**Prescripted Living:
Gender Stereotypes and Surveillance Technologies**

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# Overview

Parallels between gender stereotyping and surveillance technologies:

- Descriptive
- Prescriptive
- Categorise and classify
- Control
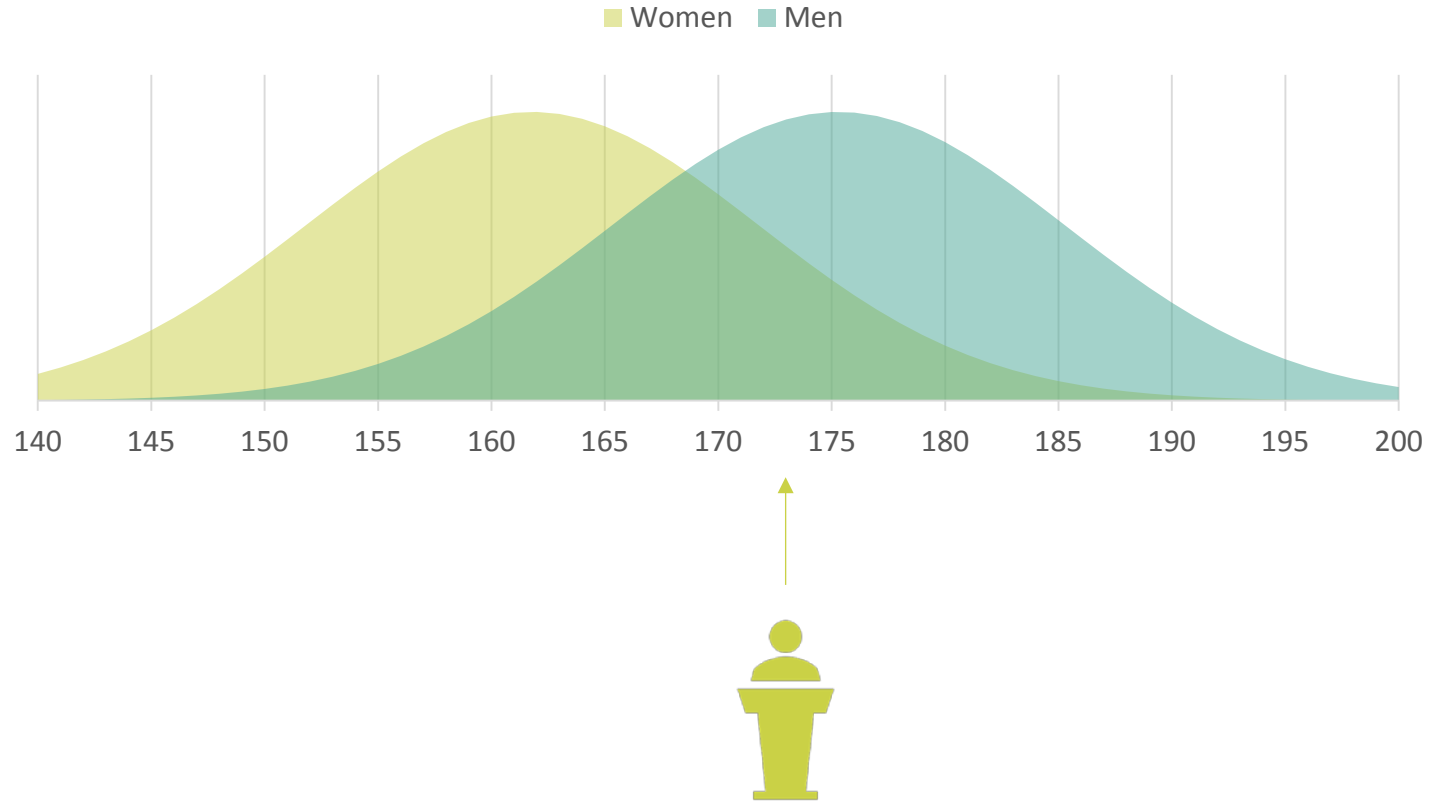- Power structures
- Possibilities for resistance

# Defining gender

- Socially constructed identities, attributes and roles
- Legal, social, and/or self-defined
- Gender identities including male, female, non-binary, third gender…

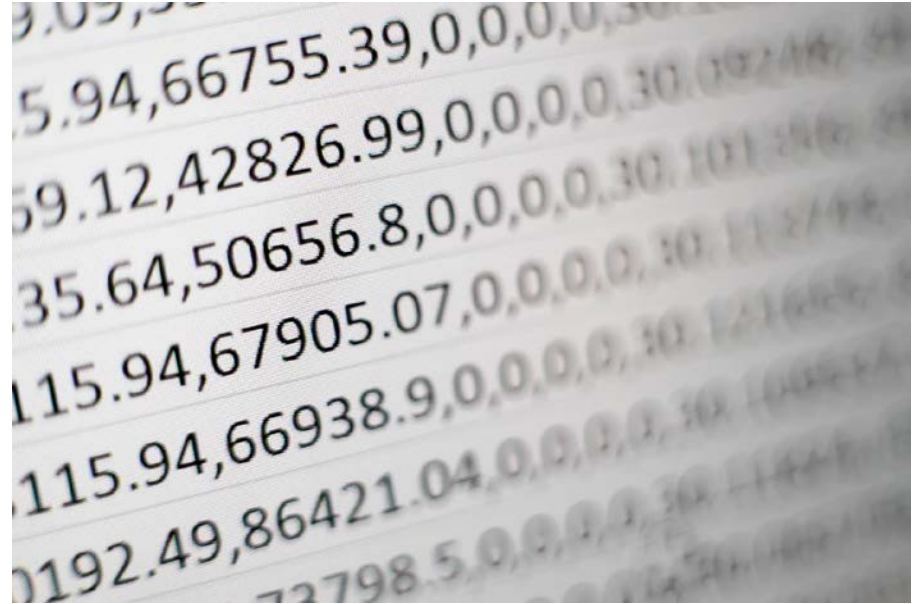# Gender stereotypes

# Defining surveillance

# Surveillance technologies

# Descriptive and prescriptive

- Claim to be accurate descriptions of behavior
- Incentivise some behaviours, and disincentivise others

# Gender stereotypes: categories

# Surveillance: categories

- Self-categorisation
  - E.g. ticking a box on a form
- Categorisation by others
  - E.g. airport scanners
- Categorisation at-a-distance
  - E.g. data brokers

# Categorisation

- External actors
- Self-identification is not always the most important factor
- Categories are not neutral

# Control through gender stereotypes

- Normative views about appropriate roles or behavior
- Participation contingent on conformity
- Consequences for failure to conform

# Control through surveillance



Amazon recommends "Causality: Models, Reasoning..." a

Amazon recommends "co2CREA Storage Hard shell..." an

Amazon recommends "Me: Elton John Official..." and mor

Amazon recommends "Practice Makes Perfect:..." and mo

**Amazon recommends "2Pack Multi Charging Cable..." an**

Amazon recommends "Sapiens: A Brief History of..." and

**Amazon recommends "Anker PowerCore II 10000,..." and**

Amazon recommends "The Seven Deaths of Evelyn..." and

# Control

Both surveillance technologies and gender stereotyps act to limit the scope of possible behaviours

# Power structures and stereotypes

- Maintain existing hierarchies of power
- Protective stereotypes can still be harmful
- Privilege may offer freedom

# Power structures and surveillance

- Welfare benefits recipients
- Who is a 'threat' and who needs 'protecting'

# Power

Both surveillance technologies and gender stereotypes
- reinforce existing power structures
- act more strongly against those who are already marginalised

# Mutual reinforcement

# Exacerbating inequalities

- Reinforcing and amplifying harmful gender stereotypes
- Structures benefit those already in power
- Reinforce categories of 'threat' and 'vulnerable'
- Individual rejection carries consequences

# Resistance

- Identification
- Understanding operation

Holding systems to account in order to hold the societies that built them to account

# The Human Rights, Big Data and Technology Project

## Advancing Human Rights in the Era of Big Data

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