

DATA & SOCIETY

Rigoberto Lara Guzman ([00:09](#)):

Hi, everyone. Welcome to our very first virtual Databite. My name is Rigoberto Lara Guzmán. My pronouns are they and he. I work as an event producer, here at Data & Society, and I will be your host tonight. Supported by my team behind the curtain, CJ, Eli and Rona.

Rigoberto Lara Guzman ([00:39](#)):

Data & Society is an independent research institute studying the social implications of data and automation. We produce original research and convene multidisciplinary thinkers and doers to challenge the power and purpose of technology in society. You can learn more about us through our website at datasociety.net. Spatially Data & Society is located in what we now refer to as New York City, a network of rivers and islands in the Atlantic northeast, land to the Wampanoag people and the South Brooklyn. It is with their permission that I want to open up this space.

Sasha Costanza-Chock ([01:25](#)):

Thank you so much. And, thank you for beginning with the digital land acknowledgment. I'm speaking to you from what's called Cambridge, Massachusetts, which is the Wampanoag and the people. We encourage people to learn more about whose lands you are on today and we've put up a link to nativelands.ca, that can help you learn more about that. If you feel like it, you could put your name and an acknowledgment in the Q&A, just to share that with some of the other people on the call.

Rigoberto Lara Guzman ([01:50](#)):

So, Sasha, you and I first met in Detroit, at the 2018 Allied Meetup Conference and since then, I have personally been co-building with the Design Justice Network. And it's just-- I can't say enough how much of an honor it is to be sharing this space with you. You have a visionary organizer, scholar, a designer. And, it's just wonderful to be in virtual solidarity, here with you tonight. We were going to launch into just a simple question, which gets us into a little bit of the context of the book. And the question is: What is Design Justice? What is the origin story of this book?

Sasha Costanza-Chock ([02:46](#)):

DATA & SOCIETY

Yeah, thank you. Rigo. It's really†-- I'm really happy to be here, in this conversation with you, as well. To me, Design Justice is a framework for analysis, about how the design of sociotechnical systems and various groups of people. And, in particular, it's an approach that focusing, very explicitly, and opening, on how design of objects, of interfaces, of the build environment, of systems, of services, may reproduce the challenge of domination. It talks about the intersection of white supremacy, patriarchy, capitalism, and migratory status, citizenship status and other forms of structural and historical inequality. In the book, I talk about the intellectual lineage of some of the concepts in Design Justice framework. It's not just an academic exercise or a way of thinking.

Sasha Costanza-Chock ([04:18](#)):

Because Design Justice is also a growing community of practice. Community of practice that focuses on the more equitable distribution of designs, benefits and burdens. More meaningful participation in design processes and decisions and especially on recognition of community-based indigenous design traditions, knowledge and practices. And of course, Design Justice is not a term that I created. It's a term that comes out of this community of practice. There wouldn't be any Design Justice theory†-- or practice†-- without the Design Justice Network, organizers, especially like you, Victoria, Wes, Carlos, Danielle, Victor, and so many, many other people who have been part of creating the Design Justice Network and growing this community over the last several years.

Sasha Costanza-Chock ([05:25](#)):

I think it's also worth emphasizing that this is a community that's made up of not only people who think of themselves as professional design practitioners, but people who work with social movements across the United States and around the world and it's a community that includes designers and software developers, architects, technologists, journalists, community organizers, activists, researchers, every-day people who got concerned with how design processes and design decisions are playing out. And, many folks are affiliated loosely with the Design Justice Network, some of just signatories to our principals. Some, like yourself, are involved with organizing local nodes that are now operating in different cities and locations around the U.S. And around the world.

DATA & SOCIETY

Sasha Costanza-Chock ([06:31](#)):

That instance of the Design Justice comes out of the Allied Media Conference. It was born in 2016. The Allied Media Conference is media-makers and activists and techies and designers who get together in Detroit. It's organized according to tracks and practice spaces and network gatherings and the Design Justice Network was really born back in 2016, that summer, when a group of 30 people took part in Generated Shared Principles for Design Justice. The goal of that workshop was to move beyond the frames of social impact design or design for good or human-centered design to challenge people working on design processes to think about how good intentions are not enough to make sure design processes and practices are really tools for liberation. And to develop, together, principles that might help practitioners avoid what is often an unwitting production of existing equalities. And so at that workshop, in 2016, people came up with the seeds for what would later be the Design Justice Network Principles. I thought it would be good to kick off our conversation by just sharing those principles and maybe that's something that you and I could do together?

Rigoberto Lara Guzman ([08:16](#)):

I would love that.

Sasha Costanza-Chock ([08:18](#)):

Thank you. So, I was thinking I'll read the first one and then you read the second one. We'll just go and forth until they're done. There's 10 of them.

Rigoberto Lara Guzman ([08:28](#)):

Okay, I'm ready.

Sasha Costanza-Chock ([08:34](#)):

So principle one: we use design to sustain, heal and empower our communities, as well as to seek liberation from exploitive and oppressive systems.

Rigoberto Lara Guzman ([08:47](#)):

DATA & SOCIETY

Number two: We center the voices of those who are directly-impacted by the outcomes of the design process.

Sasha Costanza-Chock ([08:57](#)):

Number three: We've prioritized design's impact on the community over the intentions of the designer because we know where good intentions lead.

Rigoberto Lara Guzman ([09:10](#)):

Number four: We view change as emergent from an accountable, accessible, and collaborative process rather than as a point at the end of a process.

Sasha Costanza-Chock ([09:23](#)):

Number five: We see the role of the designer as a facilitator rather than an expert.

Rigoberto Lara Guzman ([09:32](#)):

Six: We believe that everyone is an expert based on their own lived experience and that we all have unique and brilliant contributions to bring to a design process.

Sasha Costanza-Chock ([09:41](#)):

I love this one. Number seven: We share design, knowledge and tools with our communities.

Rigoberto Lara Guzman ([09:54](#)):

Number eight: We work towards sustainable, community led and controlled outcomes.

Sasha Costanza-Chock ([10:04](#)):

Number nine: We work towards non-explosive solutions that reconnect us to the earth and to each other. And the last one?

Rigoberto Lara Guzman ([10:14](#)):

Number 10: Before seeking new design solutions, we look for what is already working at the community level. We honor and uplift traditional, indigenous and local knowledge and practices.

DATA & SOCIETY

Sasha Costanza-Chock ([10:26](#)):

So, thank you for reading those with me. And for those who are watching the stream, if these resonate with you, you can learn more about them at designjustice.org, and you can sign on to them, as well, at <http://designjustice.org/designprinciples>. And I guess the last thing I'll say about this first question about where did this come from and how do I think about it, so, you know, we just emphasized the history of the network and where it came from and these principles. In the book, it's my own experience of working in that network. There are many people who have tried, over time, to think about how design can be used for liberation, rather than to perpetuation oppression.

Sasha Costanza-Chock ([11:25](#)):

I think about through my own lived experience as a trans-feminine person and my own experience as an educator. I have a way to think about how to teach Design Justice in a classroom. That is from teaching at MIT. Each chapter has a mix of sort of what's happening in this community of practice, what does design theory have to say and then some aspects that I'm drawing from my own experience.

Rigoberto Lara Guzman ([12:03](#)):

Thank you so much for sharing that brief presentation, Sasha. There's so much to unpack in this book. And I think it would be appropriate to begin with a question about how the book emerges. Because you've named already so many people, so many contributors. And I was just wondering your thoughts on the importance of forming communities of practice. What is a community of practice? And then why is it important to establish these through Design Justice?

Sasha Costanza-Chock ([12:37](#)):

Yeah, I mean, I think that the theory, without practice, is not that useful. Also, probably doesn't go that closely to ground truth so I think that a lot of the ideas that we're working within the network, and certainly the ideas that influence me the most, come out of particular social context and communities that have organized and struggled against forms of structural and historical oppression. Obviously, the book draws heavily on black feminist and trans-feminine theories and on many other sort of genealogies of radical

DATA & SOCIETY

thought, that have always been tied to community organizers and to liberation movements. As well as to designers and design communities and the ways that designers, over time, have tried to theorize their practice, especially those who are connected to, say, you know, labor movements or other types of social movements.

Sasha Costanza-Chock ([13:49](#)):

And I think in terms of sort of, you know, intellectual kinship and histories of course design justice is a new iteration maybe of many other intersecting and overlapping ways of thinking about how to do design better. So for example I'm really influenced by this book, by Arturo Escobar. This is called Designs for the Pluriverse. Its really phenomenal, the subtitle is Radical Interdependence, Autonomy, and the Making of Worlds. And the idea of creating a world where many worlds fit, which of course comes from the slogan of the movement, is one that has been influential for me, personally, and that's why the subtitle of my book-, and the ways I'm thinking about what it is we're trying to do,- is never about finding the one way. The one⁺ the one, perfect design ring to rule them all.

Sasha Costanza-Chock ([14:54](#)):

How do we fragment that global monoculture, that vision of top-down, perfect control and open up space for building many different types of worlds. You know, there's this history of, you know, folks like Victor Papanek, who wrote Design for the Real World. I think there's a lot of really powerful ideas in here, as well. He and his students were interested in how do you redesign objects using, you know, locally-available materials? How do you rethink and reimagine what it mean to innovate and design through a process that can actually delink people from the necessity to replicate locally what global transnational firms are telling people to do and adopt. That said, this book barely mentions gender and race. It does mention disability a little bit, but I think there's a lot of important concepts in here that we can build on.

Sasha Costanza-Chock ([16:07](#)):

And I actually think that most recently, we're living in a moment where there's a profusion, an explosion of really phenomenal design, practice and theory that's trying to engage with concepts of structural and systematic inequality along race and class. We've got great books like Kat Home's Mismatch: How Inclusion Shapes Design. Where Kat is

DATA & SOCIETY

trying to encourage people to abandon the idea of edge cases and we don't need to pay attention to this small subset of population when we're building our product because that won't affect very many people. She's saying, no. If we design around the so-called edge cases, we're building objects and systems and interfaces that are far more resilient, and I'm really inspired by that.

Sasha Costanza-Chock ([17:15](#)):

I love this book, *Technically Wrong*. This is by Sarah Wachter-Boettcher. And, the subtitle is: *Sexist Apps, Biased Algorithms, and Other Threats of Toxic Tech*. There's just so much happening right now. Value-sensitive design. This is a whole framework that was developed, starting really-- actually, I don't know when they first began. I've read stuff that was published in the 80s and 90s. And this is a synthesis of the work that's happened through the value sensitive design framework over time.

Rigoberto Lara Guzman ([17:52](#)):

No, you've touched on so many beautiful concepts. The one that stands out of course is the idea of plurality and how do we make space for multiplicities to emerge, which is why I think the focus on always working towards community and these intellectual kinship bonds is super important.

Sasha Costanza-Chock ([18:16](#)):

Yeah, for sure. And I think in terms of building a community of practice in the Design Justice Network, what we're trying to do is have people connect with other folks who are inspired by the principles and what we call local nodes. So, that's, - you know, the first local node was created in Toronto, after we did a workshop there from folks from the Data Justice lab and looking at how Google's subsidiary, Sidewalk Labs, they've purchased an area of Toronto's waterfront for a perfect, smart city. It has- robots are delivering all of the food through underground tunnels and there's no... the only workers are so-called knowledge workers.

Sasha Costanza-Chock ([19:12](#)):

And so their vision of a utopia isn't something that a lot of us would want to live in. And it's certainly not something that admits working people and new immigrants and people

DATA & SOCIETY

who don't identify as high-skilled knowledge workers for tech firms. There's been a whole movement in Toronto to block Sidewalk and push back on that particular plan. And also, sort of thinking about how that type of vision of a smart, perfectly-surveilled city, the recolonization of space and people have carved out different types of world. By partnering with that coalition, we were saying, what does the⁺-- our principles and this approach to thinking about design, what does it have to say about city planning and design of the future?

Sasha Costanza-Chock ([20:09](#)):

And since then the Toronto local node has moved on to other activities. So they're they're working on a zine about how to organize a local node and a bunch of other stuff. But that was a really great sort of tangible space to gather together and think about what does Design Justice mean in the context of what's happening in Toronto today. I think that in different local nodes, people are exploring different issues, different areas, and building different types of coalitions in sort of this emerging community of practice. And I wonder if I could throw this question back to you a little bit around, you know, what's happening, we're new in the New York process of forming, forming a local node. How has that been and what is community of practice mean to you all?

Rigoberto Lara Guzman ([20:54](#)):

Yeah, absolutely. We launched the New York City Node last year actually, at Data & Society. It was a wonderful gathering. And right now, I think we are working on developing capacity-building. So that we can⁺-- we can extend, like, responsibility and develop momentum to spark the node. One of the issues, of course, in network-building, is having enough capacity. I think some of the things you've mentioned⁺-- and pointed out⁺-- really speak to the importance of building trust with the people that you're building with so that, you know, some of the work can get done. Really, a lot of it is administrative work that that needs to happen and so in order to sustain it, you really have to have a sense of play, pleasure and connectedness.

Rigoberto Lara Guzman ([21:59](#)):

I love that. The word Cotorreo is still on the slides during our conversation.

DATA & SOCIETY

Rigoberto Lara Guzman ([22:05](#)):

It's like a hangout, you know? I love that it's in relationship to conversation because conversation is a powerful tool for developing this trust and this kinship that I'm talking about. And so, yeah, I think it's a slow process. And, I welcome anybody on this webinar and beyond who is interesting in helping us build what a localized New York City Design Justice Node can look like. Before moving on to this next question[†], which I'm excited to get to[†], I want to give a shout-out to the people on the Q&A function, who have been naming their respective nations. And also, given homage to the land that they are on. We've kind of taken over the Q&A function, as a pseudo chat, so feel free to use it as a chat function, as well. We love to see your comments. This question really came from reading about your experience with the TSA and I was just curious,- as I was reading it, curious to explore this concept of deviance with you and how it is that it plays out in your every-day life, navigating sociotechnical systems.

Sasha Costanza-Chock ([23:30](#)):

Deviance, and how it plays out in my life and this book, so, as you said, the book, Design Justice, in the introduction, I begin with this story of my own experience navigating airport security systems and in particular, the millimeter wave scanners. And I'm not going to recount the story, here, because it's in the book and you can read it you can actually even read it for free on the Design Justice Pub Hub, that I think maybe we can put that into the chat and into the Q&A because the MIT Press has been making one chapter of the book available each month and so we're now -- the intro and chapter 1 are available and pretty soon, chapter 2 is going to drop. And that's going to keep happening for the next couple of months.

Sasha Costanza-Chock ([24:20](#)):

So, you can read that story in more depth. I've also talked about it at a couple of recent talks, so I don't want to really repeat it right now. In brief, when you go through the millimeter wave scanner, which is one that you step into and it spins around you like this, after you put your arms up over your head in a triangle, a lot of cisgender people don't necessarily know, on the other side, the TSA agent is looking at you and visually just basically deciding whether they think that you are man or a woman and based on

DATA & SOCIETY

how they read you, they are pressing a little blue boy button or a little pink girl button, as you can see on the slide here.

Sasha Costanza-Chock ([25:14](#)):

And this is something that in the trans community, people have been talking about for years. It's only now starting to become more known and more visible to cis people. So, basically, for me, as a trans-fem person, usually the TSA agent will read me as male. Press the pink girl button and then my groin area will get flagged as anomalous because the data construct it's compared the scan of my body at resolution to, I'm outside the parameters of a normative female body. But if they press the⁺-- maybe I'm presenting more masculine or maybe they read me as male, if they press the blue boy button, then my chest area is going to get flagged and highlighted in bright yellow on the touchscreen on the other side of the millimeter wave scanner.

Sasha Costanza-Chock ([26:14](#)):

And so I use this as an example for my own lived experience of how this is a particular configuration of a sociotechnical system that is designed to erase, flag as risky, my particular form of body type deviance from normative cis-gendered binary body type assumptions. And I also, you know, I talk more about how that process works. And, I also, you know, I kind of use it to open up the conversation of Design Justice and and of how the matrix of domination of a white supremacy, heteropatriarchy cisnormativity, capitalism, and settler colonialism and ableism are constantly being reproduced through sociotechnical systems. So it's like a window for me. And I also really highlight in the book how this isn't something that's only a problem for trans or gender nonconforming people, right?

Sasha Costanza-Chock ([27:25](#)):

These are these are systems that also are biased systematically against black people. So ProPublica has a story about black women's hair styles and how they're constantly flagged by the millimeter wave scanner. Simone Brown in her book dark matters talks about how Sikh men, Muslim women and others to wear head wraps consequently get flagged. And Joy Buolamwini who founded the Algorithmic Justice League technically demonstrates how gender itself is always racialized already, because humans have

DATA & SOCIETY

trained our machines to categorize faces and bodies as male and female through lenses tinted by the optics of white supremacy. And of course, airport security is also systematically biased against people with disabilities who are going to be flagged as risky if they have non-normative body shapes or if they use prostheses and and so on and so forth. And if you fall into more than than one of these non-normative or deviant categories, then you're multiply burdened within a matrix of domination and you're most likely to not only be flagged as risky, but then to suffer the worst harms from that flagging. And so I also talk about how all of us simultaneously occupy positions of privilege and marginalization within the matrix of domination. So because of my white skin and my MIT affiliation, my educational privilege and my us citizenship, when I get flagged, I don't have to worry about being, you know, hooded and taken away to a secret prison that's part of the global infrastructure of the so called war on terror and disappeared without representation and all that type of stuff. I might miss my flight or something.

Rigoberto Lara Guzman ([29:23](#)):

Thank you for modeling what multisidedness looks like. What multisided knowledge production is. You've cited so many people already and it's just a testament to me, as someone who works in an institute that is producing knowledge, how important it is to be in community with those we cite, as well. I wanted to also respond to this phrase, these are your words. I'm responding to your words. A reservoir of relief. I'm just curious, how are you replenishing your reservoir of relief, at this moment?

Sasha Costanza-Chock ([30:05](#)):

That's such a hard question really.

Rigoberto Lara Guzman ([30:08](#)):

This is the hard question?

Sasha Costanza-Chock ([30:15](#)):

Because I don't know. Yeah, just right now it's, it's just so wild, like up and down, you know. It's like one moment I'll be like there's, there's so much wonderful organizing and I feel so lucky you have to be in community with so many people whose work I really

DATA & SOCIETY

respect and be in those conversations. And then another moment, I'll just read some new news report about the latest aspect of the unfolding current crisis which, of course, just dramatically magnifies all of the underlying structural crisis that we already live. And I'll just get really down about it. So this is, this is hard. But I wouldn't say, honestly, my only answer to this right now is the little, personal and everyday kind of things.

Sasha Costanza-Chock ([31:05](#)):

So I'm here, I'm with my family and our apartment and we kind of we go for walks when it's sunny outside. So we spend a little bit of time outside that really helps a lot. We also are attending different arts events and online poetry readings and musical events and livestreams and just kind of getting, you know, inspiration and relief from from the work of artists and creators who are finding interesting ways to, to build community and share space and share creation creation in this time. And then personally, I've also been spending some time making beats because I actually used to do that a lot.

Rigoberto Lara Guzman ([31:55](#)):

Hold on. Did you say beats or beads?

Sasha Costanza-Chock ([31:57](#)):

Beats. Music. Over here. In the background, - I don't know and you can see this is my k2000 sampling work station. I had it since the 90s. And I've been, when I'm really down, I get back into taking some samples and making some rhythms.

Rigoberto Lara Guzman ([32:23](#)):

So you're a DJ for Design Justice and also a DJ. Thank you for answering that question. I wanted to leave room for us to kind of field the vulnerabilities that are coming up for everyone right now. And speaking from a situated, personal experience, as we ask this question, now, to our audience, through this interactive that we're moving into next, dealing with experiences of erasure can be really painful. And, it's through sharing and speaking and naming them that we are able to access a kind of resiliency together.

Rigoberto Lara Guzman ([33:17](#)):

DATA & SOCIETY

So Sasha and I were interested in opening up the space a little bit, even though I can't see any one of you, to this, to this question of is there a time you can think of where you weren't seen by a computer system?

Rigoberto Lara Guzman ([33:36](#)):

It's such a fascinating question and I'm super curious to explore the response to this. Again, feel free to use the QA function. I prompted you to give us a little bit more context about what that meant, but people are already responding in the Q and A. I'll uplift one here, from Brenda. When Siri couldn't understand my accent. Erica says that Google Art and app that aligns your face to a painting. That can get into some real trouble there. Sasha, are you able to see the Q&A?

Sasha Costanza-Chock ([34:24](#)):

Yeah, I can see it now. And I wanted, I wanted to shout out the one, I think it was from, is it Erica?

Sasha Costanza-Chock ([34:29](#)):

They're going away once they get answered, so I don't see the name anymore, but the Spanish language accents on Siri. Absolutely, and I would encourage everybody to take a look. I'm at this project by the Algorithmic Justice League and Joy Buolawini called Voicing Erasure that just dropped the other week. It's at ajlunited.org/voicing-erasure. And it's basically a poem that I had the honor of being invited to participate in, which draws attention to the way that recent research that demonstrates systematic disparities in the way that voice recognition systems are able to deal with African Americans vernacular English. Well that that's a thing and that there's a recent paper that demonstrates that, but that the way that that was reported was actually done. It was reported in the New York Times. But the primary authors of the article, many of who are women, none of them were cited in the reporting, so seven men were cited. So the prose poem is joyous response to both be study itself and the findings as far as the way it was covered, people should definitely check it out. Again, that's jlunited.org/voicing-eraser. And there's going to be more happening with that.

Rigoberto Lara Guzman ([35:55](#)):

DATA & SOCIETY

And I see Joy in here, in this Q and A and they're asking you for a beat. Maybe at a future webinar, we can get deejay Sasha Costanza-Chock.

Sasha Costanza-Chock ([36:06](#)):

Maybe we can save that for the end and I'll do a beat box at the end.

Rigoberto Lara Guzman ([36:12](#)):

I love that. Let's do that. Is this a relative of yours? Carol?

Sasha Costanza-Chock ([36:19](#)):

Yes. Hi mom. Hey mommy. Every single frequent time I'm required to specify Mrs. or Mr.

Rigoberto Lara Guzman ([36:29](#)):

That's your mom's experience.

Sasha Costanza-Chock ([36:32](#)):

Here's one from AY. I'm AY, I did a Zoom call with a group of friends who are mostly black and when we did the zoom virtual backgrounds, I'm the lightest skin person in the group and the virtual background worked for me, but not for my friends. Not direct erasure, but the erasure of my community of friends felt like an erasure of part of me.

Sasha Costanza-Chock ([36:52](#)):

Wow. Thank you for sharing that example. That's a very powerful example and that sounds like something that would be really interesting to follow up on and explore. Can we gather more instances of that? Can we make that public? Can we demonstrate to Zoom that along with the privacy concerns that they, much to their credit I think, have actually recently announced that they were going to put a lot of resources into really focusing on fixing some of the worst aspects of their, the privacy aspects of the tool. Although I'm skeptical until we actually see how it comes together. But in addition to that, it looks like they've got a bunch of other forms of erasure that they need to be dealing with as well.

DATA & SOCIETY

Rigoberto Lara Guzman ([37:39](#)):

Shout out to M.T.P. Here. Saying census forms, not listing intersections of identity and asking to choose between identities, Afro Caribbean and Chinese, et cetera. I think, yeah, filling out forms can be such a trigger for many of us who do not fit within these boxes. That's for sure

Sasha Costanza-Chock ([38:00](#)):

The census forms not having the intersections. Here's Z.F., I'm a Muslim and a hijabi. I've always been asked to step aside in airports for a more thorough inspection because the scanner at the airports couldn't see what's inside my hijab. Rebecca Ackerman says my middle name gets auto corrected every time.

Rigoberto Lara Guzman ([38:24](#)):

I love J.B. saying here, I'm Palestinian, Muslim, female on many systems I don't exist.

Sasha Costanza-Chock ([38:36](#)):

Y.T. Says my East Asian last name was once deemed invalid for an online membership sign up form. And I.Y. Says when I type give away on my Android phone and it's autocorrected to get away. Interesting.

Sasha Costanza-Chock ([38:52](#)):

Sasha, I'm curious if you can address a little bit, this dichotomy between visibility and invisibility within social technical systems. Sometimes the only way we can get access to resources is to be visible to the state or to the system. Other times we don't want to be so visible. How do you, how do you approach that?

Sasha Costanza-Chock ([39:18](#)):

Yeah, absolutely. I mean, I think the short answer to this is that it's deeply contextual. So a lot of times when I give the talk about the millimeter wave scanners and trans erasure, I'll always get that one engineer in the audience will be like, well, you know, I can think about how we might need to retrain the system to be more inclusive of trans body types or something. Is that something that you would want to work on? My answer to that is

DATA & SOCIETY

always, no, I'm not interested in making more inclusive millimeter wave scanners for a variety of reasons. Including that they don't do what they claim to be doing. The TSA, you know, own audits, actually, sorry, department of Homeland Security, its own audit. The systems found they were ineffective at detecting you know, weaponry and so on.

Sasha Costanza-Chock ([40:07](#)):

I don't know, I don't know the exact stat right now off the top of my head, but they're fairly, they don't do what they're supposed to do. They serve more as what Bruce Schneier calls security theater. So they may feel like something is being done to make them feel quote unquote safe. In fact, I think of them more as a border technology or a technology of empire. And I really like to think about Harsha Walia's framework of undoing border imperialism that I'm more interested in eliminating the need for these technologies in the first place or the presumed need for them. I'm interested in ending carceral forms of technology. I'm interested in decarceral technology. I'm interested in abolition. I'm interested in undoing border imperialism and I'm not interested in inclusion in technologies of empire and border control.

Sasha Costanza-Chock ([41:11](#)):

That said, it's contextual. So sometimes we do want to be able to understand and see how many trans and gender nonconforming people are out there and how are we able to make our way through the employment system? Are we able to advance and be promoted? Or we might want to see that for women in general. And if we don't have some forms of aggregate data, it becomes hard to make claims about widespread and systemic bias. So inclusion depends on the context and the system that you're talking about and what the goal is.

Rigoberto Lara Guzman ([41:55](#)):

Y.T. saying, my East Asian last name was one deemed quote invalid for an online membership sign up form. So what we're witnessing here is not that the forms themselves are biased, but that the people who are in the backend creating the standards for these forms are showing us a little bit of their biases. Can you speak a little bit more about that, the design decisions that go into creating these forms that we then have to interact with?

DATA & SOCIETY

Sasha Costanza-Chock ([42:34](#)):

Yeah, for sure. I mean, I think that there's a lot of things that go into that and part of it is exactly what you're describing, which is that unfortunately in the tech sector there's still a chronic over representation of what Joy calls pale males. And the undersampled majority are not participating in the design of these systems. So there is certainly a lot of work that needs to be done that could fall under the diversity, equity and inclusion umbrella. So how do we make these spaces more inclusive? How do we build the pipeline? How do we make sure that hiring and retention and promotion happens? How do we set it up so that there's capital available to non-normative founders who want to create new tech startups and get access to that? And I certainly think that all of that is important and support a lot of those efforts.

Sasha Costanza-Chock ([43:30](#)):

I also though want to be careful about allowing, design justice is not just an argument for neoliberal inclusion in a representational capacity, in the already existing processes of technology, design and development. In part because you could easily end up with a situation where you just have a bunch of pretty awful extractive, ecologically devastating firms creating products for the global 1% who just happened to have more diverse development teams on them. It doesn't change the dynamic of how are we organizing our priorities around what we need to design and build and develop. And maybe right now the global pandemic is a moment where you can actually see the mask get stripped away and you can kind of see where yes, on the one hand, existing inequalities are playing out in really awful ways in terms of who is suffering the greatest harms from the pandemic and the response. But at the same time, what I'm trying to say is that you can see when we really need to, as a species, we're able to kind of all gathering, get together and say, we need to organize as much of our resources that we possibly can towards dealing with this thing right now.

Sasha Costanza-Chock ([44:49](#)):

And so suddenly there's massive amounts of resources and time and energy and investment in figuring out, you know, the vaccine and rapid testing and detection and contact tracing. We can get into more and everything else. And so the priorities for

DATA & SOCIETY

designing and prototyping and rolling out systems that are going to structure our lives. You know, they could be different. It could be other. We just have to understand, you know, we have to understand ecological devastation as a crisis that's actually on the scale of larger than a pandemic. We have to understand, , gender and racial diversity as a crisis. It's on the scale of something like the global pandemic and we need to figure out how do we build and design and redesign systems to reduce incidents rather than to constantly replicate it.

Sasha Costanza-Chock ([45:49](#)):

We have to think about homelessness and poverty and hunger and food insecurity as crises on a scale of something like the pandemic. And how would we redesign our systems so that those things are far less of a problem. We have the ability to do it. And this shows us that that's the case. We just need to not go back to quote unquote business as usual. On the other side of this. I'm really inspired by Arundhati Roy's article about the pandemic as a portal. You know, it's a portal and we can choose whether we want to drag all of the matrix of domination through to the other side, or you want to leave some of that baggage behind.

Rigoberto Lara Guzman ([46:35](#)):

Thank you everyone for interacting with us through this Q and A function. I feel like we really hacked this, this Zoom function and for sharing your experiences of a ratio. That was really, really amazing. I was not expecting to receive so much engagement, but it just shows I think representative of the resonance that people are feeling Sasha to the book, to the ideas that we're setting up, putting on the table. And you know, as we are approaching the end of this webinar I want to just talk about where you're at now at the stage of, of launching the book, what's coming up for you in terms of your next steps, in terms of next steps for DJN and what are some, what are some things you want to leave us with before you drop that beat?

Sasha Costanza-Chock ([47:34](#)):

Thanks so much. This has really been a pleasure. I wish we had a lot more time because there are so many amazing questions that have been popped into the Q&A. Actually maybe we could open a conversation with the hashtag #desig justice on Twitter, Insta, on

DATA & SOCIETY

your platforms. And we could raise some of these questions there. I also would encourage people to connect with the design justice network in particular with if you're in New York, connect with the local node in New York City through being in touch with Rigo. How can, how can people connect to the NYC local node?

Rigoberto Lara Guzman ([48:10](#)):

You can find me on Twitter. @chicanocyborg and just DM me and we'll make it happen.

Sasha Costanza-Chock ([48:21](#)):

Cool. Thank you. And I think in terms of next steps for me, I'm really excited to get into some more work actually with the Algorithmic Justice League. So stay tuned for an announcement about what that's gonna look like. Coming up in near future. I'm also, I'm doing a lot of talks with the book. So that's been kind of exciting and I'm trying to no share those out social media. Mostly I use Twitter. So you can follow me there at Schock, S C H O C K. And also everything that the network does we're sort of trying to share and be transparent so you can learn more about the events in the network. On the, on the website designjustice.org. And there's a lot a lot happening and it's distributed.

Sasha Costanza-Chock ([49:13](#)):

So it's happening coming from the different, you know, local nodes. We have a new zine that's going to drop this summer called How to Organize a Local Design Justice Node among other goodies that are coming down the pipeline. So I'm pretty excited about all of that. Of course, at the moment we're on Covid and dealing with this and we didn't really have a chance to get that deeply into it. I think we're having a lot of conversations about what does the design justice approach mean for Covid and for so-called Cov-tech, in particular, proposals around how contact tracing is going to work. The different privacy mechanisms for the apps. But also trying to break the frame a little bit and say, well, maybe the most effective contact tracing is about hiring enough people to do contact tracing effectively and not automate it away.

Sasha Costanza-Chock ([50:05](#)):

Maybe there's some combination that happens, but that's a longer conversation. And then there are just the proposals that are so, so awful. Like, let's use face recognition to

DATA & SOCIETY

automate contact tracing or let's use heat sensors from drones to automatically track down people with fevers and warn them despite the fact that we now know that such a high proportion of people are asymptomatic and even those who do have symptoms to be raised. And I was one of them, on top of a whole bunch of other questions about how that would work. So there's a lot to critique in the Cov-tech space. Which isn't to say that there's no role for new technologies. But I think unfortunately I have to get into that in another conversation and I will, I guess I'll just promised I would do it. So I guess I'll just end with the little beat.

Rigoberto Lara Guzman ([51:27](#)):

Thank you again to our wonderful guests, Sasha Costanza-Chock, her new book *Design Justice: Community Led Practices to Build the World We Need*. It's available digitally and via delivery. We welcome your feedback on this event. Check out our website and sign up for the Data & Society events list for future programming as well as our newsletter. I want to say again, muchas gracias Sasha. Muchas gracias a todos y a todas. Keep each other safe and have a wonderful night.

Sasha Costanza-Chock ([52:00](#)):

Gracias Rigo.