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# The Digital Fortress. Navigating Tech-Control, Hate Speech and Discrimination in Spain and France

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***Abstract.*** In the context of increasing government technologization, this article examines the role of artificial intelligence and big data in establishing surveillance mechanisms targeting migrants and diasporic populations in Europe. Through a comparative study of Spain and France, we analyze how these technologies may exacerbate existing social inequities. We investigate digital control mechanisms at Spain's southern border, focusing on the Integrated System of External Surveillance (SIVE), and explore how algorithmic video surveillance (AVS) deployed during the 2024 Paris Olympic Games may impact migrants' lives in France. This study contributes to our understanding of how surveillance technologies transform migration management and their implications for human rights and social equity.

***Keywords***: Surveillance, Migration, AI, Bias

## Contextual Background

To begin addressing the issues and actors involved in this study, it is essential to emphasize the phenomenon of migration itself as a fundamental aspect of human beings in constant evolution and movement. The political, media, and regulatory approach to human mobility, which often stems from the rhetoric of an "original sin" (Arce, 2023), fails to recognize migration as a phenomenon inherent to humanity. This deviation leads to a "constructed reality" (Cózar & Rodríguez, 2019) of human mobility, often portraying migration flows as threatening, uncontrolled avalanches, demanding exceptional political and legal measures that do not prioritize the human rights of migrants.

Moreover, due to transnational bonding, the definition of group identities is no longer determined by the geographical and physical space that groups inhabit. In this breeding ground, to understand the basis of transnational networks (Vertovec, 2004), it is worth referring to what Appadurai called "the work of imagination" (1996), highlighting the influence of knowledge technologies[1] such as AI and big data, which are critical elements in weaving transnational communities around the globe. In this sense, the fundamental role of knowledge technologies is not necessarily seen negatively, as they enable the elaboration of a multilocated geography, allowing for dense social life, fostering new landscapes and possibilities for creating and recreating culture and social capital.

[1] Knowledge Technologies are new computer-based techniques and tools that enable a more sophisticated and intelligent use of Information Technology. These technologies encompass a wide range of tools and systems, including artificial intelligence and big data analytics, which are designed to process and interpret vast amounts of complex information quickly and efficiently (Milton 2008).

Beyond these positive potentials, this article aims to raise awareness of some harmful possibilities related to these technologies. It addresses threats posed by algorithmic surveillance systems to individual rights and the proliferation of biases influencing population decision-making procedures. The broader adverse collective social impacts of knowledge technologies could systematically undermine socio-technical systems[2], highlighting the complex interplay between technological advancements and their societal implications (Yeung, 2019), with direct consequences for racialized communities.

In this context, we analyze the use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools by official state bodies, as well as the European Union's recent reinforcement of its borders and legislative frameworks within its territory. Despite international and European legal frameworks requiring states to uphold human dignity and fundamental freedoms for all individuals under their jurisdiction (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2024), significant gaps remain in safeguarding fundamental rights. These gaps give rise to scenarios that seriously endanger the fundamental rights of migrants at risk, whose rights are often severely violated. The EU's emphasis on border control and dissuasion frequently neglects the protection of these rights, perpetuating a humanitarian and human rights crisis both within and beyond its borders (Doctors of the World, 2024).

Building on this foundation, we will examine the influence of AI-related rhetoric, which often permeates our understanding as "objective information" flowing through media channels that establish hegemonic narratives. It is essential to question these narratives to prevent deviations that may introduce bias and disinformation, particularly in the forms of racism and hatred, as evidenced in the cases we are studying.

With this purpose in mind, the study employs a primarily theoretical methodology, focusing on the analysis and synthesis of existing literature to critically engage with these issues. This approach involves a comprehensive examination of current documentation regarding AI and big data legislation in the EU, specifically exemplifying its use by state forces in France and Spain. The research methodology is grounded in a thorough review and analysis of legal frameworks, policy documents, and academic literature pertaining to the EU AI Act and its implications for state-sanctioned AI applications. By adopting this approach, we aim to provide a nuanced understanding of the complex interplay between AI technologies, migration policies, and human rights in the European context.

### *AI: A Double-Edged Sword*

The development and use of big data and artificial intelligence tools by official European state forces raise critical questions about their conception, purpose, and implementation. This investigation focuses on several fundamental aspects: How were these tools conceived? What specific purposes were they designed to serve? How were officials trained to use these applications, and how were the applications themselves programmed to achieve their objectives? These inquiries serve as a foundation for our subsequent analysis of the theoretical and ethical implications that underpin the deployment of such advanced tools in state-sanctioned contexts.

[2] Socio-technical systems refer to the complex interplay between people and technology in society. This concept emphasizes that individuals are not merely passive users of technology, but active participants who shape society through their interactions with both technological tools and other people. As Sang Baek et al. (2015) note, these systems highlight how social interaction dynamics contribute to the overall formation and evolution of society in conjunction with technological advancements.

AI has indeed become a revolutionary force, offering the ability to automate tasks, enhance efficiency, and provide deep insights through data analysis. However, alongside its benefits, AI has come under scrutiny for its capacity to perpetuate and even amplify existing societal biases (Ma et al., 2024). Since AI is based on algorithms created by humans, there is a risk that developers, even unintentionally, may transfer their own biases and prejudices into these technologies. In line with this, one of the consequences of the structural powers embedded in socio-technical systems is the so-called algorithmic bias (Scott, 1992), as AI technologies are predominantly developed from and centered around the perspectives of more advantaged groups (Carsteens & Friess, 2024).

As a result, numerous studies have examined AI's capacity to reinforce social inequalities and discrimination. For instance, Eubanks (2018) discusses how AI, when applied to automated decision-making, can lead to "digital discrimination" and explores the challenges and consequences of giving machines the power to make decisions about human needs, public benefits, and state interventions. Buolamwini and Gebru (2018) conducted groundbreaking research showing that facial recognition systems (widely used by law enforcement) perform poorly when identifying racialized individuals. Their findings reveal that AI models often misclassify individuals from minority communities at alarmingly high rates, possibly leading to wrongful arrests or increased surveillance of already discriminated groups, in particular racialized individuals.

Within the scope of our research (border scenarios in Spain and large public events in France), AI-driven surveillance is increasingly used, and the inaccuracies involved can lead to severe consequences. Additionally, following Pasquale (2015), the opaque nature of many AI systems, working as "black boxes", significantly exacerbates discriminatory outcomes, as their inner workings are not transparent to users, regulators, or the public. This opacity not only conceals how AI systems make decisions but also obscures the biases embedded in them, making it difficult to scrutinize or contest their outputs. Without transparency, it becomes nearly impossible to determine whether an algorithm's decisions are fair or biased, complicating efforts to hold institutions accountable when discriminatory outcomes arise.

O'Neil (2016) reinforces the idea that bias in AI-driven decision-making often reflects race, gender, and socioeconomic status. Thus, when AI systems are trained on biased datasets, they may disproportionately harm marginalized groups, leading to unfair outcomes in critical areas such as policing, criminal justice, and public safety. Racialized individuals frequently encounter systemic barriers that AI may not only fail to address but may also aggravate, particularly when algorithms are used in contexts where they are already under heightened scrutiny, such as border control, immigration processes, or public safety measures at large-scale events.

In these cases, we will study how AI can be a double-edged sword and, when in the hands of official state forces, must be regulated, presenting a significant issue for the European community. This challenge must be addressed not only through the detailed revision of applications that deal with citizens' rights but also through proper training of state force officers who work directly with the population in their jurisdiction. The task at hand requires a comprehensive approach, balancing the potential benefits of AI with the need to protect individual rights and prevent discriminatory practices.

**AI Surveillance at the Southern Border of Spain**

The European Union has been working for years on the development of "smart borders"[3] along the limits of the Schengen Area. This concept encompasses the use of artificial intelligence technologies for controlling the entry and exit of citizens from "third countries"[4] (Fernández, 2023). Within this framework, we will assess the increasing technification of control processes at the southern border of Spain[5], which has seen continuous growth in recent years.

Within this framework, the rise and capabilities of tools that combine AI and big data in border contexts present several conflicts, based on two fundamental issues. On one hand, controversy surrounds the use of these tools by state forces towards individuals, as they may violate the fundamental rights and freedoms of migrants in transit and at their destinations (FRA, 2024). On the other hand, this fact brings about the collection, interpretation, and use of personal data, which can potentially infringe upon basic privacy rights (Eticas AI, n.d.).

Specifically, at the southern border of Spain, a variety of tools work together to create a far-reaching and branched control network. Among these, we focus on one of the most significant, known as SIVE (Sistema Integrado de Vigilancia Exterior, or Integrated System of External Surveillance), a system designed to enhance border control, purportedly with the aim of combating illegal immigration and drug trafficking (Jiménez Arandía, 2022).

SIVE is a comprehensive surveillance system that employs a network of fixed and mobile radars, along with high-resolution cameras and infrared sensors, to detect and identify vessels approaching the Spanish coasts (Fisher, 2018). This system provides real-time information to a control center, allowing for the coordination of interception efforts by land, sea, and air resources of the Spanish civil guard, called Guardia Civil.

The implementation of SIVE began in 2004 in the Canary Islands, and nowadays, its application varies across the Iberian Peninsula, Ceuta, and Melilla as well. Despite geographical and political differences, efforts have been made to standardize surveillance, detection, and migration management, such as through the SIVE system, which includes drones, thermal cameras, and facial recognition systems in Ceuta and Melilla (CEAR, 2017).

Since its initial development, various companies have been responsible for updating the system. In 2024, GMV enhanced the software underlying SIVE with a new product called PERSEO, using its OTEOS system (Observation and Tracking Electro-Optical System)[6]. This system employs AI-based algorithms to automatically classify vessels as "suspicious". PERSEO uses image recognition technology to analyze the silhouette and size of vessels detected by SIVE, identifying whether they are sailboats, merchant ships, passenger vessels, small boats, or potential drug trafficking vessels. When the radar detects a new object at sea categorized as

[3] Smart borders refers to the use of advanced technologies to enhance border management, including automated border control systems, biometric identification, and large-scale information systems for border control purposes (European Parliament 2016).

[4] Third countries are defined as countries that are not members of the European Union and whose citizens do not enjoy the European Union right to free movement (European Migration Network n.d.).

[5] Southern border of Spain mainly includes the ports of Andalusia and the Canary Islands, as well as the maritime and land entry points to Ceuta and Melilla. For years, this border has established itself as one of the three most important routes for migrant arrivals by sea to Europe, alongside Italy and Greece.

[6] Presentación Escribano M&E. December 2023. https://anyflip.com/ezgnc/xbsb/basic

"suspicious", the agents operating SIVE can manually adjust the cameras to focus on the area indicated by the radar and decide on the appropriate action (Bellio et al., 2024).

This objective, according to which SIVE aims to encircle boats suspected of criminal activities, does not align with other definitions of the system that highlight border control actions based on the installation of radars and facial recognition systems at border posts, with the aim of enhancing the smart borders system (Público, 2015). The installation and refinement of anti-climbing systems on the walls of Ceuta and Melilla, and the improvement of thermal cameras, AI-equipped drones, laser illuminators, and biometric tools for facial and fingerprint recognition puts the focus on border surveillance, detection, prevention, and containment of mobility, rather than its use for facilitating rescue and protection.

This finding confirms trends observed in the Mediterranean region where technology is primarily used to implement a repressive migration policy regime, relegating the protection of migrants to a secondary role compared to the militarization of borders (Bautista et al., 2022). This directly relates to border security policies that are serving to increase the risk and danger of the journeys and routes that migrants are forced to take (Almoguera, 2024).

The widespread application of AI technologies further endangers migrant groups already at significant risk while fleeing their countries of origin, particularly during sea migrations. These journeys are fraught with dangers such as drowning and harsh weather conditions, especially for inexperienced travelers in unseaworthy vessels often lacking basic safety equipment like lifejackets. Additionally, climate patterns significantly influence migration flows across the Mediterranean, with an increase typically observed in the second quarter of each year. As spring brings calmer seas, more migrants attempt the perilous journey, further complicating the risks they face (Frenzen, 2014).

Among the threats they face, which stem from EU-funded projects, are remote biometric identification systems, profiling within EU databases, and predictive analytics systems, with the inherent risks of algorithmic biases. As currently drafted, the AI Act[7] either does not sufficiently address these threats or fails to consider them altogether (Bollero, 2022), raising alarms among civil liberties advocates. Consequently, the issue goes beyond harmful elements like fences topped with razor wire and trenches, or security forces using excessive force beyond the scope of international human rights standards.

As noted by the UN Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights (Association for Progressive Communications, 2019), there is first concern about the growing role of private technology companies in managing digital social resource systems as we have seen in the SIVE case. Second, there is concern that applying technological advances to access social rights may deepen the criminalization of poverty, as it prioritizes fraud detection and economic efficiency over the effective enjoyment of welfare resources by vulnerable groups, including migrants (Soriano, 2021).

In this context, migrants and people in the process of diaspora already affected by exclusion are exposed to an increase in negative stereotypes, barriers to reducing social disparities, and new difficulties related to the impact of digitalization on legal and social aspects of their lives. At this juncture, we examine the interplay between daily life and legal structures,

[7] Further Information: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/topics/en/article/20230601STO93804/eu-ai-act-first-regulation-on-artificial-intelligence

focusing on the role of media in Spain and its potential influence on the technification of the southern border. This analysis aims to assess the media's rhetoric and its possible contributions to shaping public perception of migration issues.

***Mass Media Narratives on Migration***

Content analysis, a widely used technique in communication studies (Igartua et al., 2007), allows us to explore the primary frames of migration in the Spanish press, examining both themes and key signifiers. This section offers a focused analysis of how Spanish media addresses migration issues, providing an overview of its portrayal.

The construction of political discourses in the media, on social networks, and daily interactions are forms of communitarian engagement that aim to make sense of social phenomena. It shapes "coherent" narratives that serve as justifications intertwined with power structures (Hall, 1997). From this perspective, prejudices against migrant populations are not merely individual attitudes; rather, they are public arguments that emerge from a broader social process of constructing and defining situations.

In this context, we analyze a news article[8] from a prominent Spanish newspaper that employs blatantly biased and sensationalist language. The headline reads: *"Ceutians[9] outraged with Sánchez over the migrant invasion: "You have to be humanitarian, but not a fool"".* Beyond the crudeness of the statement, it is worth questioning the foundations on which this postulate is built. Who are the ceutians represented by that statement? On what grounds is the term "invasion" being used?

The use of terms like "invasion" exaggerates the scale of migration, potentially fostering negative public perceptions that are not supported by factual data. According to the IOM World Migration (2022) international migration movements account for around 3.6% of the global population. This data shows that the use of alarmist terminology like "invasion", "tension" or "migrant crisis", repeatedly used in articles and news reports (Málaga Acoge, 2020), exaggerates the issue but plants the seed of distrust and fear through repetition.

Is it a crisis concerning European borders and vast amounts of migrants looking to enter? Or is it a crisis of European immigration and asylum policies, forcing migrants in search of a better life to travel this deadly and dangerous route? (Jumbert 2018, p. 691). Such reporting often scapegoats migrant movements as the cause of long-standing national problems that governments have struggled to resolve for decades.

As we observe in this same article, the combination of "unemployed" and "migrant" constructs a leading question, "Why do they want immigrants when there are four million unemployed?". Following Lakoff's works and specifically the "don't think of an elephant" technique, which demonstrates how language and framing shape our perceptions (Lakoff, 2004), we analyze this query that strategically connects "immigrants" and "unemployed," establishing a mental structure that implicitly suggests a conflict between these groups. In this case, the question depict

[8] https://okdiario.com/espana/ceuties-indignados-sanchez-invasion-migratoria-hay-que-ser-humanitario-pero-no-gilip-13390792

[9] Demonym for the population of Ceuta, a Spanish autonomous city, located on the Tingitan Peninsula, on the African shore of the Strait of Gibraltar, on its eastern side. It is washed by the waters of the Mediterranean Sea, while to the west and southwest it borders Morocco.

migration as a threat to employment, potentially reinforcing negative associations with migrant and diaspora communities.

This narrative suggests that migration are the source of national problems, fueling notions of crisis and public frustration, and it reflects Van Dijk's (2016) concept of the "ideological square", which emphasizes the positive traits of the in-group ("us") while downplaying its flaws and highlights the negative traits of the out-group ("them"). Such framing not only oversimplifies complex economic issues but also contributes to the marginalization of migrant communities, potentially justifying discriminatory policies and social exclusion.

The rhetoric of racism (Faso, 2010) underlying news stories like the one analyzed here, seeks to normalize and legitimize the exclusion and stigmatization of migrant groups, closely tied to concepts of democratic racism. Such exclusion removes migrants from democratic frameworks in the EU context, legitimizing human rights violations by portraying migrants as threats and framing migration within a security-oriented discourse (Buraschi & Aguilar, 2023).

At this point, it is essential to highlight that both human and AI model biases are largely a product of the information they consume. Research has shown that people often internalize and reproduce stereotypes after exposure to biased media (Muchnik et al., 2013). Similarly, AI systems trained on such biased data can learn and perpetuate these stereotypes, reinforcing harmful biases in their outputs, which, as we will see, can lead to hate speech and other race-based discriminatory outcomes.

***AI Surveillance at the 2024 Paris Olympic Games***

France, under President Emmanuel Macron's leadership, has strategically positioned itself as a global leader in AI technology. This ambition has been solidified through policies encouraging technological innovation across various sectors. A key example of this is the proposed law on the 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games which includes Article 7[10], a controversial provision that authorizes the use of experimental AI-driven surveillance systems during the 2024 Paris Olympic Games which includes polemical algorithmic video surveillance (AVS). This legislation permits the deployment of AI technologies to monitor public spaces and detect potential security threats, marking one of the first large-scale implementations of AI surveillance at a major global event.

Proponents of this initiative argued that these advanced technologies would significantly enhance public security, streamline crowd management, and enable real-time detection of "suspicious" activities[11], which could help prevent incidents such as terrorist attacks. However, the adoption of Article 7 has raised significant concerns among both human rights organizations (e.g., Amnesty International, 2023; Privacy International, 2023) and researchers (e.g., Duflot 2024; Azran et al., 2024), who argue that this measure violates international human rights law, contravenes the principles of necessity and proportionality, and poses unacceptable risks to fundamental rights such as privacy, freedom of assembly and association, and the right to non-discrimination.

Given the international visibility of the Paris Olympic Games, many saw this as an opportunity for France to demonstrate the power and efficiency of implementing AI in public safety.

[10] Law no. 2023-380 including Article 7: https://www.senat.fr/leg/pjl22-220.html

[11] AI Olympics Security. Built In. Accessed February 7, 2025, https://builtin.com/articles/ai-olympics-security.

Precisely, Article 7 allows law enforcement agencies to analyze video feeds from drones, closed-circuit television cameras, and other surveillance systems using AI algorithms designed to detect "unusual" behavior, such as crowd surges or "suspicious" movement (Statewatch, 2023). However, the legislation explicitly stated that these operations would not involve biometric identification or facial recognition technologies, in compliance with the European Union's stringent data protection laws, such as the General Data Protection Regulation (Red en Defensa de los Derechos Digitales, 2024). This appeared to be a measure to safeguard privacy by ensuring personal biometric data will not be processed.

Despite these assurances, critics like Chiappini (2023) highlight concerns about the broader ethical and legal implications of using AI for mass surveillance, even without biometric data. One significant aspect is the absence of rigorous regulations to evaluate the risks and biases associated with these AI systems before their deployment. The lack of transparency in how these AI algorithms are designed and trained, raises doubts about their accuracy and potential for misuse. For instance, without proper safeguards and oversight, there is the risk that AI-driven surveillance systems could unfairly target or misclassify individuals, leading to immediate and profound consequences.

AI-powered surveillance technologies remain largely unexamined, raising serious questions about their decision-making processes and the potential for discriminatory outcomes, particularly in high-risk public spaces. The risks associated with these AI systems are especially concerning when processing the facial features of non-white individuals, resulting in higher error rates in identifying people from diverse racial or ethnic backgrounds. Migrants, especially those from regions underrepresented in the datasets used to train these algorithms, are disproportionately affected by these inaccuracies (Jain et al., 2004).

The French government's decision to employ smart video technologies designed to detect "suspicious" behavior has raised ethical questions about the definition of such behavior and the potential for disproportionate targeting of minority groups. One of the primary concerns surrounding this, has been the potential for racial profiling. Lodie and Juarez (2023) discuss how AI-assisted security measures, though not using facial recognition specifically for the Olympics, could still exacerbate France's history of biased law enforcement practices.

Moreover, the risks of deploying AI surveillance systems in public spaces are further compounded by the possibility of false positives, where normal behavior is incorrectly flagged as "suspicious". For instance, Amoore (2020) highlights that predictive algorithms used in mass-surveillance can misinterpret crowd behavior, such as peaceful protests, as potential security threats. Applying Amoore's insights to cultural or festive events typically held by minority or migrant groups, this misidentification could lead to disproportionate police intervention, thereby infringing on individuals' rights to free speech, assembly, and civil liberties.

France's history of discrimination against migrant populations, particularly African, Middle Eastern, and North African communities, has raised concerns about the potential over-surveillance of these groups during the Paris Olympics Games. Research from the National Institute of Standards and Technology (Grother, Ngan, & Hanaoka, 2019) has demonstrated that facial recognition systems misidentify black and asian individuals at rates significantly higher than white individuals. These findings support the idea that the deployment of AI-powered camera surveillance was particularly troubling in the context of the Olympics, where large, diverse crowds were gathered.

In response to the French National Assembly's decision to allow the use of algorithmic video surveillance technology powered by AI during the 2024 Paris Olympics Games, Mher Hakobyan, Amnesty International's Advocacy Advisor on AI Regulation, has stated that, "while France promotes itself as a champion of human rights globally, its decision to legalize AI-powered mass surveillance during the Olympics will lead to an all-out assault on the rights to privacy, protest, and freedom of assembly and expression" (Amnesty International, 2023). This criticism highlights a key concern that AI systems will monitor individuals continuously, often without their consent, collecting and analyzing vast amounts of personal data.

Additionally, in 2023, a group of civil society organizations released an open letter[12] calling for the rejection of the aforementioned Article 7, arguing that the measures "pose unacceptable risks to fundamental rights". Allowing the experimental use of "augmented cameras" during the event set a precedent that may prompt other EU States to adopt similar measures. According to Coaffee's research (2024), the Olympic Games have often served as a pretext for introducing heightened surveillance technologies, which tend to persist long after the events have ended.

Long-term social sorting and discrimination are consequences of surveillance systems, according to David Lyon (2003), who argues that these systems gather data to classify people based on various criteria, determining who is subjected to intensified scrutiny. Adding to this concern, Karolina Iwańska (2024), Digital Civic Space Advisor at the European Center for Not-for-Profit Law, explains that "once an 'exceptional' surveillance measure is allowed, it's very easy to normalize it and make it permanent". This statement underscores the risk that algorithmic video surveillance conducted during the Olympics in France could continue beyond the agreed date of March 31, 2025 (Library of Congress, 2023).

In this line, Paris police prefect, Laurent Nuñez, has already expressed his support for extending the use of algorithmic video surveillance, initially experimented with during the 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games (Daffunchio Picazo, 2024). Although he emphasized that this technology has only been limited to detecting behaviors or events deemed "abnormal" (such as abandoned objects, falls, or crowd movements) and officially excluding facial recognition, the desire to extend its use raises important questions:

Could the continued use of such knowledge technologies lead to widespread privacy violations, as individuals are monitored simply for attending public events?

Does this create a slippery slope where the initial purpose of surveillance might expand, potentially infringing on fundamental civil liberties and human rights in France?

***Social Media Narratives on Migration***

Social networks have become a space where anger and hate can be expressed with impunity. Homophobia, xenophobia, Islamophobia, anti-Roma sentiment, and other forms of intolerance exploit the internet and social media to insult, humiliate, engage in social lynching,

[12] A coalition of 38 civil society organizations, including EDRi, ECNL, La Quadrature du Net, and Amnesty International France, published an open letter urging the French Parliament to reject Article 7 of the proposed law on the 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games. The letter argued that the article's provisions for AI-driven video surveillance posed "unacceptable risks to fundamental rights" and could set a dangerous precedent for expanded surveillance practices across the EU (European Digital Rights, 2023).

harass, or threaten (Cabo A, García Juanatey, 2017). The spread of racist narratives online has led to alarming trends, such as the propagation of the "great replacement"[13] conspiracy theory, which has been associated with multiple hate-motivated attacks globally (Laub, 20199). These developments highlight the complex challenges faced by social media platforms, governments, and society in addressing online hate speech while balancing free speech concerns.

Hate speech on the internet, particularly on social media, has reached such a scale that it is presumably now on the agenda of numerous European and international organizations. However, despite the growing recognition of this issue as a significant problem on social media platforms, political measures taken so far have proven insufficient to effectively combat it. The scale and complexity of hate-fueled content have outpaced current regulatory frameworks and enforcement mechanisms.

The harmful consequences of media rhetoric that negatively portrays migration and emphasizes the need for stricter border controls and anti-migrant regulations are evident in the proliferation of different forms of online harassment continually appearing on social media. A striking example is the emergence of a song on TikTok titled "je partirai pas" (I won't leave). This anthem, generated through artificial intelligence tools, mockingly spreads openly racist lyrics advocating for the forced return of immigrants to their countries of origin (Tual & Reynaud, 2024).

This viral phenomenon in the form of a xenophobic anthem also includes lyrics such as "good riddance and don't come back" or "as you come, you will leave!". It gained particular traction during the French legislative elections held between late June and early July 2024. The song's lyrics directly reference Jordan Bardella, who became one of the most relevant faces of France's far-right movement party's National Rally (Maldita, 2024). This case illustrates how social media platforms can amplify extremist rhetoric, especially during politically charged periods.

Right-wing supporters in France have stimulated the song's popularity, which specifically targets people of Arab or Muslim origin, exemplified by terms as "djellaba" (a traditional North Africa robe) and names as "Fatma" (a popular Arabic name). After gaining significant traction, TikTok's bans have not deterred users from re-uploading the track manually (Dufeal, 2024). Consequently, it has spread to other social media platforms such as YouTube and X, which only declared it would "limit the visibility" of posts by applying the message "limited visibility: this post may violate X's rules on hateful conduct" under tweets sharing the song.

The anti-racism organization SOS Racisme filed a legal complaint against social media X for "incitement to hatred and discrimination against a community based on their religious affiliation or nationality" in response to the xenophobic song and their lack of action towards the racist content circulating on social media. The organization called for the immediate removal of the offensive content from platforms and urged authorities to take action against those that failed to comply (Le Grand Continent, 2024).

The connection between the rhetoric constructed in the media regarding migration and the racist discourse spread by the public on social media is direct. As the saying goes, "you reap

[13] The "great replacement" is a far-right conspiracy theory that claims white European populations are being systematically replaced through mass migration, demographic growth, and a decrease in the birth rate of white Europeans. This theory, popularized by French author Renaud Camus in 2011, asserts that Muslim and non-European populations are replacing the native white population, allegedly endangering European culture and civilization. Despite lacking credible evidence, the theory has gained traction among far-right groups and has been linked to several violent attacks worldwide (Laub, 2019).

what you sow," and, in Goffman's sense, frames constitute "schemes of interpretation" (Goffman, 1994). Each situation or experience can be "framed" in different ways, but the interpretative schemes applied define the meaning of the situation, how it is interpreted, and how it is understood. In this sense, the link between media narratives "framing" the discourse generated by the public in the form of hate speech, as we could see above, is noticeable, highlighting the need for stricter regulation of digital interaction spaces.

With this in mind, the feedback loop between individuals and communities that incorporate knowledge technologies into daily life and vice versa resembles a two-way road with a blurred dividing line, depicting a scenario where risks and vulnerabilities are ever-present. The urgent need for effective governance and regulatory frameworks in the digital realm is well portrayed by Davidow (2024) when he warns that "like the overgrazing of public lands or overfishing of the seas, the digital space will continue to be exploited" referring to an imperative need for regulation of digital spaces to preserve civil rights against power interests seeking to control and exploit discourse in digital media.

## Conclusions

While knowledge technologies such as AI and big data tools have the potential to revolutionize various sectors by increasing productivity, and presumably expanding efficiency and accuracy, their deployment, particularly in sensitive areas like law enforcement and surveillance presents significant ethical challenges. The cases we have examined exemplify how these tools, despite their benefits, can exacerbate societal inequalities and perpetuate biases, particularly against migrant individuals. The use of AI-driven surveillance by states raises critical concerns about privacy violations, racial profiling, and the disproportionate targeting of migrants and minority groups. As we have analyzed, this creates a chain of events that, from a structural level, permeates the community networks woven through social interaction.

As we have been able to analyze, both in relation to the SIVE software in the southern border of Spain, as well as in relation to algorithmic video surveillance at the 2024 Paris Olympic Games, there is a common denominator that refers to the "suspicious" target that these tools focus on. Whether in reference to "suspicious" vessels, movements, activities or behaviors, what we find is a categorization that supports surveillance systems trained by artificial intelligence systems to decide what constitutes "normal" or "abnormal" at every moment they are put into operation. However, every artificial intelligence tool is nurtured by people who shape it and enable it to work, and the logic that underpins these social conventions with which these tools are instructed is contextual.

In this way, the social context of those who develop and work with these tools is transmitted, and knowledge technologies, even though they are capable of restructuring and generating information, operate within the contextual margins that have given rise to them. The perception and categorization of each citizen becomes an increasing value to sustain logics that can continue feeding the structural logics that reproduce inequity and racism in all its forms. It is at this point where the media, as de facto powers, raise their role as shapers of public opinion that will be poured into the aforementioned artificial intelligence tools.

As we have observed based on the case studies examined in this research, it is highly relevant to stress the role of media in framing, selecting stories, shaping language and formatting discourse. Mass media manage what is known as the Overton Window (Overton, 2006), also

known as the window of acceptable discourse. This concept represents the range of ideas considered acceptable in public discourse, and from this position, they have the capacity to widen or narrow the margins of this window, thus influencing what passes through it and is therefore considered "normal" or "acceptable".

This framing process involves not only highlighting certain issues but also how they are presented and explained, selecting specific aspects, emphasizing certain elements, and often excluding others. We observed this in the portrayal of supposed unanimous Ceutian opinion about migration on the southern border of Spain, leading to the distortion of realities through discourse. The risk of exposure to this type of news is the reproduction of hate speech and patterns, as evidenced by the case in France and the viralization of a racist anthem created with artificial intelligence.

Thus, political decisions, media representations, and public opinion form three interconnected axes of a spiral that continuously evolve, feeding back into each other while shaping social conventions. The role of knowledge technologies, gaining prominence at various stages of this spiral evolution, is central to this research. The findings of this article aim to raise awareness about the potential tendency of structural powers to monopolize digital advances implemented by state institutions, potentially exacerbating social inequities.

The central question of this article has pointed towards the aggravation of this problem at a critical point, as when these artificial intelligence tools are used by official state bodies that hold and exercise uncontestable power over the population, the implications can incur in pressing human rights violations, increasing and supporting abuses of power such as racial profiling stops on the street or hot returns at the border. The basic error is the same: the perpetuation of biases that normalize discriminatory actions. However, the consequences, when perpetrated by official authority, can be exponential if the European Union and its Member States do not regulate and detail the use of these tools in each of the cases in which they come into play.

It is crucial to recognize that AI systems, when trained on data generated by members of societies with historically racist structures, can perpetuate and amplify these biases. Intercultural education at all levels is fundamental to ensure that future AI training does not harbor racist biases. This approach aims to foster critical thinking that can lead to the development of AI systems that are more equitable and less prone to perpetuating harmful biases.

In this context, it is essential to emphasize educational approaches that place critical digital literacies at the center (Pangrazio, 2016). These literacies refer to the ability to question power and authority, playing a crucial role in socio-digital contexts. They encourage citizens to critically reflect on mainstream media representations and produce alternative content that challenges dominant ideologies. This relationship between critical literacies and political engagement is further supported by critical pedagogy, which advocates for educational methods fostering reflection and political action (Luke & Freebody, 1997).

Given the pervasive nature of racism in our society, it is imperative that we take an anti-racist stance across all levels - institutional, personal, and communal. This approach requires concerted efforts to identify, challenge, and dismantle racist structures and behaviors. In this regard, grassroots organizations play an essential role in creating socio-educational environments in both formal and non-formal educational settings. These initiatives focus on training and prevention concerning violence and stigma against marginalized groups, with a special emphasis on digital environments.

However, the work done by social organizations is not sufficient to resolve structural issues. As AI becomes increasingly integrated into public life, establishing ethical frameworks and regulatory safeguards is essential to ensure that its benefits are equitably distributed. Policymakers must prioritize transparency, accountability, and fairness in AI systems to prevent them from reinforcing social inequities. As social cohesion among communities is at stake, these technologies should be designed to serve society as a whole, requiring approaches grounded in anti-racist perspectives to help shape intercultural socio-digital environments.

***Declaration of Interest***

The authors declare that they have no competing interests that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper. This includes but is not limited to financial relationships, personal relationships, or professional connections that might raise questions about the objectivity or integrity of the research presented herein. All authors have reviewed and approved this statement.

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