Article

Terms of inclusion: Data, discourse, violence

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Abstract

Inclusion has emerged as an early cornerstone value for the emerging domain of "data ethics." On the surface, appeals to inclusion appear to address the threat that biased data technologies making decisions or misrepresenting people in ways that reproduce longer standing patterns of oppression and violence. Far from a panacea for the threats of pervasive data collection and surveillance, however, these emerging discourses of inclusion merit critical consideration. Here, I use the lens of discursive violence to better theorize the relationship between inclusion and the violent potentials of data science and technology. In doing so, I aim to articulate the problematic and often perverse power relationships implicit in ideals of "inclusion" broadly, which—if not accompanied by dramatic upheavals in existing hierarchical power structures—too often work to diffuse the radical potential of difference and normalize otherwise oppressive structural conditions.

> [*Violence is*] *always at the horizon of social imagination, even for those who do not perpetrate it.*
>
> Iris Marion Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference*

Introduction

In the emerging domain of data ethics, inclusion is everything. Inclusion offers data science and technology boosters—in industry, academia, and government alike—a ready-made narrative of iteration and improvement, making space for apologies and

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vows to "do better" without threatening the overall social and financial promise of, among other things, "big data," social media, machine learning, and artificial intelligence (AI). Far from a panacea for data technologies' discriminatory and violent potential, however, inclusion—as Sara Ahmed (2012) describes—is itself a kind of technology, one that makes "strangers into subjects, those who in being included are also willing to consent to the terms of inclusion" (p. 163). In some cases, inclusion has meant expanding the checkboxes and data input fields for identity markers like gender, race, or sexuality—opening up new possibilities for user self-identification *and* targeted advertising (Bivens, 2017). In other cases, inclusion has meant hiring low-wage workers to surreptitiously photograph unhoused people and college students in order to diversify and "improve" facial recognition datasets (Hollister, 2019). Connected to a broader ideology of diversity that has, as Rinaldo Walcott (2019) argues, reached its "logical end" (p. 394), inclusion discourses gesture toward social transformation as a way to diffuse resistance to structural conditions of domination and subordination. As Ruha Benjamin (2019) summarizes, inclusion is part "of a larger repertoire of 'happy talk,' which involves a willingness to acknowledge and even revel in cultural difference without seriously challenging ongoing structural inequality" (p. 148). Indicative of a larger body of limited and atomistic responses to problems of structural violence and data discrimination (see Hoffmann, 2019), inclusion discourses work as a convenient cover for problems that are—as Oscar Gandy (1993) demonstrated—not separate from, but intrinsic to technologies predicated on surveillance, social sorting, and optimization.

In this article, I draw on feminist and other accounts of *discursive violence* as a way to probe the problematics and limits of inclusion as a solution to data technologies' ills. In doing so, I show how inclusion discourses can further rather than subvert vulnerability to what might more broadly be called "data violence"—that is, the material, symbolic, and other violences inflicted by and through data technologies and their purveyors (Hoffmann, 2018). This article proceeds in four parts. In the first part, I discuss the relationship between data and violence generally. In the second, I develop an account of *discursive violence* as, in particular, a form of violence that operates by diffusing resistance, deepening dependency on oppressive structural conditions, and preserving the potential for other forms of violence, including physical, material, and symbolic violences. In the third and fourth parts, I describe and critically assess discourses of inclusion to demonstrate the ways they reproduce the very norms and structures they purport to address. In particular, I show how popular discourses on inclusion in the emerging domain of "data ethics" perpetuate the unequal and often violent relations that inhere between data technologies, their purveyors, and differently situated social groups. As a form of discursive violence, then, inclusion discourses work to scatter opposition to structural inequality, reinforce unequal relationships, and maintain data science and technology's potential for violence.

Data and/as Violence

This work grows, in part, out of engagement with what Dean Spade (2015) has elsewhere dubbed "administrative violence." Administrative violence describes how

administrative systems facilitate state violences encoded in laws, policies, and schemes that arrange and define people by categories of indigeneity, race, gender, ability, and national origin (Spade, 2015: 20–21). Throughout his work, he shows how data and administrative systems construct the very identities and categories presented to us as "natural," both inventing and producing meaning for the categories they administer (Spade, 2015: 31–32). Though Spade focuses primarily on state-run administrative systems, we can extend these insights to cover a range of processes of classifying, sorting, bounding, labeling, and optimizing enabled by data technologies, both state-run and privately controlled. This extension is necessary as the boundaries between state and private sector data collection, processing, storage, and application are hardly distinct—and perhaps never were. For example, states regularly consult data created and maintained by private Internet companies (Andrejevic, 2019), while those same companies often leverage public or liberal rhetoric—like freedom of speech—in an effort to gain credibility and, in some cases, stave off government regulation (Van Dijck, 2013). Here and elsewhere, I employ the term "data violence" as a way of extending the insights of administrative violence to a broader terrain of both public and private data technologies and their attendant discourses. In this way, "data violence" represents an instance of what Sandra Braman (2006) dubs "informational power" (p. 26), that is, power that underwrites and manipulates the informational bases of other forms of power, such as instrumental, structural, and symbolic power.

Historically, the violences enabled by data are well-documented. In the United States, population data were instrumental to the forced dislocation and mass murder of Native Americans, as with—for example—the special censuses of Choctaw, Creek, and Eastern Cherokee peoples that laid the groundwork for their forced removal to lands west of the Mississippi River (Seltzer and Anderson, 2001: 490). Later, census data would aid US officials in the internment of Japanese Americans during the Second World War (Seltzer and Anderson, 2001: 492). Elsewhere, population records in countries like Germany, Poland, and the Netherlands supported the identification and slaughter of European Jewish and Romani peoples under Nazi programs of genocide (Aly and Roth, 2004). Similarly, Belgian colonial registration systems aided the Rwandan genocide of Tutsi people during the 1990s (Des Forges, 1999). While these cases make clear that data violence pre-dates digital data and electronic computers, such violences have—since the late-19th century—been extended and amplified by computational tools and techniques. Perhaps most notoriously, IBM and its subsidiaries worked with Hitler's Nazi regime by providing the material and computational support necessary to scale its program of genocide (Black, 2001). Since then, the connection between computing, data, and state violence has only intensified, as the very ways we think about and conceptualize "national security" has been reshaped by computation, networked surveillance infrastructures, and statistical modeling (Amoore, 2009; Suchman, 2020).

At the same time, advances in computer networking from the 1960s onward facilitated the development of systems of surveillance and social sorting that shape people's life chances in pervasive ways (Gandy, 1993). In particular, the ways data are labeled, people are classified, or systems are implemented may inflict symbolic or representational violences—that is, they may reproduce racist, sexist, and other norms and

stereotypes that position some people as subordinate, inferior, or irredeemably "other." As Simone Browne (2015) has demonstrated, today's data-based digital surveillance systems are deeply rooted in longer standing norms of White supremacy that actively construct Black communities and bodies as dangerous or deviant. Consequently, supposedly "objective" data can amplify, rather than ameliorate long-standing stereotypes of race and gender (Noble, 2018). Similarly, processes like "automatic gender recognition" can harm transgender people by encoding violent sexist and colonial ideals of binary gender, as in the case of airport body scanners that position some bodies as "normal" and others as "anomalous" or dangerous (Beauchamp, 2019). As Minh-Ha T. Pham (2015: 165) has shown, these examples are reflective of broader processes of technologization and rationalization that frame bodies, identities, and groups as outside of historical frameworks and experiences of racial and other forms of difference.

The landscape is further complicated by data processed *algorithmically*—that is, through processes and procedures of software that turn data inputs into particular outputs (Bucher, 2018; Gillespie, 2014). Mimi Onuoha (2018), for example, uses the term "algorithmic violence" to capture the ways "an algorithm or automated decision-making system inflicts [violence] by preventing people from meeting their basic needs" (n.p.). Sara Safransky (2019) extends this term to capture the reproduction of racialized violences of redlining in so-called "smart cities"—part of a broader system of digitally encoded racism that Ruha Benjamin dubs "the New Jim Code." For example, transportation apps like "Ghettotracker" and SafeRoute that purport to help users navigate around "dangerous" or unsafe areas often target neighborhoods populated by people of color by encoding racist articulations of what constitutes danger (Gilliard, 2018: n.p.). Furthermore, algorithmic systems can amplify and extend the impact of racialized and other instances of violence. Tonia Sutherland (2017), for example, describes the video capture of Michael Brown's murder at the hands of police and its subsequent circulation through online information algorithms as a kind of racialized trauma "continuously re-inscribed, visually and, perhaps, eternally" (p. 34).

While fundamental to our understanding of the relationship between data and violence generally, much of this work, however, focuses on the tracing of inputs and outputs—that is, they do the necessary work of tracking the ways data technologies arrange inputs, outputs, and ideological commitments to generate harmful, unequal, or violent outcomes. Insofar as they are understood as socially situated, however, they at times cast data technologies—to borrow a metaphor from Nick Seaver (2017)—as merely a rock in a stream, wherein "the rock is not part of the stream, though the stream may jostle and erode it and the rock may produce ripples and eddies in the stream" (p. 4). Though data technologies are no doubt "situated" in this sense, we must also pay close attention to the broader discursive processes by which we make sense of their situation. Importantly, the study of discourse is integral to comprehending data science and technology as—following Lisa Nakamura (2013: 153)—constitutive of broader processes of social formation and regulation. To this end, I draw in the next section on feminist and other accounts of *discursive violence* as one way to apprehend the discourses that animate our understanding of the ethics of data, media, and technology. More precisely, I show how the idea of discursive violence can help us destabilize any neat or firm distinction between "good"

and "bad" applications of data science and technology as binaries that are, themselves, indicative of broader social and ideological commitments.

Discursive violence and normalizing oppression

Violence is, among other things, political—that is, it functions as a kind of disciplinary, regulatory, and hierarchicalizing force (Aldama, 2003: 6). In some instances, violence's political function is discharged materially—for example, in the form of militarized law enforcement agents, maldistributions of economic resources, or (at its most extreme) programs of genocide. In other instances, it is discharged discursively in the form of norms, patterns, or "ways of being" that inform one's vulnerability to other, more direct material and symbolic violences.[1] Perhaps, most forcefully described by Frantz Fanon, violence is both contingent upon and constitutive of social and political norms through which certain actions, identities, or ways of being came to be understood as deviant or "wrong" in the first place (Gordon, 2017: 51). In this way, discourse and violence are co-constructing: the possibility and threat of violence inform our understandings of the world while hegemonic norms, in turn, inform our understandings of what constitutes violence.[2]

The role of discourse in helping to construct and cultivate violence is compellingly detailed in Cynthia Enloe's (2000) work on gender and militarization. In particular, Enloe (2000) shows how the violence of militarization does not only issue from particular material configurations of bodies, resources, and physical might but also from a "far more subtle process" by which a society and its people ultimately come to depend on and internalize oppressive (or, in her case, militaristic) values and ideals, making those values and ideals appear "not only valuable but also normal" (p. 3). This discursive transformation is hardly innocuous; rather, it undermines our ability to neatly distinguish between violent and non-violent conditions, as the latter is often contingent on the former in insidious ways (see Carver, 2017; Enloe, 2014). Ultimately, then, this kind of violence—what we can call *discursive violence*—diffuses resistance by normalizing conditions that, as peace studies scholar Johann Galtung (1990) put it, make other (material, symbolic) violences "look, even feel, right—or at least not wrong" (p. 291). Or, as Iris Marion Young (1990) put it, what makes violence a form of oppression "is less the acts themselves, though these are often utterly horrible, than the social context surrounding them, which makes them possible and even acceptable" (p. 61).

Though Enloe is hardly alone in attending to the relationship between discourse, norms, and violence (see, in particular, Fanon, 2008; Foucault, 2003; Mbembe, 2003), I emphasize her work for the parallels we find between militarization and the phenomenon of "datafication"—and not only because many of the tools and technologies that underwrite datafication have roots in the military. As with militarization, datafication does not only depend on a reconfiguration of material resources, labor, and production; it is also a discursive process, one that routes—and assigns value to—human life through the logic of quantification and statistical methods (Mejias and Couldry, 2019). To repurpose and broaden Mike Ananny's (2016: 98) discussion of algorithmic mediation, datafication represents a discourse that is at once social and technological, structuring how various identities and bodies are produced, surfaced, made sense of, seen as legitimate, and ascribed significance. As the previous section demonstrates, however, this discursive

transformation is hardly innocuous—rather, data science and technology reproduce, as Louise Amoore (2009) puts it, "a militarization of thinking" (p. 65) that "reinscribes the imaginative geography of the deviant, atypical, abnormal 'other'" (p. 56) in new, often routinized ways. As Oscar Gandy (1993) makes explicit, the disaggregation of people in the form of data is never merely descriptive—it is always implicated in broader systems of power, norms, and normalization.

Methodologically, attending to the discursive violences of datafication means exposing the subtle processes by which we come to internalize and further entrench its violent or oppressive presuppositions. It requires that we pay attention to the ways certain social dependencies and political arrangements are normalized, for example, by reference to their purported benefits (as with early "Big Data" boosterism) or by positioning sociopolitical constructs as somehow natural or pre-given (as with the reification of identity categories like race or gender). Of particular relevance to this article, it also means attending to how particular articulations of ethics (as with "data ethics" or "tech ethics") and values (as with "inclusion") might obfuscate, rather than expose more pernicious operations of social hierarchy and inequality—as when liberal ideals of diversity and inclusion are deployed in ways that obscure data science's deeper commitment hegemonic social norms (Beaton, 2016). Following other critical methods in information and digital studies, we need to pay close attention to the disjunctions between popular claims about the social values and uses of technologies (Day, 2007: 578) in order to decenter dominant discourses about technology and their influence (Brock, 2018: 1027). As a question of data violence, discursive violence asks us to focus not only on data science and technologies harmful outputs but also the broader configurations of histories, institutions, and discourses that not only enable, but normalize the potential for violence. Or, at any rate, that is what I will endeavor to show.

Inclusion and the new data ethics

As already noted, work by activists, advocates, journalists, and scholars have—over the past decade, in particular—helped expose the harmful and discriminatory impacts of data science and technology. This work has been helped along by (among other things) myriad privacy scandals, high-profile data breaches, and recent examples of technology journalism that have helped raise public awareness of the harms enabled by "big data," algorithms, and AI. Thanks to this work, accounts of data science and technology's potential that appeal to the language of limitless understanding, revolutionary insight, and unequivocal social progress are now more difficult to advance than in, for example, the halcyon days of "Big Data" hype. Or, to rework a passage from Lewis Gordon's (2017) read of Fanon: discourses of datafication and progress cannot sustain their legitimacy in the face of widespread inequality and harm. As a consequence, those most invested in a datafied future in industry, academia, or government alike have required alternative discourses—specifically discourses that acknowledge the harms perpetrated by and through data science and technology without also conceding the social, political, or economic power they afford.

The answer it seems, has appeared in new and emergent commitments to "data ethics" and related ideals of "tech ethics," "AI ethics," and "social responsibility." Or, as the

highly publicized Center for Humane Technology (2019) captures it: "We are at a turning point where we can either allow that power to continue unchecked, or contain it by building humane technology that protects our minds and replenishes society" (n.p.). Notably, however, many of the activities that fall under this heading are not antagonistic toward, but congenial to the further proliferation of data science and technology. As Greene, Hoffmann, and Stark (2019) have shown in their work on values and ethics statements guiding the development of machine learning and AI, these efforts provide little indication that data technologies can be limited or constrained—they paint ethics as a matter of iterative improvement and staving off negative impacts rather than one of justice or radical social transformation. As Sareeta Amrute (2019) describes, such approaches center the regulation of designers and designs instead of attending to the underlying conditions that make ethical guardrails necessary in the first place.

Central to many of these efforts is an insistence that we (iteratively) employ data science and build data technologies to make the world a better, more humane, and *more inclusive* place. Inclusion's centrality is evident in the sheer range of activities through which it is suffused, including (but not limited to) conferences and "human-centered" research activities, diversity efforts, interface and data input design changes, technical solutions, as well as marketing and public relations (PR) campaigns. In the remainder of this section, I detail discourses of inclusion advanced by a range of industry and academic actors in the amorphous domain of "data ethics," which operates alongside (and intermingles with) other domains like research ethics, engineering ethics, technology ethics, media ethics, and AI ethics. To be clear, the collection of documents and activities reviewed here is not exhaustive, but selective. I am more interested in capturing the breadth of sites where inclusion discourses have been marshaled in the service of ethical data science and technology. Consequently, the below reading should be considered open-ended and provocative, as opposed to definitive or complete.

To accommodate a wide range of genres and texts (including, but not limited to, corporate PR materials, academic and industry conference materials, scholarly works, and platform designs), I am loosely guided by Ruha Benjamin's (2019) articulation of the method of *thin description* (as opposed to "thick description") as able to "[engage] fields of thought and action too often disconnected" (p. 45). Here, thinness offers one way to describe and critically assess the various ways a wide range of materials organize differently situated social actors relative to a range of social, political, and economic structures and resources. To scaffold my account, I have organized my review into three thematic categories: inclusion as social commitment, inclusion as discrimination solution, and inclusion as affective appeal. Throughout my discussion, I follow both Shaka McGlotten's (2016) and the Feminist Data Manifest-No's (Cifor et al., 2019) insistence on "reading data" in its social and political context. Against datafication's reductive imperatives, we must continually refuse to engage with life in ways "that reduce it to lists of bare accountings" (McGlotten, 2016: 279).

Inclusion as social commitment

Inclusion has become a hallmark of efforts to improve data science and technology—and to minimize their harms—as articulated by a range of academic conferences, research

centers, and large Silicon Valley-style technology companies. For example, the ACM Conference on Fairness, Accountability, and Transparency (ACM FAccT) has come to prominence, in part, as an attempt to "[bring] together a diverse community of scholars" (ACM Conference on Fairness Accountability, and Transparency, 2020: n.p.) to tackle social and ethical issues related to a range of data technologies. Similarly, Stanford University's widely publicized Institute for Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence (HAI) notes that they are "committed to seeking the insights, experiences, and concerns of people across ethnicities, genders, cultures and socio-economic groups" (Stanford Institute for Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence, 2019: n.p.). Meanwhile, industry-supported efforts like the Partnership on AI (PAI, originally the Partnership on Artificial Intelligence to Benefit People and Society) and AI4ALL advance inclusion as integral to the present and future development of AI. PAI, for example, states a commitment to "provide an open and inclusive platform for discussion and engagement" (Partnership on AI, 2020: n.p.) on AI, other data technologies, and their impacts on society. Meanwhile, AI4ALL (2020) is explicitly "dedicated to increasing diversity and inclusion in AI education, research, development, and policy" (n.p.).

At the same time, large technology companies have publicly renewed their commitment to building more inclusive engineering and design teams. As one Microsoft initiative puts it, "Hiring diverse backgrounds, disciplines, genders, races and cultures into the teams designing and engineering these experiences is critical" (Chou and Ibars, 2018: n.p.). Or, as Amazon Web Services' "We Power Tech" initiative puts it, "we believe the . . . future of tech is diverse, inclusive and accessible" (Khanna, 2020: n.p.). These efforts are bolstered by a growing industry of consultants and non-profit groups like Project Include (2020), which "uses data and advocacy to accelerate diversity and inclusion solutions in the tech industry" (n.p.). These efforts appeal to the idea that the diversification of design and development teams will—axiomatically—result in more inclusive data technologies and products.

Inclusion as discrimination solution

The ideal of inclusion has also permeated efforts to mitigate problems of bias and discrimination in data science and technology. Often, this work focuses on the ways unfair or biased outputs of discriminatory systems can issue from limitations or biases in datasets—for example, in training data where a computer "learns" to apply the rules and procedures defined by a set of algorithms. If training data are not sufficiently representative of the populations upon which the program will ultimately be applied, it is likely to produce problematic results. For example, as Buolamwini and Gebru (2018) demonstrated, facial recognition software trained on data reflecting mostly light-skinned faces both misrecognizes (or fails to recognize) faces with darker skin and performs inconsistently across binary gendered groups. The insights of this and other work generated a bevy of "inclusive" industry responses. Microsoft, for example, quickly announced "significant improvements in [its] system's ability to recognize gender across skin tones" (Roach, 2018: n.p.), while IBM Research (2018) responded by releasing to technologists what at the time was the world's largest available dataset of faces "equally distributed across skin tones, genders, and ages" (n.p.).[3] Although not limited to Microsoft and IBM,

these efforts share an ethical commitment to inclusion as central to equality—or, as the Algorithmic Justice League (2020) puts it, to the idea that "technology should serve all of us. Not just the privileged few" (n.p.).

Beyond fair and inclusive algorithms, the push for inclusivity has also extended to the design of data inputs for demographic information like race and gender and customization options for a broad range of individual expressions of identity. From census documents to medical intake forms to social media sign-up pages, it has become a truism that "checkboxes," input fields, and interface design choices can profoundly shape both individual experiences of recognition and downstream data analyses. Among the most visible of these efforts have been moves by large online platforms—like social media sites or dating apps—to accommodate a broader range of gender identities in their user profiles (for a review of these efforts, see Bivens and Haimson, 2016). In 2014, for example, Facebook launched a major update that allowed users to choose from not two options ("male" and "female"), but 56—including agender, gender non-conforming, genderqueer, non-binary, and transgender (Bivens, 2017). More recently, the popular dating and hook-up app Tinder—following reports that transgender users of the app were being harassed and targeted for exclusion (Vincent, 2016)—similarly expanded their input fields for gender identification and preference filtering to be more inclusive of transgender and non-binary users.

Inclusion as affective appeal

Work on inclusion has been further bolstered by high-profile marketing and PR campaigns. These campaigns arguably constitute the new data ethics' affective guard, marked by emotional appeals to tech's role in mediating people's relationships and helping them achieve their goals. After CEO Mark Zuckerberg's testimony before US congressional lawmakers, Facebook released what at the time was its biggest ever ad campaign; in it, the company took a remorseful tone, promising to "do better" and re-focus on building community (Beer, 2018: n.p.). In a similar vein, Google's (2019) media blitz—titled "Here to Help"—centered its role as an information resource and implored users to embrace a more inclusive and diverse view of the world ("learn something new, explore the world around you . . . all with a little help from Google" (n.p.)). Tinder's gender-inclusive design efforts were also accompanied by a robust advertising campaign. Branded with the hashtag #AllTypesAllSwipes (referring to the "swiping" motion users make to evaluate another user's profile picture) and featuring a bevy of trans activists, bloggers, models, and performers, the platform lamented that it did not have "the right tools to serve our diverse community in the past," but invited everyone to celebrate their move toward "a more inclusive community" (Tinder, 2016: n.p.).

Perhaps, most prominent among these efforts was IBM's "Dear Tech" ad campaign. Featuring high-profile figures like neuroscientist/actress Mayim Bialik (2019), actress/pop star Janelle Monáe, and second-man-on-the-moon Buzz Aldrin, the campaign—debuted during the television broadcast of the 91st Academy Awards—beseeched technology industries to engage in a broader conversation about technology's values and goals, from caring for the environment and improving healthcare to promoting privacy and supporting women in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).

("Dear tech. . ., you've done a lot of good for the world," Aldrin says. "But," Bialik picks up, "I feel like you have the potential to do so much more.") Rather than halting, walking back, or fundamentally rethinking the role of "tech" (and technology companies) in people's lives, the campaign—as with others—entreats them to do better and chart a more inclusive path forward.

Against inclusion, or: the discursive bases of data violence

Activism and critical scholarship have laid bare the ways data science and technology are instrumental to racist, sexist, colonial, and anti-Indigenous violences. In response, the boosters of such technologies have promised to "do better," in part, by appealing to feel-good notions of a better, more inclusive world.[4] Against easy or quick fixes, however, histories of data violence ask us to attend to popular discourses—like discourses on inclusion—and the ways they feed and maintain the potential for material and symbolic violence. Furthermore, work on discursive violence demands that we resist the reduction of data technologies to mere tooling and, instead, attune ourselves to broader norms, ideals, and configurations of power that simultaneously maintain and obscure the potential of data science and technology for facilitating violence. In this article, doing so means critically assessing the ideal of inclusion as advanced within the context of new and emerging discourses of data and technology ethics.

Perhaps most notable are the ways inclusion discourses too neatly *pose and resolve* the problem of violence. "Inclusive" mission statements and organizational commitments readily admit that data technologies produce harmful or even violent outcomes but respond by positioning data science and technology as ultimately the solution to these violences—as long as we design and deploy them in more inclusive ways. More inclusive datasets and data input fields billed as progress or "doing better" implicitly concede the harms inflicted by their less inclusive iterations, while celebrating narrow technical updates as a kind of victory for marginalized communities. Insidiously, this reasoning subtly normalizes a near total absence of the word "no" in discussions of data ethics (see also Greene et al., 2019). It neutralizes critical calls to *not* collect certain kinds of data or build and deploy certain technologies by reframing the issue as exclusively one of iteration, improvement, and doing things more inclusively. Following Gangadharan and Niklas (2019), however, this focus on "inclusive" solutions to social problems leaves untouched the violences of social hierarchy by "prioritiz[ing] technical forms of discrimination or unfairness at the expense of other techniques faced by individuals or groups who systematically bear the risks and harms of a discriminatory society" (p. 885).

Recalling Bivens' (2017) rejoinder that "the gender binary will not be deprogrammed," tweaks to data input fields are insufficient for confronting the hierarchical power structures that produce (material and symbolic) violences against, for example, transgender women on Tinder in the first place. Although more granular user control over filtering and identification can reduce harm in an individualized sense, it ultimately converts the problem of gendered violence into a kind of "compensatory individualism" (Walcott, 2019: 402) that offloads the work of security, leveraging iterative updates, and design tweaks to insulate themselves from deeper or more meaningful challenges to their power and position (Acker and Beaton, 2016). Rather than the company being themselves

accountable—to stay with the Tinder example—to transgender users, such "inclusive" solutions evade accountability and instead "empower" individuals to regulate their own safety and visibility. But, as Seeta Peña Gangadharan (2017) has shown in her work on the downsides of digital inclusion and broadband adoption, inclusion efforts that convert broad social aspirations to matters of individual responsibility ultimately exacerbate—rather than alleviate—existing inequalities.

Although perhaps less obvious, inclusion discourses manifested in technology marketing and new "data ethics" initiatives often reproduce the same dynamic. By narrowing the kinds of forces and experts capable of technical interventions to make technology "better" (i.e. more inclusive), this discourse routes progress through the very firms and people responsible for many of the most visible instantiations of data violence in the first place. At times, this routing borders on self-parody (as IBM's commercial exhorts, "I need a cloud that talks to my other clouds"); other times, however, it appears completely devoid of self-awareness, as when the company that sold data processing products to Hitler implores us to "champion data rights as human rights." But, while a bit of shallow corporate PR may be easy to pick on, its core message is difficult to dismiss, as its central assertions sit atop a broader reinvestment in extant hierarchies of social, political, and economic power. Far from liberatory, however, inclusion discourses transform—as Lilly Irani (2019) has shown in her work on "other-directed" projects like social good hackathons, "user-centered design," and empathetic design thinking—"situation[s] into a problem amenable to their particular forms of knowledge and perceived agency in the world" (p. 66). As a matter of discursive violence, the feel-good language of inclusion works to short circuit more radical confrontations with corporate dominance and cultural hegemony.

A further consequence of this discursive move is its narrow conception of the resources and expertise required to address data science and technology's potential for violence. If mass politics and structural transformation are off the table, then ethical intervention is largely reduced to questions of design and development. In this way, inclusive solutions perversely reify the exclusive nature of technical expertise—as Greene et al. (2019: 2129) put it, they frame ethical problems as best solved by those best positioned to technically intervene, especially in areas like machine learning or AI. Put another way, inclusive solutions sidestep more critical discussions about how certain kinds of practical knowledge are evaluated—and who gets to make such valuations (Amrute, 2019: 58). As with the sort of dependencies Enloe describes in the context of militarization, this move only normalizes the dependency on exclusive forms of expertise in ways that do not address but feed and maintain the potential for violence. This dependency is further secured by predictable cycles of recognition and reward that follow "inclusive" system or design changes; by making good on "doing better" and being more inclusive, the purveyors and builders of data technologies get to bask in a period of social accolades and good press. They also benefit economically insofar as more—and more fine-grained—data on users are valuable, whether for purposes of marketing or through sale on secondary data markets. And they benefit politically, given that splashy appeals to inclusion and "doing better" can help stave off external scrutiny, especially by state regulators or watchdog groups. In this way, "inclusive" moves are not distinct from, but continuous with established norms and patterns of political power and positioning—or, as micha cárdenas (2017) argues, a "diversity of representations" (p. 168) not only benefits, but is integral to high-tech global capitalism.

Finally, discourses of inclusion ultimately reproduce, rather than subvert the legitimating power of dominant actors—that is, the power to mark off and bestow recognition upon diverse "others." As Eunjung Kim (2016) observes, the move to include often "ironically enable[s] the violent subject's power to recognize . . . othered subjects as humans" (p. 124). The dependency on dominant actors for recognition is grounded—following Fanon—in systems of social and political norms that position certain actions, identities, and ways of being as "wrong" in the first place. Even ostensibly critical work in this domain—that is, work that is cognizant of and attempts to foreground pernicious racial, gendered, or other dynamics—reproduces, through an appeal to inclusion, this legitimating power. Or, as Ramon Amaro (2019) notes, such work "speaks directly to this problem of the erasure, yet folds seamlessly into the desire for representation" (n.p.). This dynamic is on full display in Tinder's #AllTypesAllSwipes hashtag, which unintentionally evokes datafication's demand that individuals be transformed into reductive and computationally friendly typological features—what Toby Beauchamp (2019) calls the "demand [of] differentiation from illegible others" (p. 139). It makes clear that being swiped (i.e. recognizable) is, in the first place, contingent on one's conformity to a "type" that can be marked off, named, and made amenable to the system. More perversely, it represents what we might call the discursive excess of inclusion; inclusion discourses do not simply normalize, but dupe us into celebrating the very power structures that generate asymmetrical vulnerabilities to violence in the first place.

Conclusion

The concept of discursive violence attunes us toward violence's discursive bases—that is, toward the "power that renders othering possible . . ." (Amoore and De Goede, 2013: 511). Attending to discursive violence when thinking with and about data science and technology offers one way to push back against empty calls for inclusion, helping us recognize and resist the hollow "smile of diversity" (Ahmed, 2012: 72) when it provides cover for the ways dominant orders acknowledge differences without being actually moved by them (Povinelli, 2001). Doing so can contribute—in some way—to broader projects of "epistemic disobedience" (Arora, 2019) that destabilize dominant discourses and ideals embedded in the proliferation of both data science and technology. As Nabil Hassein (2017) reminds us, "the struggle for liberation is not a struggle for diversity and inclusion—it is a struggle for decolonization, reparations, and self-determination" (n.p.). Following this, it is worth acknowledging that the proliferation of inclusion discourses has been met by further critiques of exploitative data technologies center values and practices of refusal (Cifor et al., 2019; Gangadharan, 2020), abolition (Benjamin, 2019), contestation (see Gürses et al., 2018), and outright prohibition (Stark, 2019). These approaches actively confront, rather than conceal the operation of power and hierarchy.

By contrast, popular discourses on inclusion direct us toward a data ethics of "minimum viable futures" rather than one oriented toward mass politics and structural transformation (Irani, 2019: 230). Put another way: inclusion represents an ethics of social change that does not upset the social order. Inclusion positions a certain kind of technology (and, more often than not, tech *company*) as integral to social progress. Inclusion leverages recognition as a means to diffuse the radical potential of difference and deepen

our dependencies on oppressive social orders—much in the same way, Enloe showed how "peace" under conditions of militarization is not distinct from, but continuous with violence. Inclusion operationalizes the language of remorse and "doing better" to obscure its commitment to a substantive, technorationalist conception of the future—that is, a future where more and better data science and technology alone can save us from the very problems data science and technology generate. At the most extreme, inclusion paints as irrational any form of resistance that does not accept, in the first place, the legitimacy of such a future (see TallBear, 2013). As a form of discursive violence, discourses on inclusion implicitly operate as a kind of threat; either accept the terms of inclusion (and concede the system's legitimating power) or withdraw (and return, in the eyes of the system, to a pre- or illegitimate state). More perniciously, inclusion reinforces the structural sources of violence it supposedly addresses, neatly illustrating Enloe's observation that there is no easy distinction between violence and its absence. As Elizabeth Povinelli (2001: 329–330) puts it, inclusion often takes the form of an imperative that those marked by difference be just different enough, but not so different as to effectively challenge or, worse, undo the logics that sustain oppressive orders.

As a political maneuver, inclusion discourses—to repurpose Walcott (2019: 405)—interrupt and delay more radical calls for human transformation. Though purporting to address harms inflicted by data science and technology, inclusion perversely reifies the power advantaged or dominant groups have to recognize and "bestow humanity" upon the subjugated. To throw insult after injury, we are asked to not merely concede, but actively celebrate inclusivity as a kind of collective "win" rather than a product of liberalism's dependency on recognition, sorting, othering, and processes of (il)legitimation in the first place. In doing so, inclusion necessitates a kind of critical silence that is ultimately, in the words of Sandy Stone (1991), "an extremely high price to pay for acceptance" (p. 299).

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Notes

1. In centering the role of discursive violence, I do not mean to minimize the importance of addressing other forms of violence. As the problems of both COVID-19 and police brutality have made clear, the social, economic, and physical costs of White supremacy are an urgent— if not *the* most urgent—political issue, at least in the US today. In view of that, I offer this work as a small contribution to broader projects of exposing liberal discourses of diversity and inclusion as insufficient for addressing pernicious material and symbolic violences.
2. There are, no doubt, other ways to theorize violence (see Lawrence and Karim, 2007). For Hegel and Marx, for example, the structure of history was marked by often violent relations between dominant and subordinated groups—on this account, violence is not some pre-social impulse, but the upshot of social structure. In a different way, Frederick Douglass positioned violence as instrumental to the realization and maintenance of dignity under dehumanizing conditions. Although I do not explore them here, these approaches point toward further avenues for exploring and complicating concepts like "administrative violence," "algorithmic violence," and "data violence."
3. During the revision stage of this article, IBM announced an intention to discontinue work on facial recognition technology. Amazon and Microsoft quickly followed up by announcing that they would no longer sell facial recognition technology to police. It is, however, unclear what these developments will mean long term. (For an overview of these announcements, see Heilweil, 2020.)
4. This is not to say that discourses of inclusion supplant or make irrelevant discourses of security and fear. As contemporary work on, in particular, border security makes clear, fear remains a powerful motivator, and key ingredient in the proliferation of data technologies (see, for example, Amoore and Raley, 2017; Beauchamp, 2019).

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