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## WHY

Forensic Science disciplines such as fingerprints have been used for more than 100 years within legal systems (Cole, 2002).

Due to the credibility given to disciplines like fingerprints or DNA [considered the 'gold standard' in forensics] errors and misguided decisions were not expected (Dror & Hampikian, 2014).

This overconfidence by the legal system in the forensic science domain led research to explore factors such as bias within practitioners' performance (Kassin, Dror & Kukucka, 2013; Garret and Neufeld 2009). One of the main topics focused by national reports (NAS, 2009) and national guidelines (FSR, 2014) respects to the human factors that may affect forensic sciences to be accurate.

Decision-making processes in forensics still need more research in topics such as the factors that affect examiners' work in the laboratory or when providing testimony in court (Thompson, Tangen & McCarthy, 2014).

## WHAT

The first big misguided decision being highly covered by media was the case of the Madrid Bombing in 2004 where four FBI fingerprint experts identified the same person to be the individual who committed the attack. However, all experts were wrong (OIG, 2006).

After this case, projects such as The Innocence Project [U.S.] and The Innocence Network [U.K.] which have been working in wrongful convictions due to invalid procedures in forensic sciences had a bigger impact in the research that has been done in this topic of bias within forensic sciences.

Currently it is possible to see national institutions giving high attention to standards and quality (FSR, 2014; NIST, 2012), since it recent errors still are being found, such as the recent case of misguided decisions within FBI hair analysts who were appointed as not been working with valid procedures in more than 95% of 268 cases in the last 20 years (Hsu, 2015).

There are also some agencies and forensic laboratories who never published [publicly] any content related to errors and misguided decisions. This might be important to take into account and ask if there were no errors, or there were any concerning with this topic.

## HOW

Research done so far only take into account the type of bias that forensic examiners have dealt with in the past as well as the factors that affect their performance most.

An exception of this research perspective is the study by Charlton, Fraser-Mackenzie and Dror (2010) where the authors interviewed fingerprint examiners and asked them for their ideas and thoughts about their practice.

The authors in this study believe that a wider perspective should be taken into account as well.

To carry that, part of this PhD project will try to reach individual interviews with fingerprint experts from a wide variety of forensic laboratories, asking these professionals for suggestions regarding the topic of bias.

The outcome is expected to be well received by the forensic community since the source of the suggestions has the same level [status] as the receptor. With this perspective, the authors are asking fingerprint experts suggestions for possible solutions for increase awareness for problems such as cognitive bias in forensics

Forensic laboratories which already agreed to participate in this research [green]  
Forensic laboratories which have already been directly contacted and are awaiting for an answer [red]



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