CS 182: Ethics, Public Policy, and Technological Change

Rob Reich
Mehran Sahami
Jeremy Weinstein
Hilary Cohen
Housekeeping

Special Event with Audrey Tang, Digital Minister of Taiwan: Tomorrow, March 16, 4-5pm (Sign up on Google Form if you haven’t yet. Link will be sent out in the morning)

Final Reflection Paper: Due Friday, March 19 at 11:59pm
1. Inclusion at Stanford
2. Is Silicon Valley a meritocracy?
3. What can we do to bring about greater inclusion and more equality in tech?
   - Companies – D&I initiatives, culture change, fair practices
   - Employees/Workers – employee activism, worker power
   - Government – quotas, worker classification
4. Individual agency and structural problems
Antonio Milane was diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy and requires a scribe to complete his schoolwork. Stanford believes it’s a “personal preference” instead of a necessity. He will not be able to attend Stanford without one.

‘Ableism is real at Stanford’: Prospective frosh calls out insufficient OAE accommodations.
Stanford’s Response

Initial Statement from OAE: “Scribing or typing assistance for homework outside the classroom is considered a personal service under the law and under Stanford’s policies, which Disability Services does not fund”

Law Professor Michele Dauber: “I absolutely think Stanford should change course here. I think it’s extremely short sighted and I don’t think it’s consistent with the many statements Stanford has made publicly about its commitment to equity and accessibility.”

Source: Stanford Daily
Stanford’s Response

Ultimately: the University is committing to “supporting his request for an academic scribe or typists to assist him with his out-of-classroom coursework needs”
Stanford’s Approach to Inclusion

Office of Institutional Equity & Access: “Our vision is to create a community in which we all thrive in an equitable, safe, caring, and just environment that supports diversity and promotes inclusion”

Areas of focus: sexual harassment/assault procedures, Title IX / gender equality, Black Lives Matter / anti-racism, COVID-19

Approaches:
• prevention – educating our campus community on sexual violence and all forms of harassment;
• inclusion – supporting affinity staff groups and leading trainings on diversity, inclusion, and bias;
• support – providing disability accommodations and helping community members who have experienced harassment or violence;
• response – problem solving, investigating, and redressing allegations of harassment and violence.
Discussion

Is Stanford an inclusive place? In what ways is it inclusive and in what ways isn’t it?

Would Stanford lose something if it were radically inclusive? (Prestige? Success? Money?)
Meritocracy

The idea: *positions and goods are distributed in accordance with individual merit*

Recall two ways to understand equality:
• Equality of opportunity
• Equality of outcome

Meritocracy is consistent with equality of opportunity, opposed to *arbitrary* discrimination
Meritocracy in Silicon Valley?

"If meritocracy exists anywhere on earth, it is in Silicon Valley."

Jodi Kantor, New York Times

"Is Silicon Valley a meritocracy, and if so, why do mostly men prevail?"

David Sacks, PayPal/Yammer/VC

Source: New York Times, Jodi Kantor’s public Facebook post
• 95% of leaders at Google are White or Asian
• 73% of leaders are men
• 2.6% of leaders are Black, 3.7% Latinx

Source: Google 2020 Diversity Report, AllRaise Data
Is This A Meritocracy?

“I was treated as an other, excluded, and undervalued in my office. I was sat in the back of the office, I was ignored, and it was made apparent that I was a 'diversity hire.' I was told I was 'too sensitive.' I was told that other black and lesbian folks in the office didn't feel as I did, after mentioning homophobic and racist jokes being spewed in work-only chat channels. I left my employer because I was being treated unfairly as a black woman and human being.”

—Black, LGBTQ, Female, Developer

“There was a multi-year pattern of young affluent white males who lacked skills and experience being unfairly sponsored, fast-tracked through promotions, and handed top choice of high profile projects. I was forced to compete on an uneven playing field where opportunities for growth and advancement were unlikely. I left the company for a more diverse and inclusive organization.”

—Chinese, Female, Engineer
“Silicon Valley’s obsession with meritocracy is delusional ... Unless someone wants to posit that intelligence is not evenly distributed across genders and race, there has to be some systemic explanation for what these numbers look like.”

Dr. Freada Kapor Klein
Structural Problems
1. Inclusion at Stanford
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   • Companies – D&I initiatives, culture change, fair practices
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4. Individual agency and structural problems
What Can Companies Do?

According to the Tech Leavers Study, there are three ways for companies to address unfairness in the workplace:

• Implement Comprehensive D&I Strategies
• Create Inclusive Cultures
• Develop Effective and Fair Management Processes

In recent years, many of the big tech companies have also committed to transparency, publishing diversity reports each year to hold themselves accountable.
A Comprehensive D&I Strategy

1. Having a Diversity and Inclusion director
2. Setting explicit diversity goals
3. Paying bonuses for employee referrals of candidates from underrepresented backgrounds
4. Conducting unconscious bias training
5. Establishing Employee Resource Groups (ERGs)

With all 5 of these in place:

- Overall experiences of unfairness and mistreatment were significantly lower
- Sexual harassment, bullying, stereotyping were significantly lower
- **Having all 5 initiatives implemented provided a larger reduction in unfair experiences than any single initiative alone**
Reminder: Leaky Pipeline

- The problem doesn’t start when people show up for their first interview or employee orientation
- Companies are making commitments to address each level of the leaky pipeline, from nonprofits focused on CS education for underrepresented groups to hiring to retention

More on this: leakytechpipeline.com
“Inclusion of employees is equally if not more important than hiring for diversity.” – Project Include

- **Build and reward diversity at every level** – is the CEO bought in? How central are D&I efforts to the company’s vision and goals?
- **Base culture on true inclusion and not on avoiding legal risk** – is there a punishment or retaliation for coming forward? Is HR seen as the enemy or part of the solution?
- **Acknowledge a variety of needs outside of work** – are people with personal obligations able to thrive in your workplace?
- **Don’t wait** – was this a priority at the beginning or only once you achieved some level of success?
Fair Management Processes

- Fairness in compensation – thorough reviews of pay discrimination and gaps

- Fairness in promotion and performance management
  - Focus on the “broken rung” – for every 100 men promoted to manager, 85 women are (or 58 Black women, or 71 Latina women)
  - Require diverse slates of candidates – when 2+ women or people of color are included on a slate, the likelihood that one will get the position rises dramatically
  - Put evaluators through unconscious bias training and establish clear evaluation criteria

- Managing backlash
  - According to Lean In research, 60 per cent of male managers are now afraid to engage in common workplace activities with a woman, including one-on-one meetings and mentoring

Source: Lean In / McKinsey Women in the Workplace 2019
Slow to Change

Few Gains for Blacks and Latinx in Big Tech
Percentage of tech workers by race and ethnicity in 2014 and the most recent report.

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<td>White</td>
<td>54%</td>
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<td>48%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>51%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>34%</td>
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<td>Latinx</td>
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<td>Mixed</td>
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The Share of Women in Tech Jobs Has Grown
Percentage of men and women in tech jobs in 2014 and the most recent report.

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<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>88%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>20%</td>
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Source: WIRED, company data
Google Walkout

- Google paid $90 million exit package to Andy Rubin after investigations into sexual misconduct in 2018
- 20,000 employees walked out
- Produced a list of demands about the company’s handling of sexual harassment
A Surge of Organizing and Activism

Workers are unionizing

New coalitions are forming

“On February 18th, 2020, Kickstarter employees voted to form a union, becoming the first major tech company in the United States to do so. We took this step in order to invest deeply in our collective future at the company we love, to create a workplace that is safer and more equitable for all, and to support organizing efforts across the tech industry and the many creative communities our work touches.”
Worker Power

Source: KQED “The Attack on Worker Power,” illustration by Giselle Chow
“Remaining nonunion is essential for survival for most of our companies. If we had the work rules of union companies, we’d all go out of business. This is a very high priority for management here. **We have to retain flexibility** in operating our companies. The great hope for our nation is to avoid those deep, deep divisions between workers and management which can paralyze action.” – Robert Noyce, co-founder of Intel

“There may have been a time and a place for unions, but not sure I see it anymore.” – Marc Andreessen, co-founder of Netscape and GP of Andreessen Horowitz

Source: “Silicon Valley’s Anti-Unionism, Now With a Side of Class Warfare” by Kevin Roose (2013)
Two-Tiered Workforce
Tech company workforces have been made up in large part by contract workers with fewer protections, lower wages, harsher working conditions, and less comprehensive benefits

• In 2019, Google had 121,000 temporary, vendor and contract workers (TVCs) globally, 102,000 full-time employees
• Santa Clara County study: while African Americans and Latinos make up only 7% of full-time employees, they account for 26% of white-collar contractors and 56% of blue-collar contractors

“We’re right there looking through the glass at people having this sort of wondrous experience, given loads and loads of perks and benefits. But we don’t get any of it, even though we’re effectively doing the same work”—Google contract worker

Amazon warehouse workers in Alabama file to hold unionization vote

Amazon launches its own anti-union campaign and website

**AMAZON UNION NOW!**

When workers come together to form a union, they win dignity and respect at work. We, the worker-driven organizing committee at Amazon in Bessemer, Alabama are fighting for just that. Together we can win a real seat at the table with Amazon, make our working conditions safer, fight for needed benefits and ensure good jobs in our community.

Are you interested in joining our BAmazon Union?

**DO IT WITHOUT DUES.**

HEY BHM1 DOERS, why pay almost $500 in dues? We've got you covered* with high wages, health care, vision, and dental benefits, as well as a safety committee and an appeals process. There's so much MORE you can do for your career and your family without paying dues.

*Applies to regular full-time employees.
Discussion

Do you believe you can change companies from the inside? Why or why not?
What Should Government Do?

117th Congress is the most diverse in US history with 23% of seats held by people of racial or ethnic minorities, 27% held by women.
Quotas for Representation

80 countries have a gender quota on government roles (either around reserved seats or share of candidates)

Belgium – when the quota was introduced, requiring equal numbers of women and men on the ballot, 16% of seats in parliament were held by women, today more than 40%

Many European countries have a gender quota on executive board positions and some have tried to pass them for management positions in large companies

A more efficient way to meet representation goals?
California’s AB 979 requires that by the end of 2021 California-headquartered public companies have at least one director on their boards who is from an underrepresented community, defined as “an individual who self-identifies as Black, African American, Hispanic, Latino, Asian, Pacific Islander, Native American, Native Hawaiian, or Alaska Native, or who self-identifies as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender.”

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<tr>
<th>Number of Directors on Board</th>
<th>Minimum # of Directors from Underrepresented Communities</th>
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<td>Nine or more</td>
<td>Three</td>
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<td>Five to Eight</td>
<td>Two</td>
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<td>Four or fewer</td>
<td>One</td>
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Discussion

Should the US government set quotas for representation in leadership roles in the public and private sector? Why or why not?

Should the quotas be set for the slate of considered candidates or the final seats/positions that will be filled?

Do quotas impose equality of outcome? Are they consistent with liberal democratic values?
Assemblywoman Lorena Gonzalez Stanford class of 1993

Sees law as a tool to expand rights of workers, women, immigrants

• In 2019, Gonzalez introduced and passed AB5 to reclassify many gig workers as employees rather than independent contractors
• 11 months later: Became a ballot measure, Prop 22
• Tech companies spent >$200mn on “Yes on 22” campaign, most ever in state history

“I come from a perspective of conflict is good ... You actually get change out of conflict. A polite society ensures the status quo.”
Break Up Big Tech

How Americans feel about Big Tech

- Overall: 65%
- Democrat: 59%
- Republican: 70%

Think Big Tech's economic power is a problem facing the US economy

- Overall: 59%
- Democrat: 55%
- Republican: 61%

Support breaking up Big Tech

- Overall: 55%
- Democrat: 87%
- Republican: 28%

Source: Vox and Data for Progress
Today’s Agenda

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Individual Action: Getting the Data

Where are the numbers?

“The actual numbers I’ve seen and experienced in industry are far lower than anybody is willing to admit. This means nobody is having honest conversations about the issue.”
Individual Action: Blowing the Whistle

She’s 26, and Brought Down Uber’s C.E.O. What’s Next?

In her first interview since the essay that started a wave of sexual-harassment revelations, Susan Fowler tells her life story and looks to the future.
“I've resigned as a member of the reddit board, I have urged them to fill my seat with a black candidate, + I will use future gains on my Reddit stock to serve the black community, chiefly to curb racial hate, and I’m starting with a pledge of $1M to @kaepernick7’s @yourrightscamp”

“I believe resignation can actually be an act of leadership from people in power right now. To everyone fighting to fix our broken nation: do not stop.”
How Change Happens
Upcoming Speakers

Audrey Tang
Erica Joy Baker
Dr. Meredith Whittaker