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Book Reviews

Costanza-Chock, Sasha. *Design Justice, Community Led Practices to Build the Worlds We Need*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press. 2020. Pp. 360. ISBN: 978-0-2620-4345-8 (paper) \$25.00; (OER options)

Design, defined in many ways, is all around us and occurs in virtually every industry. Design impacts the structure of society. With structural inequities at the root of social systems, technology and design are part of power dynamics and impact those who are intersectionally disadvantaged. Increasingly, technology and design are investigated and scrutinized from different perspectives. Central to Sasha Costanza-Chock’s *Design Justice, Community Led Practices to Build the Worlds We Need* is design justice—the idea that design needs to be re-imagined, with marginalized communi-

ties at the center, leading the charge. Costanza-Chock takes a deep dive into how design led by marginalized communities can be a tool and catalyst for dismantling social and structural inequalities. The relationship between social justice, design, and power are woven throughout Costanza-Chock's exploration of design justice in practice and theory.

Sasha Costanza-Chock is an Associate Professor of Civic Media at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), a Faculty Associate at the Berkman-Klein Center for Internet & Society at Harvard University, a Faculty Affiliate at the MIT Open Documentary Lab, and the creator of the MIT Codesign Studio. Their work uniquely ties together critical standpoint theories and participatory action research (PAR), focusing on design justice, transformative media organizing, and social movements. Their research centers around creating media strategies for a more creative, collaborative, and just society. Costanza-Chock brings a unique perspective due to their rich experience and training in feminist standpoint theory, Black feminist thought, disability justice, media production and design, and activism.

The book takes us on a journey through the world of design justice, specifically looking at how universal design principles place people in the margins or erase them, especially if they have intersectional identity markers that are non-dominant in society. Key topics discussed include: The Design Justice Network, design justice, feminist standpoint theory, participatory action research, Intersectionality, and The Matrix of Domination.

Costanza-Chock explains that the term design justice developed from a community of people who do social activism work, such as researchers, journalists, developers, and many others. This group of people make up the Design Justice Network, that was originally created at the Allied Media Conference (ACM) in 2015. The Design Justice Network organizes workshops, runs a group within ACM, and produces zines to share collective ideas with the public. Design justice is a framework for analyzing who benefits and who is burdened by design. Design justice is also at work when designers make the people and communities they impact equal partners in the design process. Designers must understand the needs of the community, interact and involve community members in the design process, and recognize that community members are experts on their own lived experiences.

Intersectionality is the foundation for design jus-

tice, and dates back to the work of Sojourner Truth, Claudia Jones, and the Combahee River Collective, but was first officially published by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989. Intersectional analysis provides insight to the lived experiences of people who are burdened by the matrix of domination. Still within Black feminist thought, Costanza-Chock uses The Matrix of Domination from Patricia Hill Collins to describe our culture as linkages of capitalism, settler colonialism, white supremacy, and patriarchy. The matrix refers to identity markers such as gender, race, class, and (dis)ability being interlocking systems of oppression. Similar to Black feminist thought and disability activism, design justice also requires designers to examine power at varying levels—personal, community, and institutional. Feminist standpoint theory, Black feminist thought, and disability activism all explain that the specific lived experiences of those who sit within marginalized standpoints need to be heard. Additionally, all areas argue that knowledge is situational and based on lived experience. In using participatory action research, Costanza-Chock forms a two-way relationship with research participants. Communities involved in the research process are viewed as co-researchers, rather than subjects. Costanza-Chock has access to these groups through their strong ties with community-based organizations, designers, and community organizers that are involved in research design. This approach is foundational to both research and design justice, utilizing an array of methods including workshops, semi-structured interviews, and participant observation. Costanza-Chock approaches their research in the same way they believe design justice should be approached.

Design Justice discusses the critical need for inclusive artifacts and spaces since design reproduces structural inequalities. The book is well organized with a powerful introduction, five chapters, and a conclusion that discusses directions for future work. To set the foundation and communicate their positionality, “Introduction: #TravelingWhileTrans, Design Justice, and Escape from the Matrix of Domination” gives insight into Costanza-Chock's personal experience with harmful security design at the Detroit Metro Airport. Being a nonbinary trans* femme queer person, they were flagged by the cis-normative body scanners and patted down by Transportation Security Administration (TSA). They use their own experience to show how artifacts are both political and biased against queer folx. Additionally, the introduction out-

lines what the Design Justice Network is, explains the methods used to conduct the research, provides an overview of intersectionality, the matrix of domination, and design justice, and finally, outlines the organization and limitations of the book.

The chapters are organized around the Design Justice Network's goals, showing how design currently works compared with how it actually should work. Chapter 1, "Design Values: Hard-Coding Liberating?" questions what values are encoded and reproduced in the design process. The chapter outlines what value-sensitive design, universal design, and inclusive design are, and applies a design justice lens to analyze concepts and tools that are used. Moreover, the chapter also questions whether affordances of technology challenge or reproduce power structures. Building from values, Chapter 2, "Design Practices: 'Nothing about Us without Us'" focuses on the people behind design. The chapter centers on disability justice work and argues that designers need to place communities they are trying to impact at the center of the process. Turning towards stories and design, Chapter 3, "Design Narratives: From TXTMob to Twitter" examines how power is created by narratives and storytelling. Stories impact how we think about the design of digital technologies, and how problems are framed and constructed for designers to solve. Examining space, Chapter 4, "Design Sites: Hackerspaces, Fablabs, Hackathons, and DiscoTechs" looks at where design work takes place, like in startups, fablabs, hackathons, makerspaces, and/or hacklabs. The main argument is the need to push against the ways in which the matrix of domination is reproduced in these design spaces, and they show how spaces can be transformed to be more inclusive. Chapter 5, "Design Pedagogies: 'There's Something Wrong with This System!'" centers critical pedagogy and different approaches to both learn and teach design justice. The chapter argues the need for connection to and involvement of students, teachers, and parents in the design justice pedagogy process. To close, "Directions for Future Work: For #TechWontBuildIt to #DesignJustice" outlines the #TechWontBuildIt movement, the way design justice work should move forward, how to get involved in the movement, and additional areas for future research.

There are many strengths to *Design Justice*, but Costanza-Chock does five things particularly well. First, the book's organizational structure is unique as it builds off themes and questions developed by The Design Justice Network. Furthermore, the timeliness of

the book is relevant as it appeared as President Biden and Vice President Harris transitioned into office. Next, the case studies and real-life examples bring a richness to the theoretical explanations. Furthermore, Costanza-Chock's passion for design justice shines through in their writing from the beginning of the book until the end. Lastly, pairing critical approaches with science and technology studies (STS) has been done, but connecting design justice to feminist standpoint theory, Black feminist thought, and disability activism specifically is very powerful and pushes the needle forward in each of these areas. The voices of those in the margins are often ignored and overlooked. Costanza-Chock does a great job of giving credit where credit is due as they apply these critical frameworks and ideologies to the design process.

Though well-written and organized, the book could be strengthened in three major ways. The language used throughout felt a bit overwhelming at times. Readers without a solid foundation in the language of design, programming, engineering, or STS might not understand the acronyms or jargon used and could find some tedium. I did appreciate the index and acronyms explanations at the end of the book. In addition, the book is long and packed with information. At times, it seemed the book would have functioned better if it were divided into separate books. Lastly, the book includes international examples, but is American-centric in nature.

Overall, *Design Justice* is a unique approach that ties together multiple disciplines and adds to the body of scholarship on critical theory, technological design, and social activism. The book would be ideal reading for graduate level courses on Social Justice, Computer Science/Design, Technofeminism, Media Studies, and/or Internet Studies. Within industry, designers looking to build more inclusive, just, and equitable technologies would vastly benefit from knowing the design justice approach. The book urges readers to think critically about how technology is designed, who is involved in the design process, who holds power, and practical strategies for improving technology design moving forward.

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University of Illinois at Chicago

Hargittai, Eszter (Ed.). *Handbook of Digital Inequality*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing Limited, 2021. Pp. 400. ISBN: 978-1-78811-656-5 (cloth) \$65. (OER options)

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