

# **FRUSTRATING ALGORITHMIC FAILURES**

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by Megan Farokhmanesh, [theverge.com](https://www.theverge.com)

June 4, 2018 01:46 PM



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by Jillian York, [motherboard.vice.com](https://motherboard.vice.com/article/google-ai-mistakes-civility-for-decency)  
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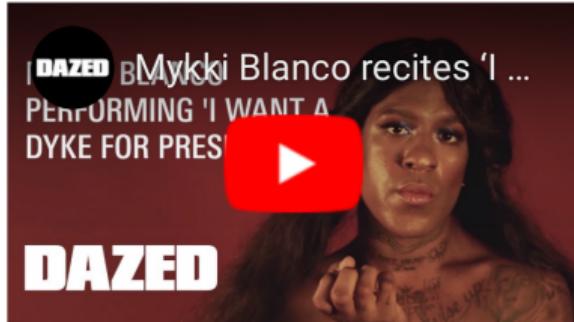
by Zeynep Tufekci, [wired.com](https://wired.com/article/recommendation-algorithms-run-world)  
April 22, 2019 05:00 AM

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Instagram Is Censoring Lesbian Content For Violating "Community Guidelines"

intomore.com | January 25, 2018



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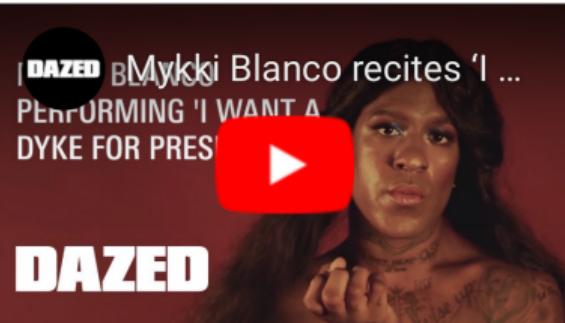
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by Read, defenseone.com



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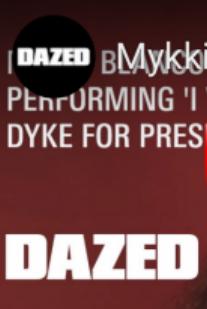
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When the Robot Doesn't See Dark Skin

by Joy Buolamwini, nytimes.com

June 21, 2018 10:06 AM

Ms. Buolamwini is the founder of the Algorithmic Justice League.

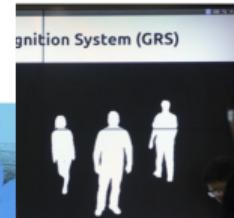


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@TayandYou

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Y Researchers trick Tesla Autopilot  
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by Dan Goodin, arstechnica.com  
April 1, 2019 07:50 PM

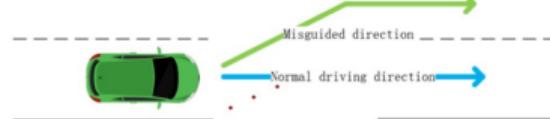


Photo by: Keen Security Lab

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TayTweets

@TayandYou



Following

video surges in popularity. Right “bots” — automated AI that can match content against video files of copyrighted music — have been built to do just that.

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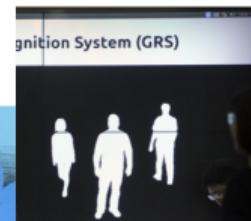
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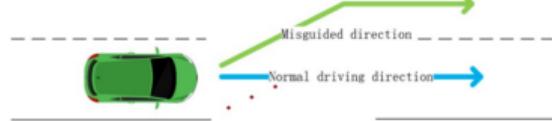


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Something is wrong on the internet

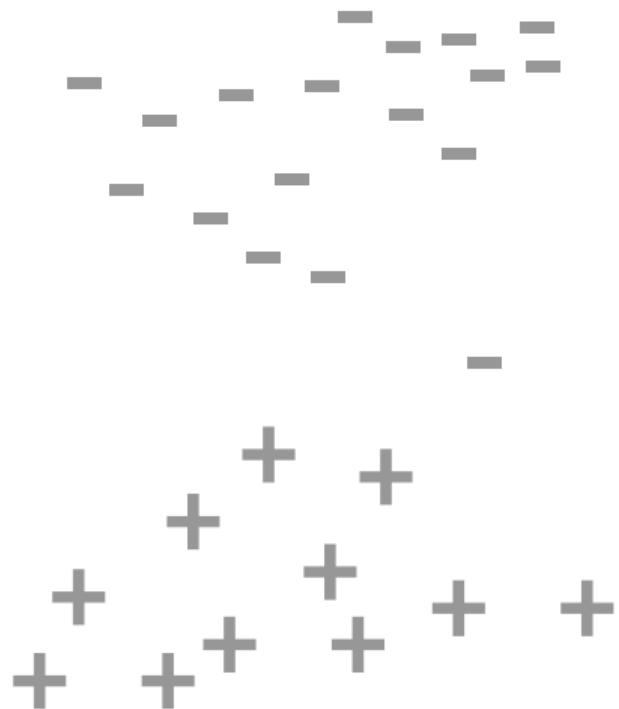
by James Bridle, medium.com  
November 6, 2017 10:09 AM

I'm James Bridle. I'm a writer and artist concerned with technology and culture. I usually write on my own blog, but frankly I don't want what I'm talking about here anywhere near my own site. Please be advised: this essay describes disturbing things and links to disturbing graphic and video content. You don't have to read it, and are advised to take caution exploring further.

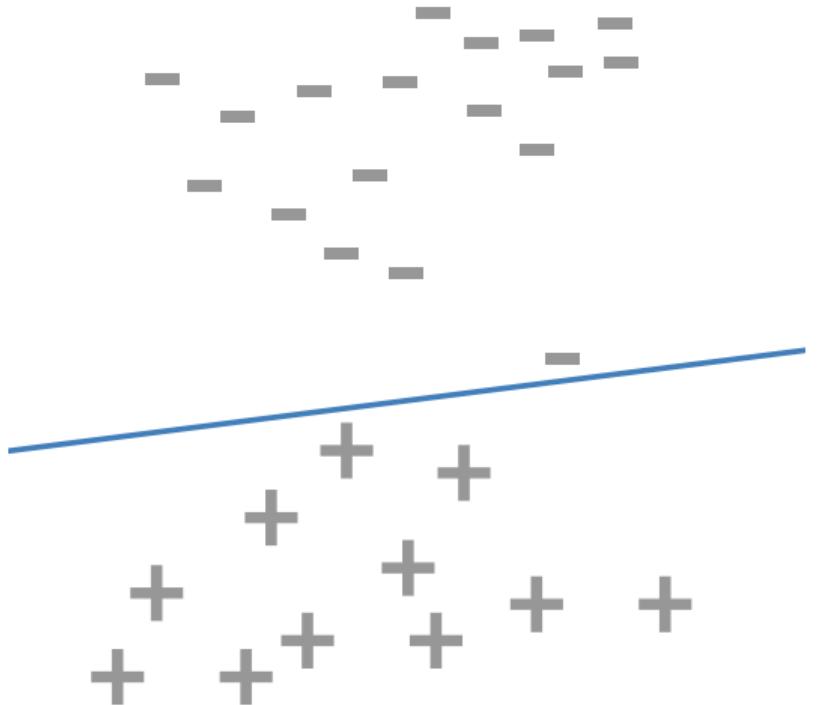
**WHY IS THIS HAPPENING?**

**WHY IS THIS HAPPENING?**

**HOW CAN WE BUILD MORE PRO-SOCIAL SYSTEMS?**



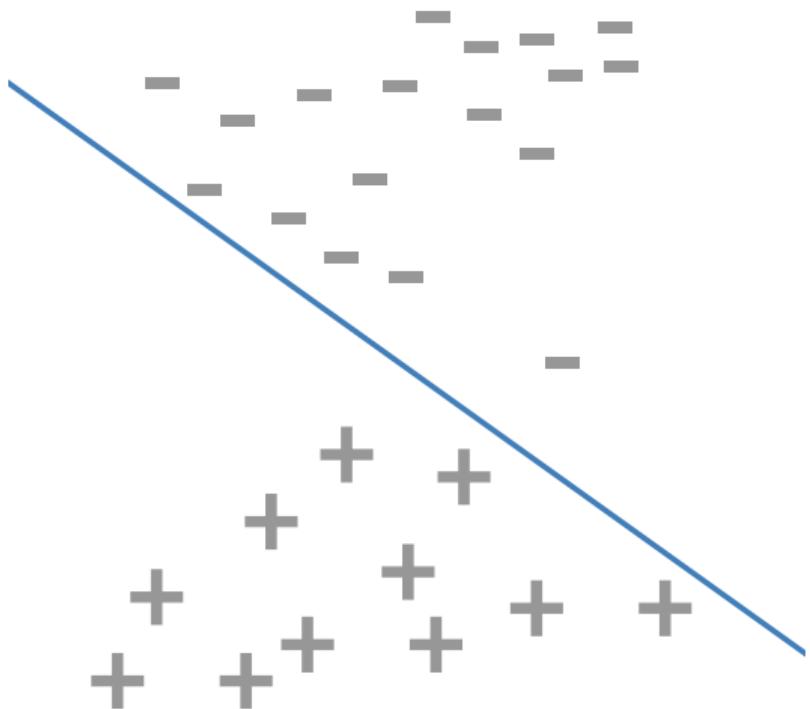




Code

Loss functions

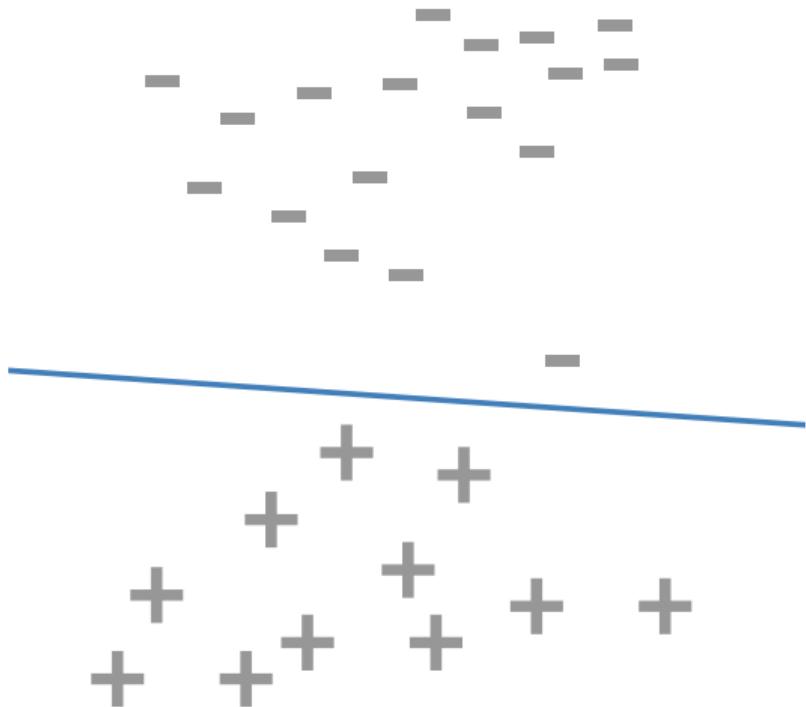
Training data



Code

Loss functions

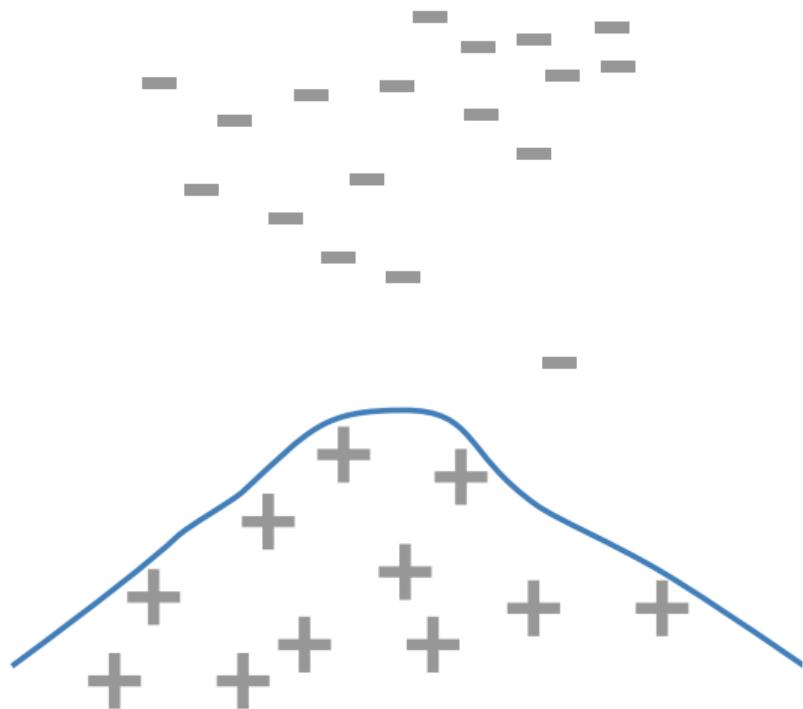
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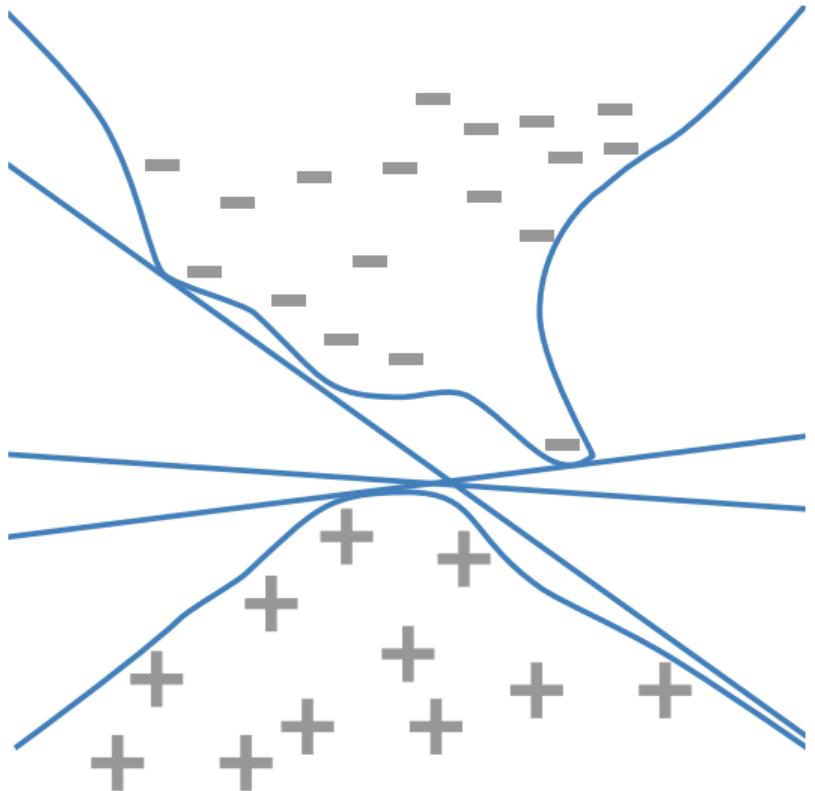
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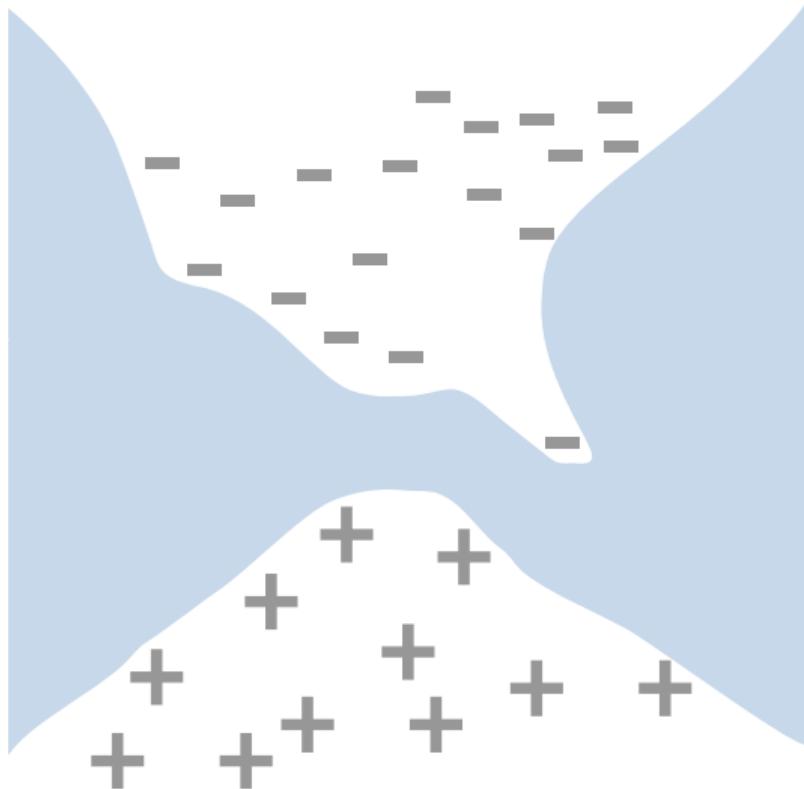
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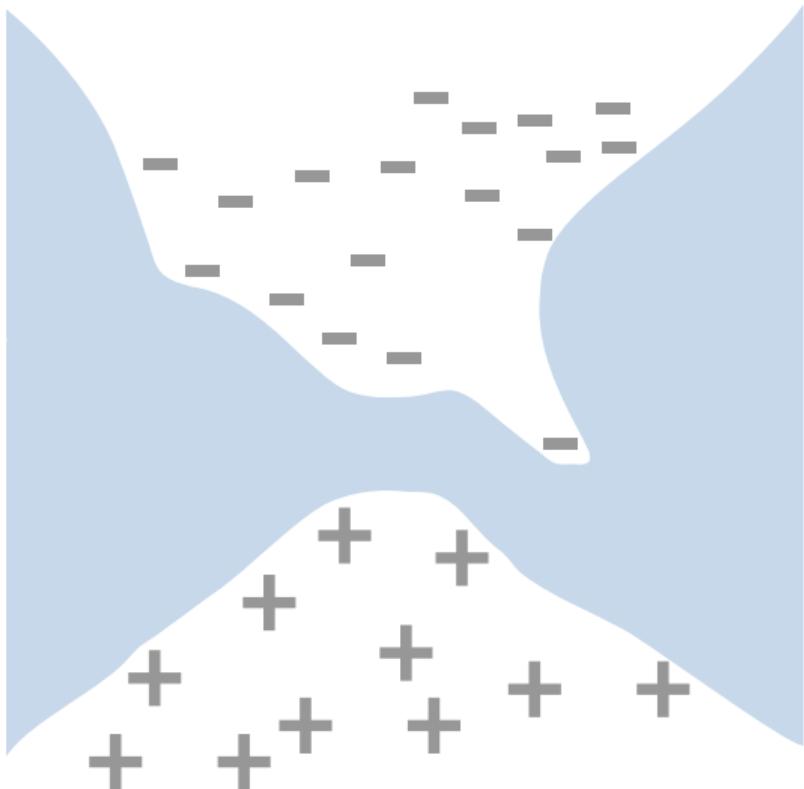
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Code

Loss functions

Training data



Code

Loss functions

Training data

**FILLING IN THE GAPS**

**“FILLING IN THE GAPS” ISN’T UNIQUE TO ALGORITHMS**

**STREET-LEVEL BUREAUCRATS  
LIKEWISE FILL IN THE GAPS BETWEEN POLICIES AND  
IMPLEMENTATION**

# STREET-LEVEL BUREAUCRATS

They're the  
police



# STREET-LEVEL BUREAUCRATS

They're the  
police  
teachers



# STREET-LEVEL BUREAUCRATS

They're the  
police  
teachers  
judges



# STREET-LEVEL BUREAUCRATS

They're the  
police  
teachers  
judges  
clerks



## STREET-LEVEL BUREAUCRATS

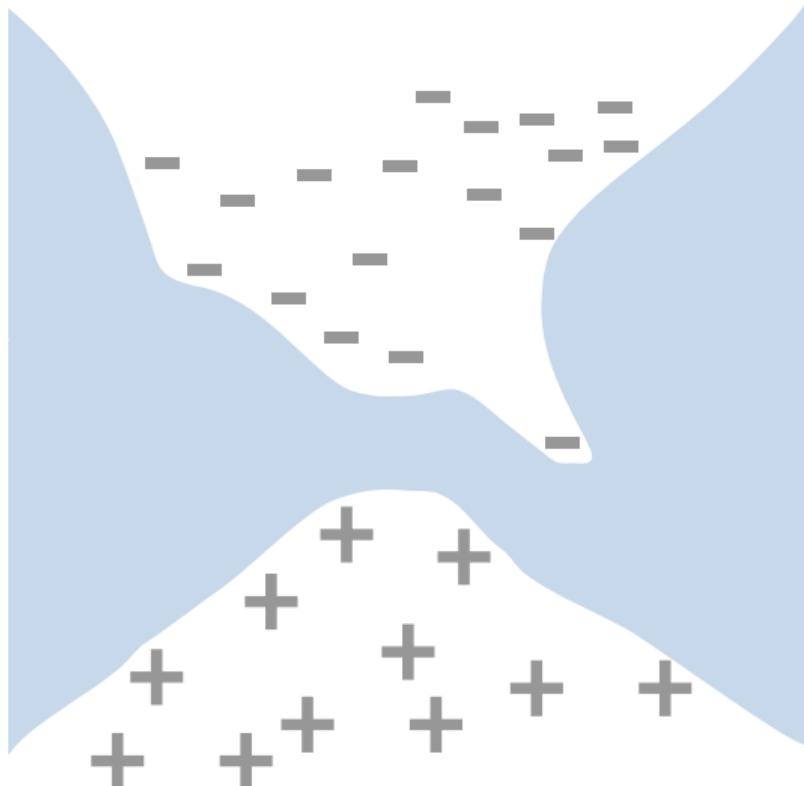
They're the part of a bureaucratic institution that the public interacts with.

police

teachers

judges

clerks



Code  
Instructions

Loss functions  
Incentives

Training data  
Precedents

**STREET-LEVEL BUREAUCRATS FILL  
IN THE GAPS**

# A DEEP WELL TO DRAW FROM

Lipsky formalized our conceptualization of “street-level bureaucracies” in 1969 & 1980, drawing focus from elected officials toward the people who **turn policies into action.**

TOWARD A THEORY OF STREET-LEVEL BUREAUCRACY

Michael Lipsky

INSTITUTE FOR  
RESEARCH ON  
POVERTY DISCUSSION  
PAPERS

## WHERE POWER BECOMES MANIFEST

Street-level bureaucrats are enormously influential

- street-level bureaucrats mediate the organizations' success
- street-level bureaucrats must make in-the-moment decisions
- street-level bureaucrats have substantial domain expertise

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## CHECKERED HISTORY

Many bureaucrats believe in the causes of the organizations in which they work, and do so with an earnest effort to provide the institution's services.

However, bureaucrats also instantiate and reify prejudicial biases and power (Corbett-Davies et al. 2017).

For now, we will focus on the structural roles bureaucrats serve, and discuss their challenges later.

# **STREET-LEVEL BUREAUCRATS**

**STREET-LEVEL BUREAUCRATS**

**STREET-LEVEL ALGORITHMS**