Throughout the course, we have identified ways in which the inequities in our society are replicated or exacerbated by new technologies:

- Racial bias in algorithms (criminal justice, Google search)
- Exploitation of user data w/o transparency, meaningful consent
- Dislocation of low wage workers, ethnic minorities due to automation
- The hatred and intolerance that appears on platforms; the bullying and harassment they enable, especially toward groups that are already marginalized
- The concentration of power in the hands of a small number of companies that make decisions about what content we see, what platforms we can access, etc... and that seek to influence our political process as well
Culture and Values in the Valley

These examples should cause us to ask hard questions about the culture and values of Silicon Valley and technology industry.

Let’s define culture as the set of social behaviors, customs, norms, traditions, and values that characterize a community or society.

Does it make sense to think of the technology industry as a community or a society?
Common Characteristics?

What tech companies are optimizing for?

Whose problems they are trying to solve?

Who is doing the engineering, the designing, and making decisions about what to invest in?

Who benefits from the technology that companies are creating? Who is hurt?
The Value of Diversity

Diversity is a property of a collectivity

Kinds of diversity: viewpoint, ideology, perspective/experience, identity, ability, expertise

Theory and evidence that diversity improves the performance of teams – when it is relevant, and when people get along
Challenges to the Dominant Culture

Lack of representation of different identity groups

Sexual harassment/gender inequality

Racial bias/discrimination

Opportunity and pay inequities

Ideological intolerance

Alternative values (e.g. double bottom line, focus on privacy)
Today’s Panelists

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