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EXPLORING THE USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN THE ROMANIAN POLICE

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Abstract

Today, artificial intelligence (AI) plays a vital role in everyday life, helping with anything from healthcare diagnostics to gadget unlocking via face recognition. AI's capacity to handle and evaluate enormous volumes of data makes it an invaluable tool for law enforcement, especially in Romania, where integrating AI might help with public safety issues. Notwithstanding its promise, many are still wary about guaranteeing AI's equity and constructive use. Public safety problems are made worse by a lack of personnel in Romania's border and police forces. Budgetary restrictions and critical vacancies result in worsened border security, higher crime rates, longer reaction times, and less public confidence in law enforcement. Furthermore, it is challenging to recruit and retain employees due to unfair labour practices and restrictive rules, underscoring the urgent need for changes. Highlighting the benefits of artificial intelligence (AI), including increased productivity and reduced crime, and using data analysis to forecast hotspots and discover illegal activity. Risks do exist, though, such as skewed algorithms and gaps in the law that might provide unjust results.

Keywords: Police, artificial intelligence, international structures.

JEL Classification: O15

1. INTRODUCTION

AI is revolutionizing law enforcement by helping agencies process massive amounts of data, detect patterns in criminal activities, and enhance efficiency. As crime becomes increasingly global – spanning cyber threats, trafficking, and terrorism – traditional policing alone is insufficient. AI offers solutions by automating repetitive tasks and enabling law enforcement to prioritize critical work. However, concerns over privacy, bias, and discrimination persist. The EU AI Act introduces new regulations to ensure ethical AI use, requiring law enforcement agencies to adapt their technologies. Biometric identification, a widely used tool, faces stricter limitations, making collaboration between police, AI experts, and ethicists crucial for compliance and future system development. (Europol, 2021)

Numerous issues facing Romania's law enforcement system seem to be well-suited for AI applications. AI presents a chance for law enforcement to advance its skills and enhance community service because of its capacity to find patterns in large datasets. However, the issue still stands: how can the public have faith that AI will be applied in a way that is both equitable and advantageous? Although it has drawbacks, artificial intelligence may enhance processes, productivity, and effectiveness. These hazards are caused by things like faulty algorithm design, skewed training data, or policy loopholes that don't take into account the possible effects of AI technology.

Research on AI systems is relatively new and focuses mainly on the European Union (EU), where the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) governs data use and transparency. Countries like the United Kingdom have adopted or adapted such regulations, with the General Data Protection Act of 2018 (GDPA) (Ian,2023) offering individuals the right to know what data is held about them. While these regulations ensure accountability in law enforcement's data practices, there is no standard to guide the use of AI and machine learning algorithms (MLAs) in reducing bias and ensuring fairness, which could negatively impact citizens.

AI plays a dual role in crime – both as a facilitator and as a tool for law enforcement. While AI-driven programs and manipulated media contribute to criminal activities like blackmail, it also aids in crime prevention by analyzing data, identifying high-risk areas, and recognizing criminal patterns. Additionally, AI enhances post-crime investigations by gathering evidence and assigning responsibility. AI-powered surveillance systems and predictive analytics improve crime detection, highlighting both the risks and the transformative potential of AI in policing.

2. THE RISE OF VIRTUAL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS (TELE-COPS)

U.S. police agencies are struggling with workforce shortages, experiencing a 5% decline in personnel over three years due to resignations and retirements, leading to slower response times. To address this, the Wichita Police Department (WPD) introduced the Commissioned Call Center (CCC), where light-duty officers handle low-risk calls via phone. A study from March to July 2023 found that phone responses maintained high satisfaction levels while significantly reducing response times (7.2 minutes vs. 45 minutes for initial contact and 13 minutes vs. 53 minutes for call completion), highlighting the CCC's efficiency in modern policing. (Cory,2024). Callers appreciated the option for discretion and privacy, particularly for sensitive cases like domestic violence reporting.

The CCC demonstrated efficiency and operational benefits, improving community access to police services. Recommendations for similar implementations include leveraging light-duty officers, equipping centralized

locations, targeting peak times, and continuously monitoring performance. Overall, this approach showcases the potential of innovative methods in modern policing.

3. ROMANIAN POLICE AND BORDER POLICE PERSONNEL RESTRUCTURING

The Romanian Police and Border Police are experiencing a critical staffing shortfall that has a significant influence on their operations and working conditions. Unbelievably high vacancy rates: in Teleorman County, the vacancy rate surpasses 28%, and certain police units run with around 25% of posts empty (Rusu, 2025). Border counties like Constanța and Satu Mare, along with Bucharest, face severe police staffing shortages, impacting public safety and cross-border crime prevention. Budget constraints and austerity measures have led to hiring freezes, while restrictive policies limit benefits for officers. As a result, existing personnel are overburdened, forced into unpaid standby duty, and struggling with longer response times and insufficient resources. Urgent reforms are needed, including hiring more officers, eliminating abusive practices, and ensuring compliance with European labor laws. Staffing shortages in the Romanian Police and Border Police have severe consequences for public safety. Reduced police presence leads to rising crime rates, delayed emergency responses, and weakened border security, making cross-border crime harder to combat. Ineffective policing erodes community trust, while overburdened officers face increased stress and personal risk. Limited personnel also result in lapses in law enforcement and fewer preventative efforts like crime prevention programs.

The root causes of these shortages include budget constraints, frozen vacancies, restrictive salary policies, and unfair labor practices such as forced unpaid standby duties. Leadership decisions limiting benefits further discourage recruitment and retention, while demographic trends like aging populations and emigration shrink the pool of qualified candidates. Urgent reforms are needed to address these challenges and ensure effective policing.

Together, these issues present significant challenges for law enforcement, making it harder to recruit and retain talented officers.

4. AI SUPPORT IN THE POLICE FORCE?

AI has shown itself to be an effective tool for solving crimes. Image recognition technology is already being used by more than 3,000 police agencies globally to automatically recognize license plates, vehicle types, and even modifications like ski racks or aftermarket wheels. A number of instances have benefited from this technology, such as the capture of a mass murder suspect in Cobb County (May 2023) (Murphy, 2023), the destruction of a catalytic

converter theft scheme (Safey, 2022), and the rescue of more than 80 human trafficking victims.

A UNICRI report, funded by the EU, examined global public perceptions of AI in law enforcement based on a survey of 670 respondents across six continents over eight months. The findings show cautious optimism about AI's role in investigating serious crimes but highlight ethical concerns, including privacy, discrimination, and real-time decision-making. A majority (69%) believed that human oversight is essential in reviewing AI-generated results, with 38.4% strongly supporting the need for "a human in the loop." Only 9.3% disagreed, while 21.8% did not respond.

Over 75% of respondents felt police should receive legal and ethical training on AI, with 56.6% believing it should be mandatory. Support for training was particularly strong among those working in or with law enforcement (84.3%).

Access to information on AI use in policing was reported as difficult by 44% of respondents, while 9.1% found it accessible. Among those who found it easy, half were affiliated with law enforcement.

Regarding AI system development, 41% of participants felt police did not need to create their own AI tools, while 40% supported external AI development. Opinions were divided, with 12.4% advocating for in-house AI systems and 14% opposing external AI solutions. Around 24% remained undecided on both aspects (UNICRI, 2024).

5. GENERATED REPORTS TO SUPPORT THE POLICE OFFICERS

AI is transforming law enforcement by automating report writing, reducing administrative burdens, and enhancing data analysis. Officers spend nearly half their time writing reports, but AI can streamline this process using speech-to-text, GPS alignment, and bodycam footage analysis. Large language models (LLMs) help summarize events and classify participants, improving efficiency and consistency.

AI-generated reports enhance crime prevention by identifying patterns and trends, allowing officers to focus on complex investigations and community engagement. They also improve communication with local populations, fostering trust and better crime prevention strategies.

However, challenges remain, including biases in AI-generated reports, legal concerns over admissibility in court, and the need for transparency in AI decision-making. Ensuring interpretability – through explainability, reliability, and auditing – is crucial for ethical AI use in law enforcement.

6. ASSISTING POLICE OFFICERS IN CRIME-SOLVING?

Generative AI tools are increasingly supporting law enforcement by automating documentation tasks, such as drafting reports and creating presentations. These tools enhance communication by generating tailored content, including images, music, and videos, for specific audiences. Officers can use AI to simplify complex ideas for different groups, such as elementary school students.

A growing trend involves integrating AI with document databases, allowing users to ask precise questions and retrieve relevant insights. Platforms like Google's Talk to Books exemplify this capability (Chen, 2023). Looking ahead, AI could revolutionize policing by transforming vast data repositories such as police reports and forensic evidence into actionable intelligence, improving investigative efficiency.

AI is increasingly shaping law enforcement worldwide. The FBI uses AI to analyse surveillance footage and predict crime patterns, while UK authorities monitor social media for security threats. In Germany, AI aids in detecting financial crimes.

Facial recognition technology plays a crucial role in identifying individuals, assisting investigations in public spaces and airports. The Miami Police Department employs Clearview AI software to match photos against databases, and the technology has also been used in Ukraine's defence efforts.

Companies like Axon and Veritone are advancing AI-powered video analysis, helping law enforcement process vast amounts of footage efficiently (Griffith, 2017). AI tools can scan videos for objects, actions, and transcribe audio, reducing review times by up to 80%. AI also enhances video redaction, ensuring privacy protection for sensitive individuals.

AI is transforming law enforcement by enhancing efficiency, automating tasks, and improving crime prevention. Predictive policing helps identify crime hotspots, while AI-driven automation reduces administrative burdens, allowing officers to focus on complex investigations. AI-powered chatbots and virtual assistants improve public engagement, and real-time data analysis enhances traffic safety and emergency response.

Despite its benefits, AI in policing raises concerns about bias, privacy, and ethical accountability. Strong governance is essential to ensure fairness, transparency, and compliance with regulations. Future AI adoption will focus on integrating existing technologies, optimizing resource management, and leveraging cloud-based solutions for accessibility. Law enforcement leaders must proactively assess risks, establish review protocols, and maintain public trust through transparency and ethical AI use.

7. ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN ROMANIAS POLICE

The Bucharest Police have launched an innovative AI-driven fraud prevention campaign, featuring an instructional song with catchy lyrics to warn users about phishing and fake communications. The campaign emphasizes vigilance, advising against sharing personal data or clicking suspicious links. One highlighted scam, "Vote for Adeline," (Ion, 2025) tricks victims into granting hackers' access to their WhatsApp accounts. To combat fraud, the police recommend enabling two-factor authentication and verifying message authenticity. With nearly 80% of Romanians encountering fraud yearly and global losses exceeding \$1 trillion (Greening, 2022), this initiative aims to reduce vulnerabilities and raise public awareness.

Romania's Ministry of Internal Affairs (MAI) is advancing emergency response, border security, and public safety through AI, drones, and robotics. A digital center for civil services is planned to enhance digitalization, and a potential partnership with Qatar aims to share AI expertise, leveraging Qatar's (Penescu, 2025) success in security technologies during the FIFA World Cup 2022.

While Romania's AI integration in policing is still developing, evolving EU regulations present opportunities for improvement. These changes could drive the adoption of advanced AI tools, strengthen law enforcement while ensure privacy and security.

8. CONCLUSIONS

AI is expected to become deeply integrated into policing, with personalized AI coaches assisting officers across various roles.

Patrol police may use AI-powered smart glasses or contact lenses for augmented reality overlays, helping them recognize vehicles, assess threats, and access crime statistics instantly. Crime analysts and detectives will benefit from AI-driven evidence analysis, enabling targeted queries and ranking suspects based on motivations and opportunities.

Police leadership could leverage AI for talent identification, personalized coaching, and data-driven decisions on hiring and promotions.

Public information officers may use AI-enhanced chatbots to improve communication, fostering trust between law enforcement and communities.

AI is transforming law enforcement by enhancing crime prevention, productivity, and community trust. To ensure ethical and effective implementation, AI systems must be continuously refined through planning, monitoring, and adaptation. Rather than replacing officers, AI should support them by streamlining tasks and improving decision-making. Collaboration with reliable vendors and community engagement is crucial to developing fair and beneficial AI programs. This approach highlights AI's potential to make policing more efficient, responsive, and aligned with societal needs.

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