The Other Side of Technology
Artificial Intelligence: Racial and Gender Bias

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Research Question

How does artificial intelligence discriminate against people of color and women?

Introduction

- Artificial Intelligence is the ability of a computer or machine to mimic the capabilities of the human mind.
- Facial recognition software is an example of AI. As it has evolved; however, it has been found to discriminate against racial minorities and women.
- The photos of over 117 million American adults, as of 2016, are within facial recognition networks used by law enforcement.
- In 2020, facial recognition platforms were used in order to monitor and identify Black Lives Matter protestors in 2020.
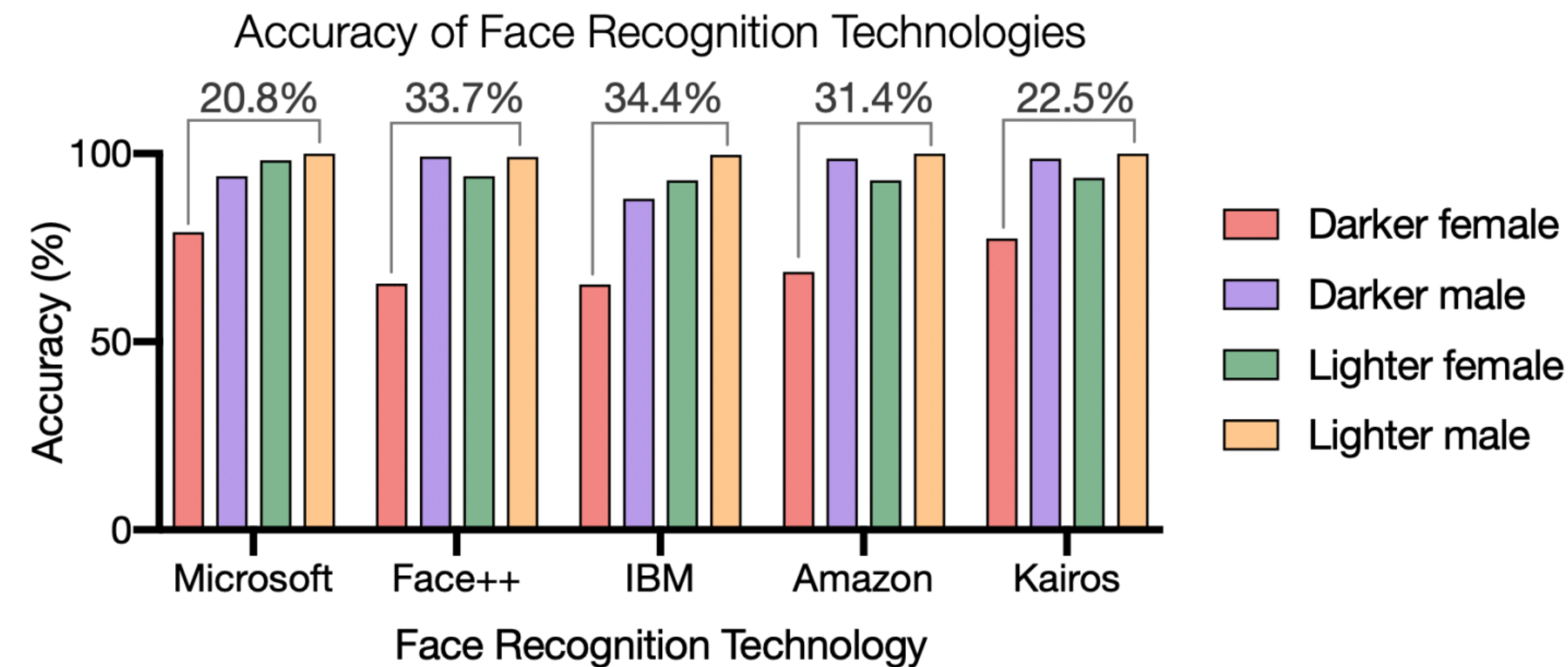- In some cities, as much as 80% of the Black male population is listed in criminal justice databases.

Methods of Inquiry

Researching and reviewing peer-reviewed journals that pertain to my research question.

Watching documentaries that cover artificial intelligence.

Results
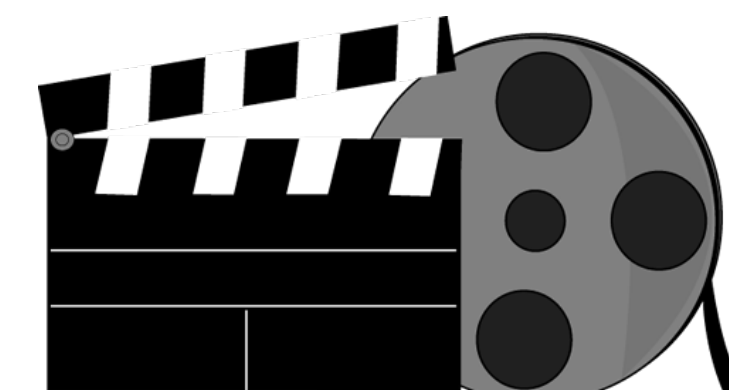
Accuracy of Face Recognition Technologies

In 2018, the "Gender Shades" project focusing on facial recognition found that across 189 algorithms, the least accurate are as shown in the chart above. Darker-skinned females have been disproportionately impacted by these technologies.
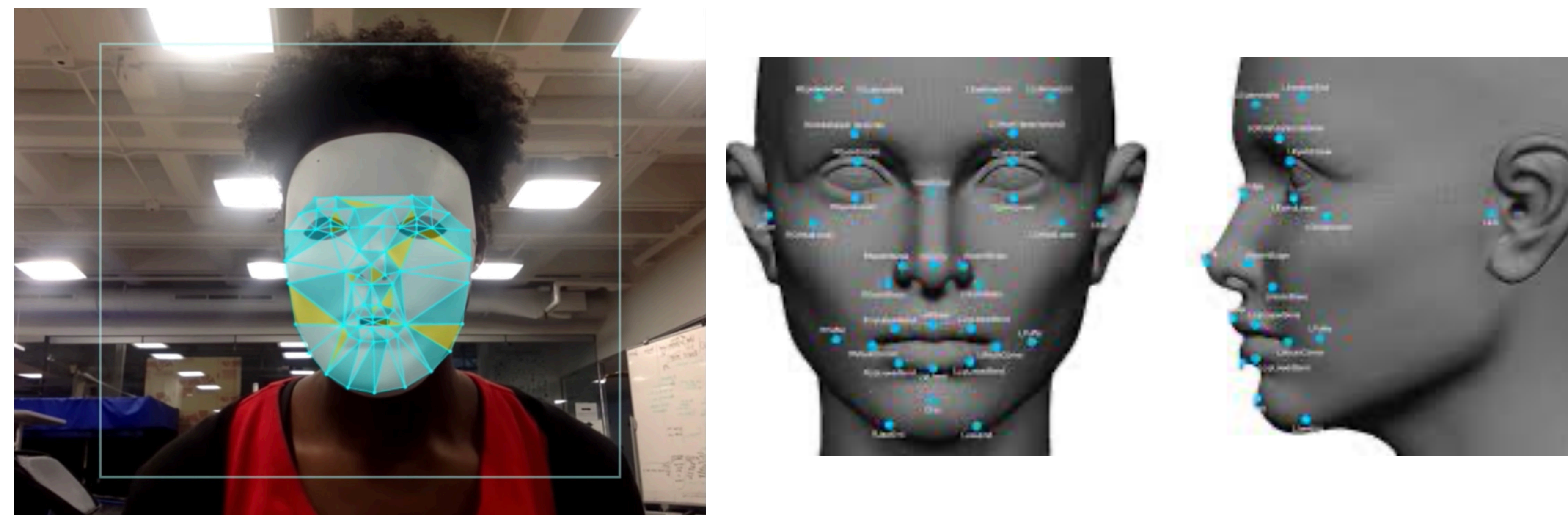
- A study led by Joy Buolamwini, a computer scientist at MIT and part of the Gender Shades Project, also found that when analyzing white males, the programs' error rate was only .8%.
- Facial-recognition systems have a higher chance of misidentifying or failing to identify those of African descent than other races which can and has resulted in innocent citizens being marked as suspects in crimes. Native Americans often are the most identified.
- There is a growing trend to ban this form of artificial intelligence as seen in major cities such as Boston and San Francisco.
- In 2021, Austin, Texas, a community with a large Latinx population, activists are calling to ban the use of facial recognition which is also used by federal agencies like ICE which used the database more than 2,200 times as of February 2020.

Conclusion

- As powerful technologies continue to evolve, it is important to realize they may have high risks. Corporations, such as Facebook, have economic and business models that mean they actively profit from misinformation, discrimination, and intolerance.
- Much of the public is still unaware of the scope of this technology and how it can affect minorities.
- Facial recognition technology contributes to strengthen the unhealthy effects of racism on minorities.

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