

THEME: Cybersecurity: Technology and Ethics

PROJECT: Automated Ethics: Managing Pre-Emptive Discrimination

Lead Supervisor: [Professor Debbie Lisle](#)

Supervisory Team: [Professor Debbie Lisle, Dr Jesús Martínez-del-Rincon](#)

Primary Location: Mitchell Institute

Recent public controversies have exposed the lingering structures of discrimination in our automated systems of surveillance and governance. Research by Browne (2015) shows us how historically grounded and persistent structures of racial discrimination operate through America's security apparatus, and recent work in Sociology charts how these racialized forms of surveillance make themselves felt throughout the crumbling Welfare State, especially in Healthcare (Benjamin, 2019).

This critical research is important because deconstructs the promise of automation – that by simply allowing the algorithms to connect multiple data points and produce a 'person of interest', we will get rid of human discrimination altogether (i.e. it is the *data* that tells us someone is risky, not the racist human border agent or bureaucrat). Starting from this position, we can see that logics of structures of power. How are these producers talking about such claims? How are they responding? Are there sector wide or systemic efforts to counter these charges? What do such training programmes look like, and who is enrolled in delivering them (e.g. academics? Activists?) Are there differences between how these sectors are responding? For example, are university responses different from military and commercial ones?

- Amoire, Louise (2020) *Cloud Ethics: Algorithms and the Attributes of Ourselves and Others*. Duke University Press
- Amoire, Louise (2013) *The Politics of Possibility: Risk & Security Beyond Probability*. Duke University Press
- Benjamin, Ruha (2019) 'Assessing Risk: Automating Racism', *Science*, 366(6464): 421-22
- Browne, Simone (2015) *Dark the forthcoming work by Amoire (2020) Primarily Matters: On the Surveillance of Blackness*. Duke University Press
- Hall, Alexandra (2017) 'Decisions at the data border: Discretion, discernment and security', *Security Dialogue*, 48(6): 488-504.

This project will require access to each sector, and this may set the parameters of the project quite early on. It is envisaged that collaboration with computer scientists and engineers in CSIT and EEEEC will give the researcher insight not only into how 'unconscious bias' can be inadvertently sutured into algorithms, but also how producers are discussing these charges of 'discrimination by design.' It is hoped that existing industry links with CSIT and EEEEC will enable the researcher to build networks into the commercial sector.

Primary Academic Discipline: International Security