The Eye in the Sky Never Lies, or Does It?
Has Law Enforcement's use of technological upgrades helped the minority community or hurt it?
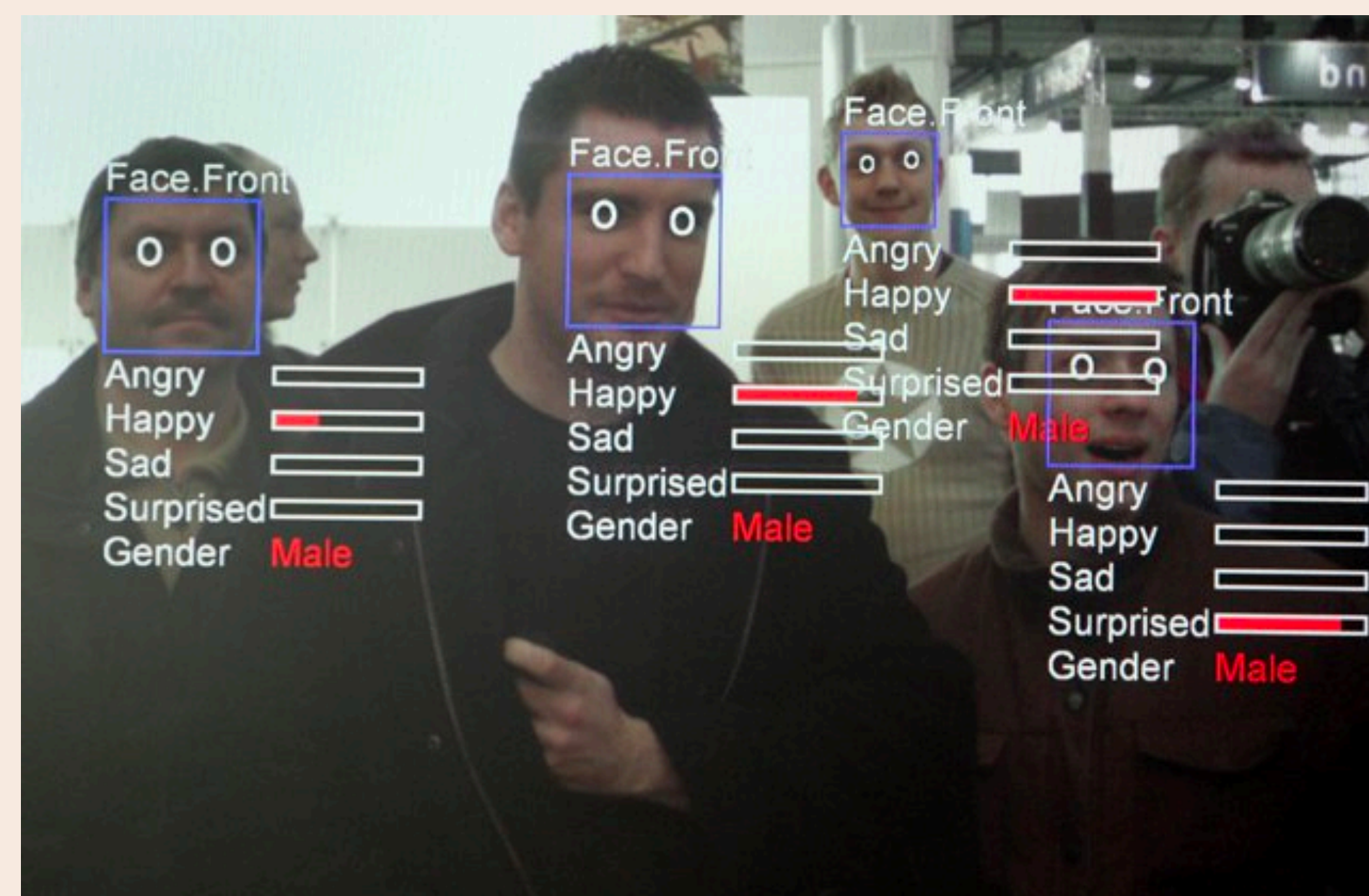
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Introduction

In recent times, Law Enforcement and the critiquing of its policies has been at an all time high. As for me personally, I come from a lineage that has Military and Law Enforcement ties, so this topic really intrigued me. I am simply researching the techniques and roles technology play in regards to policing, and how, as a whole, that plays into relations with the LatinX Community.

Interviewee #1-
- 18 years as a local police officer (MI)
- Retired early 2010's
- White Male

Interviewee #2
- 7 Years as a local police officer (CA)
- Currently still actively serving the community
- Latino male

Research Goal

My overall goal is to find out in which ways the technological advancements of the 21st century are able to help Law Enforcement act with less discriminatory actions towards the LatinX community, and other minority communities as a collective.

Methods

In conducting an interview with a current Los Angeles Police Officer, a retired Trenton Police Officer, I was able to get a look on how the current technology of this generation and the past technologies of the last generation have affected the LatinX Community. I also reviewed research journals and articles on how generalized policing towards the LatinX community has changed over the last few decades, including how technology has affected the interactions between the two.

Figures

A few ways technology has advanced for Law Enforcement would be facial recognition programs, body cameras, drones, thermal imaging, and even artificial intelligence systems. These are examples of ways the 21st century has advanced technologically specifically for Law Enforcement.

Results

- Do you like the idea of having to wear a body camera?

Interviewee #2: "I love the idea. Not only does it help with complaints and other issues, but it helps us become better police officers when reviewing footage after incidents."

- Was facial recognition implemented into your department?

Interviewee #1: "Biometric software, no. We would take surveillance footage and try to find a still image that we could compare to mugshots and other photos. We had to work with the resources that we had at the time."

- Would you say that the implementation of advanced technology has helped you to police? Have minorities adopted the same ideology?

Interviewee #2: "It keeps a level of professionalism on the job. The (LatinX) community feel more comfortable due to my own background I would say. I think there is a long road ahead of both sides to meet in the middle on the issue with policing and the public."

Interviewee #1: "I dealt with a lot of hate due to the reputation my department had. I still did my job to the best of my ability though. We didn't have body cameras until towards the end of my career."

Conclusion

- Overall, my interviewees collectively spoke on the issue of embracing the technological change. I got the tones that as long as humans continue policing, there will never be a major issue.
- I stand by the above statement, my secondary research colluded with the idea of keeping policing "human".
- I have personally have had bad experiences with law enforcement, and it has led me to question a lot of their tactics and policies. But at the same time I am interested in pursuing a career in law enforcement so I would like to be a part of positive change.

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