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Algorithmic reparation | Big Data and Society

By Jenny L. Davis, Apryl Williams, and Michael W. Yang
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Machine learning algorithms pervade contemporary society. They are integral to social institutions, inform processes of governance, and animate the mundane technologies of daily life. Consistently, the outcomes of machine learning reflect, reproduce, and amplify structural inequalities. The field of fair machine learning has emerged in response, developing mathematical techniques that increase fairness based on anti-classification, classification parity, and calibration standards. In practice, these computational correctives invariably fall short, operating from an *algorithmic idealism* that does not, and cannot, address systemic, Intersectional stratifications. Taking present fair machine learning methods as our point of departure, we suggest instead the notion and practice of *algorithmic reparation.* Rooted in theories of Intersectionality, reparative algorithms name, unmask, and undo allocative and representational harms as they materialize in sociotechnical form. We propose algorithmic reparation as a foundation for building, evaluating, adjusting, and when necessary, omitting and eradicating machine learning systems.

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