUES VIEWED  
AS STAND-INS FOR  
HUMAN LABOR.

AUTOMATION IS SPOKEN  
OF AS A VALUE-NEUTRAL  
CHANGE IN SIMPLY THE  
TYPE OF WORK.

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WORKERS AND  
COMMUNITY MEMBERS  
EMPHASIZED THEIR  
SEVERAL GENERATIONS  
OF STRONG TIES TO  
THE LA HARBOR AREA  
THAT GAVE PORT  
LABOR HISTORICAL  
AND REGIONAL  
CONTEXT. AND THROUGH  
THIS DEEP UNDERSTANDING  
OF HISTORICAL CHANGE,  
THEY VIEWED  
AUTOMATION AS A  
CHALLENGE TO THEIR  
FUTURES AND A DIRECT  
ASSAULT ON THE PEOPLE  
THEMSELVES.



I WAS BORN AND RAISED HERE, AND THEY TAUGHT US HARD WORK... BUT NOW THEY'RE TRYING TO REPLACE US WITH ROBOTS. TODD SHIPYARD NO LONGER HERE. THE FISHING INDUSTRY IS PRETTY MUCH GONE, CANNERIES ARE GONE. INSTEAD OF WORKING TOGETHER, THEY JUST WANT TO GET RID OF US.




I'VE LIVED IN SAN PEDRO MY WHOLE LIFE. I'VE WORKED IN THE PORT OF LOS ANGELES FOR THE PAST 20 YEARS.

I WAS HERE WHEN PIER 400 WAS BUILT. THE FEW THINGS I HEARD WAS IT WOULD NOT TAKE AWAY THE COASTAL BEAUTY THAT WE SEE EVERY DAY FROM THE HILLS OF SAN PEDRO.



THEY LIED.



THEY ALSO SAID IT WOULD CREATE MORE JOBS FOR OURSELVES IN OUR COMMUNITY.

NOW IT'S TIME TO KEEP YOUR PROMISE.

WE NEED THOSE JOBS, WE NEED OUR CHILDREN'S JOBS, WE NEED OUR FUTURE.


3

AUTOMATION IS NOT  
JUST ABOUT THE FUTURE  
OF WORK,  
BUT ABOUT THE FUTURE  
OF COMMUNITY

AI PROMOTERS AND  
PORT OPERATORS  
PROMISE PRODUCTIVITY  
GAINS WITH PORT  
AUTOMATION. BY  
QUANTIFYING CHANGES  
FROM AUTOMATION  
SOLELY IN TERMS OF  
JOBS, EFFICIENCY,  
THROUGHPUT,  
PRODUCTIVITY, AND  
CAPITAL, THEY REDUCE  
HUMAN ACTORS  
AND COMMUNITIES  
TO JUST THEIR  
LABOR.

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COMMUNITY MEMBERS  
EXPRESSED CONCERNS  
ABOUT HOW THE  
IMPACT OF  
AUTOMATION WILL  
HAVE ADVERSE  
EFFECTS WITHIN  
THE SURROUNDING  
COMMUNITY- BEYOND  
A SIMPLE FLOW OF  
SALARY MONEY.  
THEY DREW A  
STRONG DIVIDE  
BETWEEN WHAT  
HUMANS AND ROBOTS  
CAN + CANNOT DO  
OUTSIDE OF THE PORT  
AND HOW THAT IMPACTS  
THE LIFE OF THE  
COMMUNITY.





THESE ARE THE PEOPLE WHO ARE HERE EVERY DAY WORKING AND SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITY. WHEN YOU DRIVE DOWN THE 110 SOUTH AND SEE THE BRIDGE AND CRANES COME INTO FOCUS, THAT IS THE SYMBOL OF THIS TOWN... A SYMBOL FOR THE WORKING MAN, A COMMUNITY BUILT BY HIM THAT RELIES ON HIM.



WE TALK ABOUT JOBS AND HOW THE MONEY INFUSES A COMMUNITY, BUT THERE'S ANOTHER THING: THE PEOPLE HERE ARE NOT JUST LABOR. THEY'RE MEMBERS OF OUR COMMUNITY.

THEY COACH LITTLE LEAGUE TEAMS... THIS IS NOT JUST ABOUT VALUE ON THE DOCK, BECAUSE A ROBOT WILL NEVER GO TO OUR CHURCHES, OR GO ON STRIKE WITH TEACHERS.



ROBOTS DO NOT VOTE. ROBOTS DO NOT ATTEND LA FLEET WEEK. THEY DON'T GO TO WATERFRONT EVENTS, WON'T USE THE WATERFRONT PROMENADE, THE BIKE PATHS, THE CALIFORNIA COASTAL TRAIL... ROBOTS DO NOT DO ANY OF THAT.

IN SUMMARY:

3 POINTS OF MOBILIZATION  
AGAINST AI + AUTOMATION  
AT THE PORT OF LOS ANGELES:

① AUTOMATION IS NOT JUST LEGAL  
OR TECHNICAL, BUT MORAL.

THE HEARING  
WAS SET UP TO  
BE ABOUT THE  
LEGALITY OF  
AUTOMATING  
STRADDLE CARRIERS



TAKING INTO  
ACCOUNT CONCERNS  
OF PUBLIC MORALITY,  
VALUES, AND PRIORITIES  
BY THOSE SUPPOSED  
TO REPRESENT THE  
COMMUNITY.

② AUTOMATION IS NOT JUST ABOUT  
RECONFIGURED WORK TASKS, BUT ABOUT  
CONTEXTUALIZED LABOR.

AUTOMATION WAS  
SPOKEN OF AS  
SIMPLY REPLACING  
OR RECONFIGURING  
CERTAIN WORK  
TASKS.



WORK AS HAVING  
HISTORICAL AND  
REGIONAL CONTEXT-  
AUTOMATING  
AWAY WORK AS A  
DIRECT ASSAULT ON  
PEOPLE THEMSELVES.

③ AUTOMATION IS NOT JUST ABOUT  
THE FUTURE OF WORK, BUT ABOUT  
THE FUTURE OF THE COMMUNITY.

CHANGE FROM  
AUTOMATION IS  
QUANTIFIED IN  
PRODUCTIVITY,  
JOBS, EFFICIENCY,  
ETC - REDUCING  
HUMANS TO LABOR



CHANGE FROM  
AUTOMATION IS  
MORE THAN  
SALARIES AND  
JOBS LOST. IT IS  
AN ANTICIPATED  
LOSS OF A WAY OF LIFE.



# WHAT HAPPENED AFTER THE HEARINGS?



LA CITY HALL

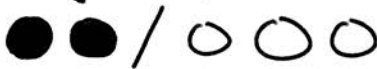
THAT TAKES OUR STORY BACK TO THIS PART OF OUR FAIR CITY.

WHILE THE BOARD OF HARBOR COMMISSIONERS ORIGINALLY VOTED 3-2 IN FAVOR OF ALLOWING AUTOMATION IN JUNE 2019, THE COMMUNITY'S TRANSFORMATION OF THE NARRATIVE AND VISIBLIZATION OF THEIR ROLES AND LIVES ALREADY MADE AN IMPACT ↓

THE IMPACTS (BEING WEIGHED) MUST INCLUDE THE DECIMATION OF THE WORKFORCE... THIS IS A BATTLE FOR THE SURVIVAL OF OUR COMMUNITY.

- 1 OF 2 COMMISSIONERS IN SUPPORT OF UNION APPEAL

NO TO AUTOMATION PERMIT



YES TO AUTOMATION PERMIT

AND THE IMMENSE SHOW OF COMMUNITY POWER AT THE HEARINGS LED THE LA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS TO APPROVE A MOTION TO WRITE MAYOR GARCETTI AND CITY COUNCIL "TO SUPPORT THE EFFORTS OF THE ILWU."

THIS ALL LED UP TO A JUNE 28<sup>TH</sup> VOTE WHERE 12 OUT OF 15 CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS VOTED IN FAVOR OF A MOTION TO OVERRULE THE BOARD OF HARBOR COMMISSIONERS' VOTE!



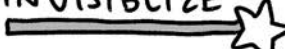
REJECT AUTOMATION PERMIT

NOT PRESENT

BY PLACING THEMSELVES  
**FRONT  
AND  
CENTER**

AT THE PROBLEM OF "AUTOMATION" COMMUNITY MEMBERS PRESENTED AN OPEN CHALLENGE TO THE OTHERWISE SEEMINGLY INEVITABLE MARCH OF TECHNOSCIENCE, BY REJECTING THE NOTION THAT ADVANCES IN AI SHOULD COME AT THEIR EXPENSE.

AND THE WAYS THAT DOMINANT CONVERSATIONS AROUND COMMERCE AND AUTOMATION

INVISIBLIZE  **INFRASTRUCTURE**

MAY MAKE IT SEEM LIKE AUTOMATION IS JUST CHANGING PARTS IN A BLACK BOX ANYWAY.

BUT BY MAKING THEMSELVES VISIBLE, WORKERS MAKE IT IMPOSSIBLE TO LOOK AWAY FROM THE REAL COSTS OF AUTOMATION.



LIKE THE OFT-MISREPRESENTED LUDDITES SMASHING MECHANIZED LOOMS REPLACING THEIR LABOR IN THE 1810S, THIS ISN'T RESISTANCE THAT COMES OUT OF IRRATIONAL FEAR OR LACK OF UNDERSTANDING OF TECHNOLOGY.

IT'S RESISTANCE THAT COMES OUT OF DEEP EXPERIENTIAL, HISTORICAL, AND COMMUNITY KNOWLEDGE OF WHAT HAPPENS TO LABORERS WHEN AUTOMATION COMES.

AND OF COURSE, THE STORY ISN'T OVER.

PUSHES FOR AUTOMATION IN THE LA HARBOR REGION CONTINUE AS OF 2023, AND LIKELY WILL INTO WHATEVER TIME YOU ARE READING THIS FROM.

SO NOW WE TURN TO

**YOU!**

- WHAT IS YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO THIS FIGHT?
- WHAT CAN YOU CONTRIBUTE?

AND BEYOND THE PORT OF LA,

- WHAT INFRASTRUCTURES ARE YOU A PART OF? BENEFIT FROM? TAKE FOR GRANTED?
- WHAT CAN YOU DO TO BUILD COMMUNITY POWER?

THIS STORY SHOWS WE ALL HAVE THE POWER TO CHANGE THINGS- AS LONG AS WE BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER.

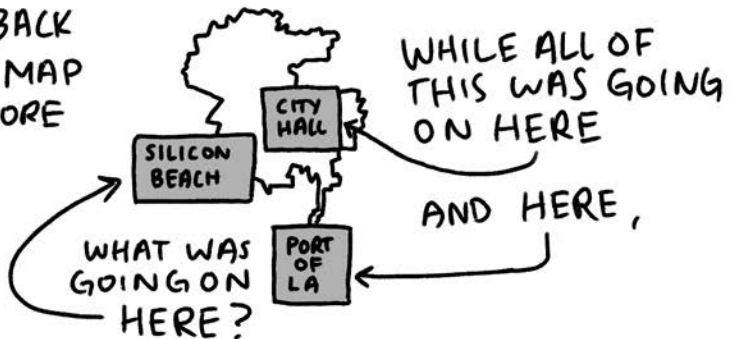
AND WE ALL HAVE THE POWER TO BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER.

# PART 2

## WHOSE FAIRNESS?

- WHOSE ACCOUNTABILITY?
  - WHOSE TRANSPARENCY?
- A NEW STARTING PLACE FOR AI ETHICS

OKAY, BACK  
TO THE MAP  
ONE MORE  
TIME.



WHILE THESE HEARINGS ABOUT THE FUTURE OF AI AND AUTOMATION IN PRACTICE WERE HAPPENING IN THE PORT OF LA, LESS THAN 30 MILES AWAY TECH COMPANIES AND TECH WORKERS WERE HAVING THEIR OWN CONVERSATIONS ON "AI ETHICS."



(MAYBE THIS IS MORE WHO YOU IMAGINED AT THE BEGINNING WHEN WE ASKED ABOUT THE "WHO" IN AUTOMATION?)

AND JUST AS THE AUTOMATION AT THE PORT OF LA IS PART OF A GLOBAL SUPPLY CHAIN, THESE CONVERSATIONS ARE PART OF A LARGER GLOBAL CONTEXT OF AI/ML/AUTOMATION DEVELOPMENT, WHICH CIRCLE BACKS TO SHAPE OUR LOCAL LANDSCAPE.



AFTER ALL, MANY DEVELOPERS TODAY **CLAIM** TO RECOGNIZE AND ACCOUNT FOR THE SOCIAL IMPACTS OF AI THROUGH CONFERENCES AND PAPERS ON AI AND TECH ETHICS, AND GROUPS AND SYMPOSIA CENTERED AROUND "TECH FOR GOOD" OR "AI FOR SOCIAL GOOD," WHERE ETHICS, JUSTICE, AND EQUITY ARE OFTEN CHARACTERIZED THROUGH THE TERMS OF

FAIRNESS,  
ACCOUNTABILITY,  
AND TRANSPARENCY.

FOR MORE CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THIS TREND: "THE FORGOTTEN MARGINS OF AI ETHICS" BY



(CRITICAL LIT REVIEW OF AI ETHICS PAPERS)

ON THE SURFACE, THAT MAY SOUND GOOD-

IT'S ALL GOOD, WE'RE THINKING ABOUT THE ETHICS, YOU CAN LEAVE IT UP TO US



WE'VE GOT A FAIRNESS-AWARE MODEL, WE'RE TAKING CARE OF THE SOCIAL COMPONENT




WE'RE INCLUDING MORE DIVERSE PEOPLE IN OUR DATA!





WE'RE DEBIASING THE DATA SET!



- BUT IN REALITY, WHAT IS THE OUTCOME OF THESE STATEMENTS?

↳ ARE EXISTING LINES OF DOMINANCE AND POWER BEING REPLICATED OR CHALLENGED BY THESE "FAIR" AI SYSTEMS? 

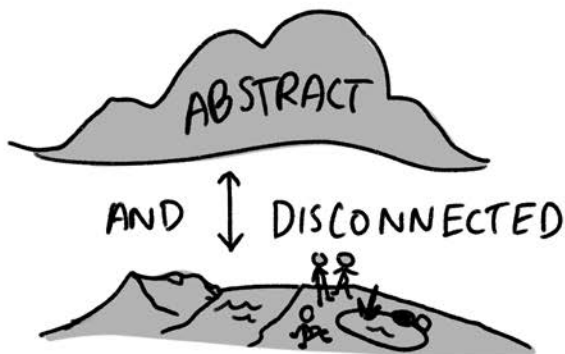
↳ WHO IS BENEFITING FROM THEM AND WHO IS BEING HARMED? 

↳ WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF THE AI SYSTEM ON THE MOST MARGINALIZED? (AND NOT JUST ABSTRACTLY/HYPOTHETICALLY) 



AND WHO ISN'T BEING INCLUDED IN THESE CONVERSATIONS, AND HOW DOES THAT LIMIT THEIR ABILITY TO TRULY ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS - QUESTIONS OSTENSIBLY SPECIFICALLY ABOUT IMPACT?

WHEN THESE QUESTIONS AREN'T ASKED, THE CONVERSATION ON AI IS OFTEN

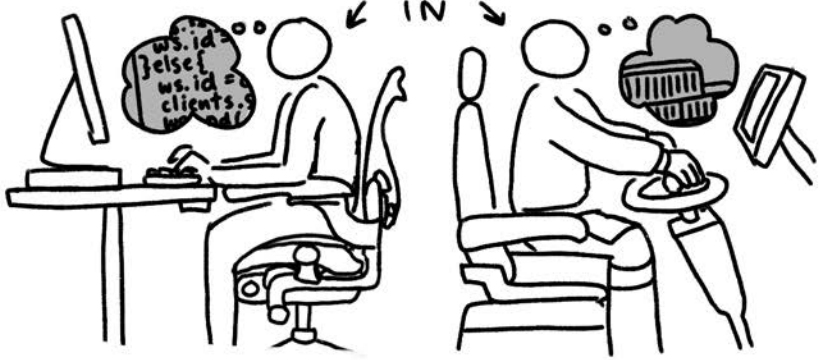


FROM STRUCTURAL/SOCIAL FACTORS AND SPECIFIC IMPACTS.

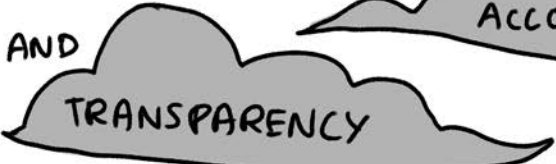
CLEARLY, PEOPLE RELATE TO INEQUALITY IN TECH AND AUTOMATION IN VERY DIFFERENT WAYS, DEPENDING ON WHAT PUBLICS, CONTEXTS, AND EXPERIENCES THEY ARE

SITUATED

IN



SO HOW DOES THE CONVERSATION CHANGE ON WHAT



MEAN,

IF WE PIN THEM DOWN TO A SPECIFIC CONTEXT AND



VISIBLIZE

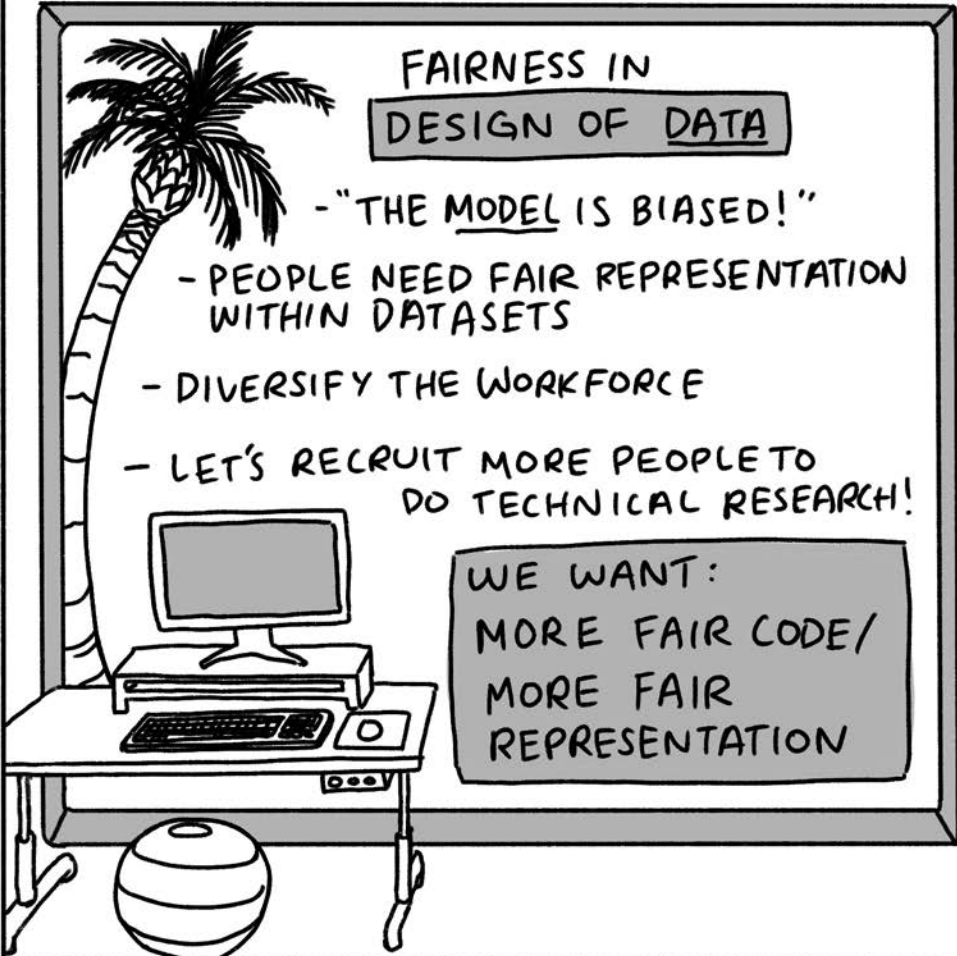
THE PERSPECTIVES OF THE WORKERS MARGINALIZED BY THESE SYSTEMS

WHOSE IDEAS HAVE NOT BEEN INCLUDED IN THIS CONVERSATION UP TO THIS POINT? LET'S FIND OUT!

# FAIR

## SILICON BEACH

### FAIRNESS IN DESIGN OF DATA

- 
- "THE MODEL IS BIASED!"
  - PEOPLE NEED FAIR REPRESENTATION WITHIN DATASETS
  - DIVERSIFY THE WORKFORCE
  - LET'S RECRUIT MORE PEOPLE TO DO TECHNICAL RESEARCH!

WE WANT:  
MORE FAIR CODE/  
MORE FAIR  
REPRESENTATION





## PORT OF LA

### FAIRNESS IN DESIGN OF SOCIAL SYSTEM

- "THERE IS NO BENEFIT TO THE COMMUNITY!"
- POLITICAL + ECONOMIC POWER AS STRONG DRIVING FORCES SHAPING AI
- BENEFITS AND HARMS OF AI IMPLEMENTATION ARE UNFAIRLY DISTRIBUTED

WE WANT:  
MORE FAIR SOCIETY/  
MORE FAIR IMPACT



# ACCOUNT

## SILICON BEACH

### INTERNAL ACCOUNTABILITY

WHO IS  
ACCOUNTABLE?

CREATORS OF  
TECHNOLOGY

ENGINEERS, DESIGNERS,  
TECH WORKERS,  
PROGRAMMERS

WHO ARE THEY  
ACCOUNTABLE TO?

...CREATORS OF  
TECHNOLOGY

...YEAH THE SAME  
PEOPLE

IT'S IN OUR HANDS!

WE NEED TO BUILD SOMETHING  
INTO THE MODEL BEFORE IT GETS  
OUT OF CONTROL!

IDEAL OUTCOME: TECHNICAL SOLUTIONS

# ABILITY

IN  
CONTEXT

## PORT OF LA

### EXTERNAL ACCOUNTABILITY

WHO IS  
ACCOUNTABLE?

ENABLERS OF  
TECHNOLOGY

POLICY MAKERS,  
PUBLIC OFFICIALS,  
GOVERNMENT

WHO ARE THEY  
ACCOUNTABLE TO?

THOSE IMPACTED  
BY TECHNOLOGY

USERS OF TECH,  
COMMUNITIES  
ALTERED BY TECH

YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO REPRESENT US!

WHO IS SUPPORTING OR REGULATING  
AI DEVELOPMENT AND DEPLOYMENT  
HERE IN THE FIRST PLACE?

IDEAL OUTCOME: POLITICAL ACTION

# TRANSPY

## SILICON BEACH

TRANSPARENCY AROUND  
"HOW THE MODEL WORKS"

WE NEED TO  
UNDERSTAND  
HOW THE MODEL  
ARRIVED AT ITS  
OUTCOME

DID THE MODEL  
BEHAVE  
APPROPRIATELY?

WE NEED TO FEEL  
SATISFIED WITH THE  
AI AS DECISION-MAKER

FOCUS SHOULD BE:

LOOK AT THE  
MODEL



# TRANSPARENCY

IN  
CONTEXT

PORT OF LA

TRANSPARENCY AROUND  
"IMPACT OF MODEL ON SOCIETY"

WHY ARE WE  
INVESTING  
IN AI?

WHAT WILL AI  
LOOK LIKE WHEN  
OPERATIONALIZED?

HOW MANY JOBS  
WILL IT CREATE?  
REMOVE? DISPLACE  
TO SOMEWHERE ELSE?

WILL IT IMPACT  
THE ENVIRONMENT?

WHAT IS THE FUTURE OF OUR COMMUNITY?

HOW WILL IT IMPACT BROADER SOCIETY?







FOCUS SHOULD BE:

LOOK AT  
US

HOW WILL  
THIS IMPACT  
PEOPLE?

# SUMMARY

OF FAIRNESS, ACCOUNTABILITY,  
AND TRANSPARENCY IN CONTEXT

	SILICON BEACH	PORT OF LA
FAIRNESS	<p>FAIRNESS IN DESIGN OF DATA</p>  <p>- MODEL IS BIASED</p> <p>WE WANT: MORE FAIR CODE</p>	<p>FAIRNESS IN DESIGN OF THE SOCIAL SYSTEM</p>  <p>- SOCIETY IS BIASED</p> <p>WE WANT: MORE FAIR SOCIETY</p>
ACCOUNTABILITY	<p><u>INTERNAL</u> ACCOUNTABILITY</p> <p>CREATORS ACCOUNTABLE TO CREATORS</p>  <p>HOW TO ACHIEVE: TECHNICAL SOLUTIONS</p> 	<p><u>EXTERNAL</u> ACCOUNTABILITY</p> <p>ENABLERS ACCOUNTABLE TO THOSE IMPACTED</p>  <p>HOW TO ACHIEVE: POLITICAL ACTION</p> 
TRANSPARENCY	<p>TRANSPARENCY AROUND "HOW THE MODEL WORKS"</p> <p>FOCUS SHOULD BE ON LOOKING AT THE MODEL</p>	<p>TRANSPARENCY AROUND "IMPACT OF MODEL ON SOCIETY"</p> <p>FOCUS SHOULD BE ON LOOKING AT PEOPLE'S LIVES</p>
	CODE-CENTERED	COMMUNITY-CENTERED

HOPEFULLY, THIS PROCESS OF VISIBLIZING THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE WORKERS MARGINALIZED WITHIN A CAPITALIST AI SYSTEM NOT ONLY BRINGS IN THEIR VOICE, BUT ALSO MAKES IT CLEAR THAT THE PERSPECTIVE OF TECH PRODUCERS ON TECH ETHICS IS NOT THE UNIVERSAL, VALUE-FREE KNOWLEDGE THAT IT'S OFTEN HELD UP AS -



- BUT JUST AS CONTEXTUAL AS THE PERSPECTIVES OF THE IMPACTED WORKERS.

AI "EXPERTS" AND THEIR KNOWLEDGE CLAIMS DO NOT STAND OUTSIDE OF SOCIETY...



DONNA HARAWAY,  
FEMINIST  
EPISTEMOLOGIST

FOR MORE, SEE  
"SITUATED  
KNOWLEDGES"

THE VIEW OF INFINITE VISION IS AN ILLUSION, A GOD TRICK

ALL KNOWLEDGE IS SITUATED, AND THAT MEANS IT HAS A VANTAGE POINT, IS LIMITED, AND IS LOCATABLE. THAT ALSO MEANS IT CAN BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE.

... BUT ARE SITUATED WITHIN IT.



AS BRIAN WYNNE SAYS IN HIS FOUNDATIONAL WORK ON THE RESPONSE OF SHEEP FARMERS TO THE CLAIMS OF NUCLEAR SCIENTISTS ABOUT RADIOACTIVITY ON GRAZINGLAND:



IN OUR CASE, THINKING ABOUT TRANSPARENCY AS

"MAKING SURE A MODEL'S DECISIONS ARE VISIBLE AND UNDERSTANDABLE TO PROGRAMMERS"

SILICON BEACH

IS JUST AS CULTURAL AS THINKING ABOUT TRANSPARENCY AS

"MAKING SURE HUMAN DECISIONS ABOUT DEPLOYMENT AND IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGY ARE VISIBLE AND UNDERSTANDABLE TO COMMUNITY"

PART OF LA



ANTHROPOLOGIST **DIANA FORSYTHE** →  
RECOGNIZED A SIMILAR PHENOMENON  
DURING HER ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH  
IN AI LABS IN THE 1990s.



THE COMMUNITY OF SCIENTISTS AND RESEARCHERS  
SHE STUDIED TENDED TO PRIORITIZE

**FORMAL MATHEMATICAL  
MODELS AND CODING**

$$T^r(h, a^r, w^r) = \sum_i \pi_i^{a_i^r}$$
$$\forall s_i \in I; A_i^r(s_i) = \{1, 2, \dots, |I_i|\}$$

OVER

**THE CONTEXTUAL NATURE OF  
KNOWLEDGE AND WORK.**



SHE THUS ARGUED THE FIELDS OF AI AND  
INFORMATICS WOULD ROUTINELY

" **delete** **the** **social** "

IN TODAY'S LANDSCAPE, AI PRACTITIONERS  
MAY CLAIM TO ATTEND TO SOCIETAL IMPACTS  
BY HOSTING PANEL DISCUSSIONS ON "ETHICS"  
OR BY RELEASING GUIDELINES ON "FAIRNESS,  
ACCOUNTABILITY, AND TRANSPARENCY," YET:

- THE **DECONTEXTUALIZED** FOCUS ON CODE,
- THE **DEVALUATION** OF CERTAIN KINDS  
OF WORK, AND
- THE **PRIVILEGING** OF AN ELITE GROUP OF  
PEOPLE WHO COUNT AS "EXPERTS"

... SUGGESTS THE FIELD **STILL "DELETES  
THE SOCIAL"**, EVEN AS IT APPEARS TO  
ADDRESS IT.

SO WHAT WOULD AN ALTERNATIVE FRAMING OF  
EQUITY, ETHICS, AND JUSTICE LOOK LIKE, ONE THAT  
CENTERS SOCIAL INEQUALITY AND THE COMMUNITIES  
WHOSE VOICES CONTINUE TO BE MARGINALIZED?

FOR MORE: "THE CONSTRUCTION OF WORK IN  
ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE"

ONE VISION FOR A FRAMING THAT STARTS ELSEWHERE COMES TO US FROM LA-BASED COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

STOP LAPD SPYING COALITION

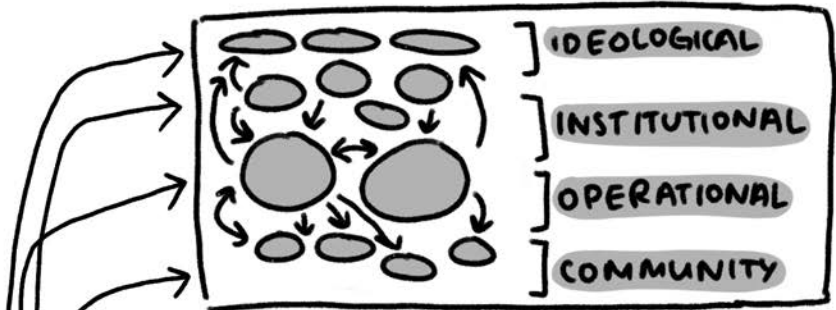


AND

FREE RADICALS



WHO DEVELOPED AN ORGANIZING TOOL CALLED  
**THE ALGORITHMIC ECOLOGY**



INSTEAD OF FOCUSING ON THE TECH ITSELF AND ITS CAPACITY TO BE MADE "MORE EQUITABLE,"

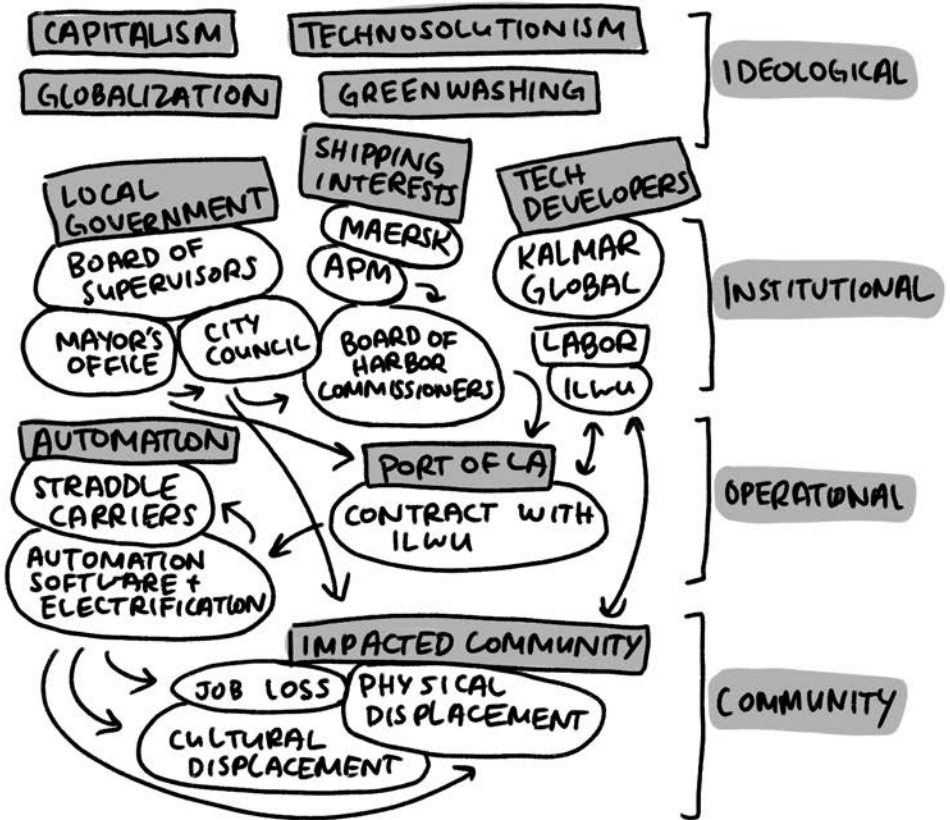
LOOK FIRST TO WHO IS BEING IMPACTED AND IN WHAT WAYS,

LOOK BEYOND TO WHAT **INSTITUTIONS** ARE DEVELOPING AND FUNDING THE TECHNOLOGY, AND FOR WHAT PURPOSES AND WHOSE BENEFIT?

LOOK OVER TO WHO IS **OPERATIONALIZING** THE TECHNOLOGY AND HOW, AND

LOOK OUT FOR WHAT **IDEOLOGIES** THE TECH IS UPHOLDING AND REIFYING.

THE ALGORITHMIC ECOLOGY FOR OUR CASE OF AUTOMATION IN THE PORT OF LA MIGHT LOOK SOMETHING LIKE THIS:



IT'S A ROAD MAP FOR WHERE POWER AND PRESSURE CAN BE APPLIED AT WHAT POINTS, A VISIBLIZER OF THE ACTORS WE KNOW AND ALSO WHAT WE DON'T KNOW, AND IT'S A COMMUNICATION TOOL FOR THE FIGHT.

SO ASK YOURSELF SOME QUESTIONS:

- WHERE DO YOU FIT INTO THIS ECOLOGY?
- WHAT OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUSHING FOR JUSTICE DOES YOUR SITUATEDNESS GIVE YOU ACCESS TO?
- WHERE IS THE WORK ALREADY HAPPENING AND HOW CAN YOU CONTRIBUTE?

AND AS SUSAN  
LEIGH  
STAR



AND ANSELM  
STRAUSS



REMINDE  
US,

"NO WORK IS INHERENTLY EITHER VISIBLE  
OR INVISIBLE. WE ALWAYS "SEE" WORK  
THROUGH A SELECTION OF INDICATORS:  
STRAINING MUSCLES, FINISHED ARTIFACTS,  
A CHANGED STATE OF AFFAIRS. THE  
INDICATORS CHANGE WITH CONTEXT, AND  
THAT CONTEXT BECOMES A NEGOTIATION  
ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN  
VISIBLE AND INVISIBLE WORK.

HOW CAN YOU INVERT

INFRASTRUCTURES  
OF INJUSTICE

TO MAKE THE PREVIOUSLY  
INVISIBLE NEWLY VISIBLE,



# ABOUT THE AUTHORS



**SOPHIE WANG** IS A RESEARCHER, EDUCATOR, ARTIST, AND ZINE GREMLIN CURRENTLY BASED IN THE TWIN CITIES. SHE MAKES ZINES/COMICS/ART THAT BRING A CRITICAL POWER LENS TO SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, EPISTEMOLOGY, AND FORMS OF KNOWLEDGE-MAKING, AS PART OF MAKING THESE CONVERSATIONS MORE ACCESSIBLE OUTSIDE OF THE ACADEMY. SHE IS A CO-FOUNDER OF FREE RADICALS, AN ACTIVIST COLLECTIVE AT THE INTERSECTION OF SCIENCE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE. YOU CAN FIND HER OFFLINE LOOKING AT LEAVES BY THE WATER OR BAKING PLUM CRUMBLE, AND YOU CAN FIND HER ONLINE AT [WANGSHUF.COM](http://WANGSHUF.COM).

**TAYLOR M. CRUZ** IS A SOCIOLOGIST OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, AND MEDICINE BASED OUT OF LOS ANGELES AND ORANGE COUNTY. SHE CONDUCTED THE MULTI-SITED ETHNOGRAPHIC FIELDWORK INFORMING THIS COMMUNITY-BASED PROJECT ON AI/ML, ATTENDING MANY PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT EVENTS ACROSS THE LA HARBOR AND SILICON BEACH (AS FEATURED IN THE ZINE YOU JUST READ!). TO LEARN MORE ABOUT HER RESEARCH OR TO DOWNLOAD FREE COPIES OF THIS CRITICAL STS ZINE, VISIT HER ONLINE AT [TAYLORMCRUZ.COM](http://TAYLORMCRUZ.COM).

WE SHARE THIS STORY TO USE THE RESOURCES AND POWER AND OPPORTUNITY THAT WE HAVE, GIVEN OUR SITUATEDNESS, TO AMPLIFY AND SUPPORT ORGANIZING, BRING THE KNOWLEDGE GENERATED BY THIS COMMUNITY TO A CONVERSATION THAT HASN'T THOUGHT TO INCLUDE THEM, AND TO BROADEN THE AUDIENCE THAT KNOWS ABOUT THE FIGHT (AND INTRODUCE SOME RELATED SCHOLARSHIP THAT MIGHT BE USEFUL TO YOU ALONG THE WAY)

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WHAT STORIES DO WE HEAR ABOUT AI  
AND ETHICS, EQUITY, AND JUSTICE?

AND WHOSE STORIES ARE THEY?

THIS IS A STORY ABOUT AI, BUT IT MIGHT  
BE A LITTLE DIFFERENT THAN YOU EXPECT.

THIS IS A STORY OF PEOPLE ORGANIZING,  
MOBILIZING, USING THEIR POWER TO RESIST  
AI, AND REWRITING A STORY THAT WAS  
BEING WRITTEN FOR THEM, WITHOUT THEM.

THIS IS A STORY OF THE PEOPLE OF THE  
LOS ANGELES HARBOR

