Twitter Thread by Khadijah *a centered voice*



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The twitter ban on 45 is a victory in some sense for the immediate but a warning in the long term, not on the curtail of free speech but as gesture towards the expansive power commercial tech has on every aspect of our governance and our lives, I don't quite have the words but-

What I'm trying to get at, is not just that Twitter's decision allows us to see—in ways that have been obscured—how much control they have over content moderation—

but as @Elinor_Carmi points out "platforms don't just moderate or filter "content"; they alter what registers to us and our social groups as "social" or as "experience." https://t.co/GSByAOoDWg changed

I'm worried that the celebration of Twitter's intervention on fascist rhetoric-however too little and too late- directs us to desire tech companies enforcement of liberal and democratic procedures rather than towards an investigation of

how they've developed computational infrastructures which exceed the power of the nation state, are hollowing out our institutions for frictionless (see removing human contact) optimization and are insufficiently described by neoliberalism

because it's not just the privatization of the state and the austerity measures for the populous, it's a kind of social control defined by centralization and infrastructure infiltrating every aspect of our lives

ie all the poor people in my life were hyped when Amazon started accepting food stamps but what does it mean for Amazon to dominate production, the market place and the processing of welfare benefits?

What does it mean if(when)Amazon is contracted to provide welfare benefits? How do we rectify that automated inequality when financed optimization will have removed the humans from every step of the social welfare pipeline?the customer service representative the lucky will reach?

I do not have romantic ideals about Child welfare, policing, universities, farms or institutions of civic society that have been racist since inception, liberalism has barely protected and often enabled both fascist and neoliberal infiltration

at the same time n in convo w/ @sedyst n others, been grappling w/ how the critiques of transparency and fairness miss the forest for the trees. We're often adjudicating the downstream harms of automated decision systems or critiquing on the level of user interface-

Missing how tech visa vie the introduction of these financialized computational structures is removing the remaining autonomy we have over our individual lives and collectively as a society. Also missing wtf will we have left when Big Tech fails as so much is being hollowed out

This is important b/c the anti trust people are trying to break up the monopolies but is the issue that 3 companies are administering the destruction of our current civic society and it'd be more democratic if it was 5 or 10 or 12 companies building up infrastructures of control?

"Centering the voices of impacted people" is very en vogue in justice league academia but leaving aside that every time I find my voice "centered" no one is listening, that this type of deference alleviates those doing the centering from a responsibility to be in dialogue-

if we take impacted voices to be a signifier for grassroots activism- beyond surveillance cameras and social amplifying fake news and hate speech, these digital infrastructure are largely invisible to even the most seasoned organizers I know

Unlike tech, grassroots is under resourced but if I had $5 million to distribute-there's no clear formal or informal organization who has integrated an analysis of tech into their strategy beyond "stop spying". Typically, it's articulated as further evidence of the carceral state

Further evidence, rather than a signal of new modes of surveillance and social control requiring a more expansive analysis than how tech is used as an eviction tool, or predictive policing or surveilling protesters. Prediction is a footnote that gets misconstrued for a main idea

The main idea is this digital infrastructure of control largely seems invisible to the most radical and knowledgeable grassroots organizers. We're 4 months post the Leila Khaled Zoom situation and the very little discussion that happened seems to have stopped at censorship

we are each only seeing a narrow horrifying glimpse into the depths of how much ground has been ceded and we have to find ways to make space for collective discussion b/c there's not some answer I'm withholding.

And collective discussion is required b/c however dangerous we can agree Trump and his base are, imagine the world in which his ideology is more seamlessly and efficiently encoded layers of technical systems that lie beneath what we see or interact with

Authoritarianism also breeds resistance as it is brutal and violent in clear and named ways. The indistinct and obscured violence of big tech reorganizing labor into gig economy, education into the Zoom show, anticipating n shaping our desires at a nudge pace etc is barely clear

Merging this thread of a few people and f/u articles for those who want to learn more https://t.co/06fmijLtJS

To the degree I\u2019ve distilled any of this stream of consciousness it\u2019s only due to how much I\u2019ve learned from and been in dialogue w/ incredible scholars/activists/babymommas/artists etc so am also making a thread of people to follow or things to read https://t.co/O1a4a4S6ab

— Khadijah *a centered voice* (@UpFromTheCracks) January 9, 2021