Case study

AI for Security Proposal

Overview

Marcelo Ebrard, applicant to presidential candidacy in Mexico, proposed "Plan ANGEL" (acronym for Advanced Geolocation and Security Standards), a strategy that aims to end insecurity and pacify Mexico through the detection of potential criminals.

During the conference, he emphasized that this proposal is inspired by technologies used by leaders of other "important countries" with whom he has had exposure in his previous role as Secretary of Foreign Affairs.

The strategy includes eight elements: facial recognition on public roads, accurate identifiers of where a gun has been accurate identifiers of where a weapon has been fired, weapon detectors, morphological recognition of criminals by the way they walk, vehicle and marking trackers, tracking, and tracing drones, and intelligent cameras for National Guard elements.

From this, create a database generated by Artificial Intelligence to interconnect all **the databases in Mexico. According to these declarations, Ebrard states that "a criminal has a certain way of acting and walking and we can establish patterns [...], if we had that technology before, we could have prevented many feminicides, homicides or other actions because of the way they walk and behave, we can establish patters and foresee".**

He also emphasizes that "all systems will be connected to the database that will operate with AI so they cannot be corrupted or corrupted, nor can they make human error".

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Background

Although the use of technology reduces human error, studies have shown that data is mostly biased by characteristics such as skin color, ethnicity, gender, among others,resulting in an act of discrimination from the algorithm itself. An example is theGender Shades study (2018), that identified that certain technological tools such as IBM, Microsoft, and Face++ fail to accurately identify the gender of women with dark skin tone.

Although in Mexico it is only a proposal, in countries in the European Union (EU), the use of AI in security matters is already a reality. It allows the exchange of facial images of suspects or convicted criminals.

Although, in the European Union a regulation of this type of technology is proposed since 2021 through the Artificial Intelligence Act, it was not until 2023 that it was approved by the parliament incorporating an amendment that prohibits biometric categorization, as well as the collection and tracking of images of people, claiming that it jeopardizes security, increases the vulnerabilities of people by categorizing them based on behavioral characteristics, socioeconomic class and personal characteristics.

The amendment considers its scope for technologies such as real time tracking, biometric categorization with sensitive characteristics, emotion recognition, which summarizes the proposal made by Ebrard.

On the other hand, Luis Fernando García, executive director of *Red en Defensa de los Derechos Digitales* (Defense for Digital Rights Network) in Mexico, warns that technologies based on AI have been highly susceptible to misidentifying people, leading to arrests of innocent people.

It has also been susceptible to aggravate discrimination against groups in vulnerable situations. We can't overlook the fact that, throughout history, the use of AI-based technologies has frequently been used for authoritarian purposes and perpetuating discrimination against vulnerable groups.

Such is the case of the persecution of activists of the anti-racist movement in the United States, activists of the pro-democracy movement in Hong Kong and journalists in Egypt. For this reason, international organizations have warned that biometric surveillance in public space constitutes a threat to human rights.

Mexico's representative for the Protection of Journalists expressed his concern about this practice due to the history on journalist persecution of journalists in the country, representing a worsening of systematic problems in Mexico.

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Final Reflection

However, the implementation of the "Plan ANGEL" will be possible thanks to the progress of the last decades in AI and could also be beneficial for security in Mexico by integrating new technologies with the country's existing systems and programs, with a view to creating a database that informs the authorities in a preventive manner, seeking to act and not react, however, the plan leaves big questions on the table:

How does a criminal walk?

How reliable are the databases?

How will human rights be guaranteed in the use of this technology?

What is our responsibility in the education and training of AI and Machine Learning (ML)?

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