

# Acculturation and Acceleration: The Impact of Facial Recognition Technology on Youth at Cultural and Sporting Events\*

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**ABSTRACT** This article aims to explore the impact of the acceleration of and acculturation to the use of facial recognition technologies at sporting and cultural events on youth. As the result of terrorist threats, these events are increasingly seen as needing more security. However, a closer examination reveals that the deployment of facial recognition technology is leading to net-widening and function creep. This technology is now being used to identify stalkers, paedophiles, troublemakers, and individuals on police watchlists. These events are particularly noteworthy because they attract many children and young people, who are especially vulnerable to acculturation processes. Additionally, the focus on surveillance of children and young people brings to light other issues that might have otherwise remained unnoticed. This article employs a rhizomatic approach to examine the acculturation and acceleration of facial recognition technology and its impact on youth. Rather than solely focusing on overarching theories like normalization and acculturation, it incorporates these processes within the broader context of the surveillant assemblage. By expanding the analytical lens and viewing surveillance as rhizomatic, the article examines the extent to which acculturation of youth occurs at sporting and cultural events and argues that processes of acculturation happen in tandem with processes of resistance and unintentional control.

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**KEYWORDS:** Facial recognition technology - Culture of surveillance - Youth, sporting and cultural events - Artificial Intelligence

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## 1. Introduction

*Taylor Swift fans mesmerized by rehearsal clips on a kiosk at her May 18th Rose Bowl show were unaware of one crucial detail: A facial-recognition camera inside the display was taking their photos. The images were being transferred to a Nashville “command post,” where they were cross-referenced with a database of hundreds of the pop star’s known stalkers according to Mike Downing, chief security officer of Oak View Group, an advisory board for concert venues including Madison Square Garden and the Forum in L.A. “Everybody who went by would stop and stare at it, and the software would start working,” says Downing.*<sup>1</sup>

As the above example of the Taylor Swift concert illustrates “the surveillance state not only listens, watches and gathers massive amounts of information, but also supports policies that acculturate the public into

accepting the intrusion of surveillance technologies and privatized, commodified values into all aspects of their lives”.<sup>2</sup> Young people are growing up in a “culture of surveillance”<sup>3</sup> where surveillance has permeated every aspect of daily life. It is no longer solely the domain of government institutions and powerful corporations but has become embedded in the very fabric of how we live and interact with others. According to Lyon, this culture of surveillance is informed by and intertwined with the surveillance state, society, and economy.<sup>4</sup> The public-private surveillance assemblages socialize everyone – and especially young people – “into a regime of security and commodification in which their identities, values and desires are inextricably tied to a culture of commodified addictions, self-help and social indifference”.<sup>5</sup> When young people are not being watched

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<sup>1</sup> S. Knopper, *Why Taylor Swift is Using Facial Recognition at Concerts*, in *Rolling Stone*, 13 December 2023, [www.rollingstone.com/music/music-news/taylor-swift-facial-recognition-concerts-768741](http://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-news/taylor-swift-facial-recognition-concerts-768741).

<sup>2</sup> H. Giroux, *Totalitarian Paranoia in the Post-Orwellian Surveillance State*, in *Cultural Studies*, vol. 29, n. 2, 2015, 108, especially 109.

<sup>3</sup> D. Lyon, *The Culture of Surveillance: Watching as a Way of Life*, Hoboken, NJ, Wiley, 2018.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> H. Giroux, *Totalitarian Paranoia in the Post-Orwellian Surveillance State*, cit., 111.

and watching others online on social media, they are increasingly being watched and acculturated by surveillance in public space, at schools and also while attending sporting and cultural events. This paper aims to explore the impact of acculturation and acceleration of facial recognition technologies (FRT) at sporting and cultural events on youth. These events are particularly noteworthy because they attract many children and young people, who are especially susceptible to acculturation processes. Even though kids can be seen as “literally the poster children for surveillance”<sup>6</sup> and childhood as the most intensively governed sector of personal existence,<sup>7</sup> scholars have often consigned children to the margins or, even more commonly, have entirely excluded children as a political or social actor category, as is also true for scholarship on surveillance.<sup>8</sup> This is also apparent in the lack of attention for children in policy and regulation of technologies (such as for instance in Europe data protection legislation and the AI act. Additionally, the focus on surveillance of children and young people brings to light other issues that might have otherwise remained unnoticed:<sup>9</sup> Children illustrate a broader array of central surveillance concepts and dynamics than adults.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, children and especially adolescents whose identities are still very much in process are more vulnerable to acculturation processes, while at the same time in their quest for autonomy often portray more resistance towards cultural processes and social control than adults.

The article employs a rhizomatic approach to examine the acculturation and acceleration of FRT and its impact on youth. This approach, that has been explored in the context of the harms of algorithmic policing,<sup>11</sup>

<sup>6</sup> G. Marx and V. Steeves, *From the Beginning: Children as Subjects and Agents of Surveillance*, in *Surveillance & Society*, vol. 7 n. 3/4, 2010, 192, especially 192.

<sup>7</sup> N. Rose, *Governing the Soul: The Shaping of the Private Self*, London, Routledge, 1990, 123.

<sup>8</sup> C. Wagnsson, M. Hellman and A. Holmberg, *The Centrality of Non-Traditional Groups for Security in the Globalized Era: The Case of Children*, in *International Political Sociology*, vol. 4, n. 1, 2010, 1; R. Van Brakel, *Taming the future? A Rhizomatic Analysis of Pre-emptive Surveillance of Children*, Unpublished PhD Dissertation, 2018.

<sup>9</sup> R. Van Brakel, *Taming the future? A Rhizomatic Analysis of Pre-emptive Surveillance of Children*, cit.

<sup>10</sup> G. Marx and V. Steeves, *From the Beginning: Children as Subjects and Agents of Surveillance*, cit.

<sup>11</sup> R. Van Brakel and L. Govaerts, *Exploring the Impact*

argues that potential harms of algorithmic surveillance are relational, intersectional and dynamic in nature, that can potentially spread and evolve through multiple channels and layers and pays attention to cumulative harms and ripple effects. The approach illustrates how traditional analytic and governance frameworks based on individual rights fall short to address and understand the harms of algorithmic surveillance. Drawing from concepts of the rhizome and assemblage proposed by Deleuze & Guattari,<sup>12</sup> and analysing how harm is produced, it becomes clear that to understand harms of algorithmic surveillance it is necessary to analyse harms through an interplay of micro, *meso* and macro elements, and the relations between, and involves an ‘assemblage’ of the technology itself, its sociotechnical context and the political and economic forces that shape its design and deployment. Rather than solely focusing on overarching theories like normalization and acculturation, it incorporates these macro processes within the broader context of the surveillant assemblage. By expanding the analytical lens and viewing surveillance and potential impact of surveillance as rhizomatic and children as relational subjects of surveillance, I will examine the extent to which acculturation of youth occurs at sporting and cultural events and will argue that processes of acculturation happen in tandem with processes of resistance and unintentional control.

The article is structured as follows: The first section discusses the normalization and acculturation of surveillance. The second section provides a brief explanation of FRT and examines the acceleration of its use at sporting and cultural events through various real-world examples. The final section discusses the impact on youth of acceleration and acculturation of FRT at cultural and sporting events

## 2. Normalisation and acculturation of surveillance

As has been shown in surveillance studies over the last decades contemporary capitalist

*of Algorithmic Policing on Social Justice: Developing a Framework for Rhizomatic Harm in the Pre-Crime Society*, in *Theoretical Criminology*, vol. 29, n. 1, 2025, 91-109.

<sup>12</sup> G. Deleuze and F. Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, London, Athlone Press, 1988.

nation states are surveillance societies'<sup>13</sup> According to Murakami Wood & Webster the normalization of surveillance occurs, "when surveillance colonises emotion, symbolism and culture".<sup>14</sup> It is therefore "more than just the proliferation of a range of surveillance artefacts and technologies; it is about how these are embedded in the norms and institutions of society and how they are reflective of other aspects of modern society".<sup>15</sup> Several commentators have indicated how 'states of exception' open the door to expansion and control of authorities and lead to normalization of such control and forms of governmentality.<sup>16</sup> What would in the previous mode of ordering be regarded as temporary or even entirely unacceptable becomes unremarkable, banal, normal and consequently may not even be challenged.<sup>17</sup> According to Selinger & Rhee these processes put "people at risk of growing numb to the possibility that one day powerful actors could abuse surveillance infrastructure - through subtle changes that leave people unable to perceive aggregate impacts, or through rapid transitions, like power grabs during emergencies - and do damage as severe as undermining democracy."<sup>18</sup>

In his book *Culture of Surveillance* Lyon argues that surveillance is not just imposed by external forces but is also something that individuals actively participate in and

internalize.<sup>19</sup> Normalization occurs as surveillance practices become routine and accepted as part of daily life. This acceptance is facilitated by the pervasive presence of surveillance technologies in various aspects of life, from social media to public spaces.<sup>20</sup> As these practices become normalized, they also shape the socialization processes of individuals, leading to acculturation. Young people are socialized into a culture where surveillance is a constant presence, influencing their behaviours, values, and identities.<sup>21</sup> This includes, for instance, surveillance technologies at school (e.g. FRT in canteens; e-learning platforms), social media surveillance, peer-surveillance on snapchat and other social media, surveillance in the street, in shops, through their parents tracking them via their phones or watches or through their toys.<sup>22</sup>

Giroux argues that the willingness of people of forgoing their right to privacy in the United States (US), especially amongst younger people, should be seen as a consequence of a process of acculturation.<sup>23</sup> More specifically, the intrusion of surveillance technologies, either corporate or as part of national security, is accepted and celebrated as opposed to challenged, precisely because of targeted normalisation and acculturation processes in which corporate and state actors engage. We are not aware that this acculturation is happening to us and that is why we are willing to surrender our right to privacy.<sup>24</sup> According to Giroux, the self under such conditions becomes not simply the object of surveillance, but a participant and subject in surveillance culture, whereby the regimes of surveillance work hard to trivialize the importance of a massive surveillance environment by transforming it into a source of entertainment.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>13</sup> D. Lyon, *Surveillance Society: Monitoring Everyday Life*, New York, NY, McGraw-Hill, 2001; D. Murakami Wood *et al*, *A Report on the Surveillance Society*, 2006, <https://ico.org.uk/media/about-the-ico/documents/1042390/surveillance-society-full-report-2006.pdf>.

D. Murakami Wood and C.W.R. Webster, *Living in Surveillance Societies: The Normalisation of Surveillance in Europe and the Threat of Britain's Bad Example*, in *Journal of Contemporary European Research*, vol. 5, n. 2, 2009, 259.

<sup>14</sup> D. Murakami Wood and C.W.R. Webster, *Living in Surveillance Societies: The Normalisation of Surveillance in Europe and the Threat of Britain's Bad Example*, cit., 2009, especially 264.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, especially 264.

<sup>16</sup> G. Agamben, *State of Exception*, Chicago, Chicago University Press, 2004; P. Fussey and J. Coaffee, *Olympic Rings of Steel: Constructing Security for 2012 and Beyond*, in C.J. Bennet and K.D. Haggerty (eds.), *Security Games Surveillance and Control at Mega-Events*, London, Routledge, 2011, 36.

<sup>17</sup> D. Murakami Wood and C.W.R. Webster, cit.; B. Goold, I. Loader and A. Thumala, *The Banality of Security: The Curious Case of Surveillance Cameras*, in *British Journal of Criminology*, vol. 53, n. 6, 2013, 977-996.

<sup>18</sup> E. Selinger and J.H. Rhee, *Normalizing surveillance*, in *Northern European Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 22, n. 1, 2021, 48-74.

<sup>19</sup> D. Lyon, *The Culture of Surveillance: Watching as a Way of Life*, cit.

<sup>20</sup> D. Lyon, *The Culture of Surveillance: Watching as a Way of Life*, cit., especially 5.

<sup>21</sup> D. Lyon, *The Culture of Surveillance: Watching as a Way of Life*, cit., especially 45.

<sup>22</sup> See also examples Marx and Steeves, *From the Beginning: Children as Subjects and Agents of Surveillance*, cit.; Van Brakel, *Taming the future? A Rhizomatic Analysis of Pre-emptive Surveillance of Children*, cit.; D. Lyon, *The Culture of Surveillance: Watching as a Way of Life*, cit.

<sup>23</sup> H. Giroux, *Totalitarian Paranoia in the Post-Orwellian Surveillance State*, cit., especially 156.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, especially 160.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

While the ‘grand’ theories of normalization and acculturation are valuable for expanding and contextualizing the analysis of surveillance, it is crucial to also consider the micro and meso levels of analysis, relations, processes and social situatedness of surveillance practices and the relational subjects of the surveillance. This raises the question to what extent (young) people are truly acculturated into a surveillance culture and how this impacts governance. The aim of this paper is to shed more light on acculturation within the context of a specific surveillance practice: The emergence of FRT at cultural and sporting events.

### 3. Facial recognition at cultural and sporting events

In this section I will give a brief introduction of FRT, the potential harms identified in research, how it is currently being regulated in the EU, followed by a discussion of real-world examples of the use of FRT at sporting and cultural events.

#### 3.1. Facial Recognition

Facial recognition technologies are not new, early experiments emerged in the 1990s in amongst others the United Kingdom (UK) and the US.<sup>26</sup> However, technological developments in machine learning and computing power have created more ‘reliable’ facial recognition algorithms, which has led to governments and law enforcement agencies interest and experimentation. Police in several countries including UK, several EU member states and the US have been experimenting with live FRT<sup>27</sup> in public space for a while

<sup>26</sup> C. Norris, *Video Charts. Algorithmic Surveillance*, in *Criminal Justice Matters*, vol. 20, 1995, 7; L. Introna and D. Murakami Wood, *Picturing Algorithmic Surveillance: The Politics of Facial Recognition Systems*, in *Surveillance & Society*, vol. 2, n. 2/3, 2004, 177-198.; L. Introna, and H. Nissenbaum, *Facial Recognition Technology: A Survey of Policy and Implementation Issues*, Center for Catastrophe Preparedness and Response, New York, NY, New York University, 2009.

<sup>27</sup> Live FRT works by “comparing faces from a live camera feed against a police-generated watchlist in real-time. It analyses key facial features and creates a mathematical representation of these features, known as a facial biometric template, which is then compared to known faces to find possible matches. The watchlist includes suspects wanted for criminal offences, individuals with outstanding warrants for an arrest ordered by the courts, and those with notifications requirements imposed by courts. An officer will review any images flagged as a potential match to determine

whether further action is needed” Bedfordshire Police, *Live facial recognition debut during River Festival weekend*, 2024, [www.beds.police.uk/news/bedfordshire/news/2024/july/live-facial-recognition-debut-during-river-festival-weekend](http://www.beds.police.uk/news/bedfordshire/news/2024/july/live-facial-recognition-debut-during-river-festival-weekend).<sup>28</sup> Moreover, legal and surveillance scholars have raised concerns about the implementation of FRT, namely the implications for public space interactions and categorisation of suspicion.<sup>29</sup> Further, research has shown how these systems are riddled with bias<sup>30</sup> and can lead to false arrests and harms<sup>31</sup> and further potential dangerous effects on modifying behaviour and chilling effects.<sup>32</sup> They further risk opening the doors to the use of permanent FRT across city-wide surveillance camera networks and function creep.<sup>33</sup> In the United Kingdom for instance, Prime Minister Starmer, in a response to the Southport attacks in which several children

whether further action is needed” Bedfordshire Police, *Live facial recognition debut during River Festival weekend*, 2024, [www.beds.police.uk/news/bedfordshire/news/2024/july/live-facial-recognition-debut-during-river-festival-weekend](http://www.beds.police.uk/news/bedfordshire/news/2024/july/live-facial-recognition-debut-during-river-festival-weekend).

<sup>28</sup> R. Van Brakel, *How to Watch the Watchers? Democratic Oversight of Algorithmic Police Surveillance in Belgium*, in *Surveillance & Society*, vol. 19, n. 2, 2021, 228; P. Fussey and D. Murray, *Facial Recognition Surveillance: Policing and Human Rights in the Age of Artificial Intelligence*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2025.

<sup>29</sup> L. Urquhart and D. Miranda, *Policing Faces: The Present and Future of Intelligent Facial Surveillance*, in *Information & Communications Technology Law*, vol. 31, n. 2, 2022, 194.

<sup>30</sup> J.A. Buolamwini, *Gender Shades: Intersectional Phenotypic and Demographic Evaluation of Face Datasets and Gender Classifiers*, PhD Dissertation, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2017; P. Fussey and D. Murray, 2019, cit.; D. Leslie, *Understanding bias in facial recognition technologies: an explainer*, London, The Alan Turing Institute, 2020.

<sup>31</sup> D. Macmillan, D. Ovalle and A. Schaffer, *Arrested by AI: Police Ignore Standards After Facial Recognition Matches*, in *Washington Post*, 13 January 2025, [www.washingtonpost.com/business/interactive/2025/police-artificial-intelligence-facial-recognition/](http://www.washingtonpost.com/business/interactive/2025/police-artificial-intelligence-facial-recognition/); Van Brakel, *How to Watch the Watchers? Democratic Oversight of Algorithmic Police Surveillance in Belgium*, cit.

<sup>32</sup> D. Murray, *Facial recognition and the end of human rights as we know them?*, in *Netherlands Quarterly of Human Rights*, vol. 42, n. 2, 2024; A. Stevens, P. Fussey, D. Murray, K. Hove and O. Saki, ‘*I started seeing shadows everywhere*’: *The diverse chilling effects of surveillance in Zimbabwe*, in *Big Data & Society*, vol. 10, n. 1, 2023; P. Fussey and D. Murray, *Facial Recognition Surveillance: Policing and Human Rights in the Age of Artificial Intelligence*, cit., 2025.

<sup>33</sup> D. Murray, *Facial recognition and the end of human rights as we know them?*, cit., 2024; R. Van Brakel, *Opinion Piece: Hangen er binnenkort overal camera's met gezichtsherkenning in de publieke ruimte?* in *De Standaard*, 6 February 2025 [www.standaard.be/opinies/hangen-er-binnenkort-overal-camera-s-met-gezichtsherkenning-in-de-publieke-ruimte/37883426.html](http://www.standaard.be/opinies/hangen-er-binnenkort-overal-camera-s-met-gezichtsherkenning-in-de-publieke-ruimte/37883426.html).

were killed, stated that a National Violent Disorder Programme will be created to stop criminals intent on causing violence and unrest on our streets. The programme will “consider how we can deploy facial recognition technology [...] more widely across the country” so that criminals can be “targeted, found and brought to justice quickly”.<sup>34</sup>

When looking more specifically at potential harms of FRT for youth, Lynch, Gordon & Campbell, argue that inadequate protections have been afforded to children who are the subject of Facial Recognition surveillance. Discrimination in the use of surveillance technology by the police is a particular issue, given the stark over-representation of certain groups of children in investigation and apprehension statistics. Children are also increasingly the subject of FRT through their involvement in public protest, as well as increasingly in education settings and other contexts.<sup>35</sup> Recent and current policy discussions about FRT in the EU, but also surveillance in general often use the protection of children as a motivation for allowing more surveillance,<sup>36</sup> while almost no attention is paid to potential harms of the deployment of AI for children specifically. This also becomes clear when looking closer at how the European AI act of 2024 regulates FRT.

The general response of the European Union to dealing with potential harms of AI such as FRT has been the EU Artificial Intelligence Act<sup>37</sup> which has two main goals:

<sup>34</sup> Prime Minister’s Office, *Our immediate action after Southport attacks*, 2024, [www.gov.uk/government/news/our-immediate-action-after-southport-attacks](http://www.gov.uk/government/news/our-immediate-action-after-southport-attacks). See also D. Boffey and M. Wilding, *Live Facial Recognition Cameras May Become ‘Commonplace’ As Police Use Soars*, in *The Guardian*, 24 May 2025, [www.theguardian.com/technology/2025/may/24/police-live-facial-recognition-cameras-england-and-wales](http://www.theguardian.com/technology/2025/may/24/police-live-facial-recognition-cameras-england-and-wales).

<sup>35</sup> N. Lynch, F. Gordon and L. Campbell, *Facial Recognition Technology: The Particular Impacts on Children*, in A. Roberts, J. Purshouse, J. Bosland (eds.), *Privacy, Technology, and The Criminal Process*, London, Routledge, 136, 2024.

<sup>36</sup> See also the EU strategy for a more effective fight against child sexual abuse material (CSAM) which proposes extreme surveillance capabilities that in turn will affect children’s and youth privacy significantly.

<sup>37</sup> Regulation (EU) No. 2024/1689 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 June 2024 laying down harmonised rules on artificial intelligence and amending Regulations (EC) No. 300/2008, (EU) No. 167/2013, (EU) No. 168/2013, (EU) 2018/858, (EU) 2018/1139 and (EU) 2019/2144 and Directives 2014/90/EU, (EU) 2016/797 and (EU) 2020/1828

1) stimulate innovation 2) protect fundamental rights and people from harm caused by AI.<sup>38</sup>

In the new AI act facial recognition technology should be categorised under biometric identification technologies. Biometric identification refers to “the automated recognition of physical, physiological and behavioural human features such as the face, eye movement, body shape, voice, prosody, gait, posture, heart rate, blood pressure, odour, keystrokes characteristics, for the purpose of establishing an individual’s identity by comparing biometric data of that individual to stored biometric data of individuals in a reference database, irrespective of whether the individual has given its consent or not”.<sup>39</sup>

Although certain applications of law enforcement use of live FRT in publicly accessible spaces are banned (article 5(1)), the Act does allow the use for law enforcement purposes in specific cases<sup>40</sup> and considering certain safeguards.<sup>41</sup> More specifically the Act

(Artificial Intelligence Act), <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/1689/oj/eng> (AI act, 2024).

<sup>38</sup> N. Smuha and K. Yeung, *The European Union’s AI Act: Beyond Motherhood and Apple Pie?*, in N. Smuha (ed.), *The Cambridge Handbook on the Law, Ethics and Policy of Artificial Intelligence*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2024, 228. See also recital 1 AI act 2024.

<sup>39</sup> Recital 15, AI act, 2024.

<sup>40</sup> (i) the targeted search for specific victims of abduction, trafficking in human beings or sexual exploitation of human beings, as well as searching for missing persons;

(ii) the prevention of a specific, substantial and imminent threat to the life or physical safety of natural persons or a genuine and present or genuine and foreseeable threat of a terrorist attack;

(iii) the localisation or identification of a person suspected of having committed a criminal offence, for the purpose of conducting a criminal investigation, prosecution or executing a criminal penalty for offences referred to in Annex II and punishable in the Member State concerned by a custodial sentence or a detention order for a maximum period of at least four years (Article 5(1) h, AI act).

<sup>41</sup> Article 5(2) states that such systems shall only be deployed to confirm the identity of the specifically targeted individual, and it shall take into account the following elements: (a) the nature of the situation giving rise to the possible use, in particular the seriousness, probability and scale of the harm that would be caused if the system were not used; (b) the consequences of the use of the system for the rights and freedoms of all persons concerned, in particular the seriousness, probability and scale of those consequences. It will further comply with necessary and proportionate safeguards and conditions in relation to the use in accordance with the national law authorising the use thereof, in particular as regards the temporal, geographic and personal limitations. Finally, it shall be

refers to a ban on real-time remote biometric identification systems (RBI) which are defined as AI systems “for the purpose of identifying natural persons, without their active involvement, typically at a distance through the comparison of a person’s biometric data with the biometric data contained in a reference database”.<sup>42</sup>

The prohibition in Article 5(1)(h) AI Act applies to the use of RBI systems for law enforcement purposes, irrespective of the entity, authority, or body carrying out the law enforcement activities.<sup>43</sup> According to the Guidelines of the European Commission corresponding to the AI Act this also includes for instance “sports federations requested by law enforcement authorities to act under their instructions and supervision to provide security at sporting events”.<sup>44</sup>

However, the use is allowed in several exceptional cases when certain safeguards are implemented. To use real-time RBI for this purpose, the respective criminal offence must be punishable in the Member State concerned by a custodial sentence or a detention order for a maximum period of at least four years and only a domestic Member State law that fulfils, in particular, the requirements in Article 5(2)-(7) AI Act can allow the use of real-time RBI, as provided by Article 5(2) AI Act.

On 6 February 2025 the guidelines of the European Commission corresponding to the AI act were published. In the non-binding guidelines, it is specifically indicated that FRT can be deployed at sporting and cultural events. For instance, the guidelines give an example of a situation in which the use will most likely be allowed: “During a busy festival in a city, police authorities deploy live facial recognition technologies to monitor the area around the festival and identify wanted individuals with outstanding arrest warrants for illegal drug trafficking and sexual offences. At different entrances to the festival, the police use live video footage of people

authorised only if the law enforcement authority has completed a fundamental rights impact assessment as provided for in Article 27 and has registered the system in the EU database according to Article 49.

<sup>42</sup> AI act, 2024, article 3(41).

<sup>43</sup> Guideline 319, Commission Guidelines on prohibited artificial intelligence practices established by Regulation (EU) No. 2024/1689 (AI Act). (Commission Guidelines AI act prohibited practices, 2024).

<sup>44</sup> Guideline 324, Commission Guidelines AI act prohibited practices, 2024.

passing in front of a mobile camera to compare their faces with a watchlist of faces of wanted individuals”.<sup>45</sup>

It is clear from above discussion that the AI act excludes from the ban the use of FRT by law enforcement at sporting and music events for quite broad purposes and thereby plays an active role in the acceleration of the deployment of live FRT in sporting and cultural events.

### 3.2. The acceleration of the use of facial recognition technology at sporting and cultural mega-events

Ensuring security at sporting events has been a major ongoing concern since the 1972 Munich Olympic Games and the events of 11 September 2001.<sup>46</sup> This especially became clear at the 2004 Athens and 2012 London Olympics, whereby both cities saw unparalleled security budgets and implementation of whole new range of surveillance technologies being installed in the cities, which were not removed after the end of the events.<sup>47</sup> In general, mass gatherings are considered vulnerable to terrorist attacks with potential to inflict high numbers of casualties.<sup>48</sup> More specifically, sporting mega-events are considered as prime sites of terrorist threat and to counter this threat surveillance has become a normalised part of such events at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.<sup>49</sup>

The acceleration of the use of surveillance at cultural events is newer and can also be partly seen as triggered by the threat of

<sup>45</sup> Guideline 355, Commission Guidelines AI act prohibited practices, 2024.

<sup>46</sup> C. Whelan, *Surveillance, Security and Sports Mega Events: Toward a Research Agenda on the Organisation of Security Networks*, in *Surveillance & Society*, vol. 11, n. 4, 2014, 392.

<sup>47</sup> P. Fussey and J. Coaffee, *Olympic Rings of Steel: Constructing Security for 2012 and Beyond*, cit., 2011; M. Samatas, *Security and Surveillance in the Athens 2004 Olympics: Some Lessons From a Troubled Story*, in *International Criminal Justice Review*, vol. 17, n. 3, 2007, 220.

<sup>48</sup> T. Atkins, *The impact of the Manchester Arena terror attack: next steps for public safety and policy*, in *Journal of Policing, Intelligence and Counter Terrorism*, vol. 18, n. 1, 2023, 112.

<sup>49</sup> C.J. Bennett and K.D. Haggerty (eds.), *Security Games Surveillance and Control at Mega-Events*, London, Routledge, 2011; R. Giulianotti and F. Klauser, *Sport Mega-Events and ‘Terrorism’: A Critical Analysis*, in *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, vol. 47, n. 3, 2012; P. Fussey and J. Coaffee, *Olympic Rings of Steel: Constructing Security for 2012 and Beyond*, cit., 2011; T. Atkins, cit., 2022.

terrorist attacks. The terrorist attack at the Eagles of Death Metal concert at the Bataclan in Paris in 2015,<sup>50</sup> the bombing of the Ariana Grande concert in Manchester Arena in 2017<sup>51</sup> and the cancellation of Taylor Swift concert in Vienna in 2024<sup>52</sup> have heightened attention for security at cultural events in Europe and beyond in the last decade. However, more recently, we can also see what Flyghed calls a ‘normalisation of the extraordinary’ whereby new coercive measures, once introduced by police to deal with extraordinary criminal behaviour, are normalised into less extraordinary forms of offences especially when looking at the acceleration of use of FRT at cultural and sporting events to for instance identify stalkers and paedophiles.<sup>53</sup> This tendency can also be recognised when looking closer at the way FRT is implemented at cultural and sporting events. Music festivals are often the highlight of summertime, but they are also spaces increasingly policed for drugs, pickpockets, sexual assault, and terrorist attacks.<sup>54</sup> FRT has increasingly been employed at various of these events worldwide. Below we will provide several real-world examples where FRT was experimented or implemented.

One of the early implementations of FRT at a large cultural event was during the Notting Hill Carnival in London, UK. In 2017, the Metropolitan Police (MPS) trialed this technology to identify individuals in the crowd who were wanted for various offenses. The MPS deployed FRT for the purpose of testing its capability for identifying known offenders. This was part of a continued trial to test the technology to see if it would aid the police in protecting the wider public.<sup>55</sup>

However, the trial faced criticism due to its high rate of false positives and concerns over privacy violations and a false arrest that was conducted.<sup>56</sup> A report published by the British NGO Big Brother Watch revealed that the MPS use of FRT resulted in over 98% of matches wrongly identifying innocent members of the public.<sup>57</sup> More recently, during a Beyoncé concert in the UK in Cardiff in 2023, South Wales Police deployed live FRT to scan the crowd for individuals on watchlists, including potential terrorists and pedophiles.<sup>58</sup> And in 2024 Bedfordshire Police deployed FRT at the Bedford River Festival “in a bid to locate the county’s most wanted offenders and keep the public safe”.<sup>59</sup> Similarly, in the US, at a Taylor Swift concert in Los Angeles on May 18, 2018, FRT was discreetly used to identify known stalkers. Fans were unaware that a kiosk displaying rehearsal clips was equipped with cameras that captured their images and cross-referenced them with a database of potential threats.<sup>60</sup> Another example is the use of FRT at Madison Square Garden, New York, where FRT has been used to identify and deny entry for a musical show to an individual involved in litigation against the venue’s parent company.<sup>61</sup>

*Notting Hill Carnival and Automated Facial Recognition (1)*, London Assembly, 14 September 2017, [www.london.gov.uk/who-we-are/what-london-assembly-does/questions-mayor/find-an-answer/automatic-facial-recognition-notting-hill-carnival-1](http://www.london.gov.uk/who-we-are/what-london-assembly-does/questions-mayor/find-an-answer/automatic-facial-recognition-notting-hill-carnival-1); S. Berry, *Question asked of the Mayor of London: Notting Hill Carnival and Automated Facial Recognition*, London Assembly 21 June 2018, [www.london.gov.uk/who-we-are/what-london-assembly-does/questions-mayor/find-an-answer/notting-hill-carnival-and-automated-facial-recognition](http://www.london.gov.uk/who-we-are/what-london-assembly-does/questions-mayor/find-an-answer/notting-hill-carnival-and-automated-facial-recognition).

<sup>56</sup> Biometrics Commissioner, *Metropolitan Police’s use of Facial Recognition Technology at the Notting Hill Carnival*, 2017, Press Release Gov.UK, [www.gov.uk/government/news/metropolitan-polices-use-of-facial-recognition-technology-at-the-notting-hill-carnival-2017](http://www.gov.uk/government/news/metropolitan-polices-use-of-facial-recognition-technology-at-the-notting-hill-carnival-2017); A.J. Martin, *Police Facial Recognition Trial Led to ‘Erroneous Arrest’*, in *Sky News*, 7 September 2017, <https://news.sky.com/story/police-facial-recognition-trial-led-to-erroneous-arrest-11013418>.

<sup>57</sup> Big Brother Watch, *Face Off: The Lawless Growth of Facial Recognition Technology in UK Policing*, 2018, <https://bigbrotherwatch.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Face-Off-final-digital-1.pdf>.

<sup>58</sup> G. Abdul, *Police To Use Live Facial Recognition in Cardiff During Beyoncé Concert*, in *The Guardian*, 17 May 2023, [www.theguardian.com/technology/2023/may/17/police-to-use-facial-recognition-technology-in-cardiff-during-beyonce-concert](http://www.theguardian.com/technology/2023/may/17/police-to-use-facial-recognition-technology-in-cardiff-during-beyonce-concert).

<sup>59</sup> Bedfordshire Police, 2024.

<sup>60</sup> Knopper, *Why Taylor Swift is Using Facial Recognition at Concerts*, cit.

<sup>61</sup> K. Hill and C. Kilgannon, *Madison Square Garden Uses Facial Recognition to Ban Its Owner’s Enemies*, in

<sup>50</sup> T. Salaün “*Death Was Coming*”: *Bataclan Band Recalls Paris Attack*, in *Reuters*, 17 May 2022, [www.reuters.com/world/europe/death-was-coming-bataclan-band-recalls-paris-attack-2022-05-17](http://www.reuters.com/world/europe/death-was-coming-bataclan-band-recalls-paris-attack-2022-05-17).

<sup>51</sup> M. Corder, *Ariana Grande Fans Tremble As They Recall Manchester Attack*, in *AP News*, 24 May 2017, <https://apnews.com/article/9d813da59c6342b09c7ea57f62a5d9a8>.

<sup>52</sup> S. Connolly, *Third Teenager Arrested Over Foiled Taylor Swift Concert Attack in Vienna*, in *The Guardian*, 9 August 2024, [www.theguardian.com/world/article/2024/aug/09/teenager-arrested-foiled-taylor-swift-concert-attack-vienna](http://www.theguardian.com/world/article/2024/aug/09/teenager-arrested-foiled-taylor-swift-concert-attack-vienna).

<sup>53</sup> J. Flyghed, *Normalising the Exceptional: The Case of Political Violence*, in *Policing & Society*, vol. 13, n. 1, 2002, 23.

<sup>54</sup> K.C. Hoover, J.W. Crampton, H. Smith and J.C. Berbesque, *Surveillance, Trust, and Policing at Music Festivals*, in *The Canadian Geographer*, 2021, 1-18.

<sup>55</sup> S. Berry, *Question asked of the Mayor of London:*

Also, at sporting events we can see an acceleration of the use of FRT in the last decade, not just for the purposes of ticketing and contactless concessions, to identify people on a police watchlist but also to monitor spectator behaviour in the context of a terrorist threat. Already in 2001 FRT was trialed at the most important American Football game Super bowl in the United States.<sup>62</sup> The trend especially becomes clear at larger events such as the Olympics. For instance, the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games marked the first time FRT was used extensively to verify the identities of athletes, officials, and media representatives. The system aimed to prevent unauthorized access and improve the efficiency of entry processes.<sup>63</sup> But also smaller sporting events such as football games are increasingly experimenting with FRT not just for security but also to enhance customer experience for more smooth entry to the venues.<sup>64</sup> A study which investigated the use of surveillance cameras in football stadiums found that 25 stadiums out of the top 100 in the world use FRT alongside their cameras of which most use it for surveillance purposes.<sup>65</sup> For instance, in Belgium the RWD Molenbeek football club introduced FRT in 2018 to streamline stadium entry for season-ticket holders. Fans who uploaded their photos online could enter the stadium without physical tickets, enhancing both security and convenience.<sup>66</sup> The French football club FC

Metz experimented with FRT in 2000 claiming they only used it to target people who are not allowed to enter the stadium.<sup>67</sup> South Wales Police has been experimenting with live FRT at several sporting events such as the Champions League Final and also rugby to identify individuals wanted for priority offenses. This deployment was part of a broader strategy to enhance security at major public events.<sup>68</sup> In the US in 2023, the Mercedes-Benz Stadium in Atlanta has employed the use of a robot dog, “Benzie”, fitted with a camera using FRT.<sup>69</sup> A recent decision by the Danish Data Protection Agency has allowed FC Copenhagen to use FRT to stop violent football fans.<sup>70</sup> Finally, several football clubs and stadiums in Brazil are using FRT. For instance, the Brazilian soccer club Palmeiras has claimed that using FRT for gaining entry to ticketed events, the system has also helped the Sao Paulo Public Security Secretariat apprehend 28 criminals at four matches at the Allianz Parque stadium and has also helped identify missing people.<sup>71</sup>

The overview above is not meant to be exhaustive and only provides a few examples as illustration. The goal of the overview was to highlight the acceleration of the technology at sporting and cultural events and provide more empirical insight into what is being implemented for what purposes.

*New York Times*, 3 January 2023, [www.nytimes.com/2022/12/22/nyregion/madison-square-garden-facial-recognition.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/22/nyregion/madison-square-garden-facial-recognition.html).

<sup>62</sup> K. Rogers, *That Time the Super Bowl Secretly Used Facial Recognition Software on Fans*, in *The Verge*, 7 February 2016, [www.vice.com/en/article/that-time-the-super-bowl-secretly-used-facial-recognition-software-on-fans](http://www.vice.com/en/article/that-time-the-super-bowl-secretly-used-facial-recognition-software-on-fans).

<sup>63</sup> C. Thornton and M. Thamsett, *Tokyo 2020 Olympics to introduce facial recognition technology*, *CNN*, 7 August 2018, <https://edition.cnn.com/2018/08/07/sport/tokyo-2020-olympics-facial-recognition/index.html>.

<sup>64</sup> See for instance E. Goode, *How Biometric Entry Systems Enhance Fan Experiences in Stadiums*, in *International Security Journal*, 2 January 2025, <https://internationalsecurityjournal.com/biometric-entry-fan-experience/#:~:text=Biometrics%2C%20particularl y%20facial%20recognition%2C%20present,fraudster%20from%20the%20entertainment%20ecosystem>.

<sup>65</sup> R. Moody, *Surveillance Camera Statistics: Which Football Fans are The Most Watched in the World?*, in *Comparitech*, 6 September 2023, [www.comparitech.com/blog/vpn-privacy/the-worlds-most-surveilled-football-stadiums](http://www.comparitech.com/blog/vpn-privacy/the-worlds-most-surveilled-football-stadiums).

<sup>66</sup> G. Roelant, *RWDM Experimenteert met Gezichtsherkenning*, in *Bruzz*, 5 September 2018,

[www.bruzz.be/sport/rwddm-experimenteert-met-gezichts-herkenning-2018-09-05](http://www.bruzz.be/sport/rwddm-experimenteert-met-gezichts-herkenning-2018-09-05).

<sup>67</sup> L. Pascu, *French Football Club Experiments with Facial Biometrics for Stadium Access Control*, *Biometricupdate*, 2020, [www.biometricupdate.com/202002/french-football-club-experiments-with-facial-biometrics-for-stadium-access-control](http://www.biometricupdate.com/202002/french-football-club-experiments-with-facial-biometrics-for-stadium-access-control).

<sup>68</sup> J. Davies, *South Wales Police Facial Recognition Software Boasts 8% Success Rate*, in *Telecoms.com*, 2018, [www.telecoms.com/ai/south-wales-police-facial-recognition-software-boasts-8-success-rate](http://www.telecoms.com/ai/south-wales-police-facial-recognition-software-boasts-8-success-rate).

<sup>69</sup> M. Borak, *Facial Recognition-Equipped Robot Dog to Prowl US Sporting Venue*, *Biometricupdate*, 2023, [www.biometricupdate.com/202309/facial-recognition-equipped-robot-dog-to-prowl-us-sporting-venue](http://www.biometricupdate.com/202309/facial-recognition-equipped-robot-dog-to-prowl-us-sporting-venue)

<sup>70</sup> M. Borak, *FC Copenhagen Will Use Facial Recognition to Stop Violent Football Fans*, *Biometricupdate*, 2025, [www.biometricupdate.com/202501/fc-copenhagen-will-use-facial-recognition-to-stop-violent-football-fans](http://www.biometricupdate.com/202501/fc-copenhagen-will-use-facial-recognition-to-stop-violent-football-fans).

<sup>71</sup> C. Meyer, *Facial Recognition at Brazilian Soccer Stadium Helps Police Arrest 28 Criminals*, in *Security Management*, 2023, [www.asisonline.org/security-management-magazine/latest-news/today-in-security/2023/september/facial-recognition-soccer-club](http://www.asisonline.org/security-management-magazine/latest-news/today-in-security/2023/september/facial-recognition-soccer-club).

#### **4. Discussion: the impact on youth of acculturation of facial recognition technology at cultural and sporting events**

In the previous section it became clear that the use of FRT at sporting and cultural events is accelerating and will most likely increase in the coming years, also stimulated by legislation such as the AI act that enables the deployment as was discussed in section two. This final section aims to reflect on the impact of processes of surveillance acculturation on youth at cultural and sporting events. To do this I approach surveillance and its subjects as rhizomatic, this implies understanding social reality as relational and intricate.<sup>72</sup> This perspective reveals a more nuanced picture of the impact of acculturation on youth considering relational, temporal and contextual factors on macro-, meso- and micro-levels in the analysis. It suggests that processes of acculturation might not be as comprehensive and intentional as they might seem at the surface when including following surveillance dynamics into the analysis: resistance, dispersed power relations and unintended control, and the socio-technical situatedness of surveillance and its relational subjects such as youth.

First, the subjects of surveillance are relational subjects, they should be considered in relation to their differences, to other subjects and their socio - economical and historical situatedness. Considering that surveillance leads to social sorting and disproportionately impacts marginalized communities in society,<sup>73</sup> it is likely that not everyone will respond to acculturation processes in the same way. For instance, Browne discusses how surveillance technologies have historically targeted Black communities in the US, leading to heightened scrutiny and control.<sup>74</sup> Similarly, Lyon

highlights the role of surveillance in reinforcing social inequalities by disproportionately monitoring marginalized groups.<sup>75</sup> If communities are already exhibiting “system avoidance”, as described by Brayne whereby individuals avoid government agencies due to being oversurveilled,<sup>76</sup> they will not be as easily acculturated to surveillance as those who have not experienced adverse effects of surveillance and have only encountered convenience, for instance, by using FRT to log into their phones or the use of FRT for entering the stadiums. By addressing youth from a rhizomatic and intersectional perspective it becomes clear that youth have intersecting identities shaped by experiences but also by the social categories they belong to and their situatedness and the (political and economic) values they have been brought up with. Therefore, making generalist statements about youth, misses out on diverse experiences and responses youth will have to surveillance and more specifically FRT.

Second, as Lianos and Sewell and Barker have argued, not all surveillance is about intentional top-down control.<sup>77</sup> Lianos suggests that surveillance often operates through decentralized and unintentional mechanisms.<sup>78</sup> Sewell and Barker further argue that surveillance practices are embedded in everyday routines and are not always directed towards explicit control.<sup>79</sup> Further, empirical research into surveillance shows a much more intricate picture of messy everyday practices and dispersed power relations.<sup>80</sup> These arguments do not

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*Blackness*, cit., 2015.

<sup>75</sup> Lyon, 2003.

<sup>76</sup> Brayne's research shows that individuals with criminal justice contact are less likely to engage with institutions that keep formal records, such as medical or financial institutions. S. Brayne, *Surveillance and System Avoidance: Criminal Justice Contact and Institutional Attachment*, in *American Sociological Review*, vol. 79, n. 3, 2014, 367.

<sup>77</sup> M. Lianos, *Social Control after Foucault*, in *Surveillance & Society*, vol. 1, n. 3, 2003, 412; G. Sewell and J.R. Barker, *Coercion Versus Care: Using Irony to Make Sense of Organizational Surveillance*, in *The Academy of Management Review*, vol. 31, n. 4, 2006, 934.

<sup>78</sup> M. Lianos, *Social Control after Foucault*, cit., 2003.

<sup>79</sup> G. Sewell and J.R. Barker, *Coercion Versus Care: Using Irony to Make Sense of Organizational Surveillance*, cit., 2006.

<sup>80</sup> M. French, *Gaps in the Gaze: Informatic Practice and the Work of Public Health Surveillance*, in *Surveillance & Society*, vol. 12, n. 2, 2014, 226.

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<sup>72</sup> G. Deleuze and F. Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, cit., 1988; R. Van Brakel and L. Govaerts, *Exploring the Impact of Algorithmic Policing on Social Justice: Developing a Framework for Rhizomatic Harm in the Pre-Crime Society*, cit., 2025.

<sup>73</sup> S. Browne, *Dark Matters: On the Surveillance of Blackness*, Durham, NC, Duke University Press, 2015; O.H. Gandy, *Coming to terms with Chance: Engaging Rational Discrimination*, London, Routledge, 2009; D. Lyon (ed.), *Surveillance as Social Sorting. Privacy, Risk and Automated Discrimination*, London, Routledge, 2003; T. Monahan, *Editorial: Surveillance and Inequality*, in *Surveillance & Society*, vol. 5, n. 3, 2008, 217.

<sup>74</sup> S. Browne, *Dark Matters: On the Surveillance of*

correspond with the more panoptic processes that Giroux indicates, where surveillance is seen as a top-down mechanism of corporate control. Instead, surveillance practices are often fragmented and involve multiple actors with varying degrees of power and influence.<sup>81</sup> This implies that the motivations for the implementation of FRT can be very diverse and are not always about control, manipulation and making profit, this especially becomes clear when starting to look at real-world examples in other countries than the US and the UK and shows the need for incorporating the micro-level and empirical data in studies of normalisation and acculturation processes.<sup>82</sup>

Third, as Martin et al have argued surveillance always goes in tandem with resistance.<sup>83</sup> By including resistance in the analysis we can find many instances where FRT has been contested at sporting and cultural events. Also, important is to keep in mind that resistance can take many forms and resisting surveillance need not be an “organised affair” as becomes clear from empirical studies by Scott<sup>84</sup> and Gilliom.<sup>85</sup> Therefore, resistance might not always be visible or explicit. Specifically, looking for acts of resistance concerning FRT at cultural and sporting events a quick search already finds several examples. For instance, a group of US musicians launched a campaign to halt the technology’s use at live shows, which led to Live Nation halting plans to use FRT at music festivals.<sup>86</sup> Similarly, the football club RWD Molenbeek, mentioned earlier, stopped using FRT after it became clear that

supporters did not like it.<sup>87</sup> During a Mets game in New York in August 2024, fans and privacy advocates protested against the use of facial recognition ticketing systems. They argued that such technologies could lead to increased surveillance and discrimination.<sup>88</sup>

In general, research that explores attitudes towards surveillance does not provide a clear picture that people are giving up on privacy. Although some researchers show that young people seem to be more acceptant towards surveillance, such as research conducted by the Cato institute indicates that young people favours the government installing surveillance cameras in their homes<sup>89</sup> others show an opposite picture. For instance, recent online survey research conducted in Canada with people attending music festivals showed that a negative attitude towards surveillance and police was common across demographic groups but stronger in males and that 87% of our participants felt that the ethos of a festival best creates a feeling of safety, while surveillance changes the nature of these public spaces, whereby 56% of our respondents felt it creates a bad vibe and 44% said it causes anxiety.<sup>90</sup> Research on privacy attitudes of youth also shows a more nuanced picture where young people.<sup>91</sup> Questions do arise about reliability with such survey research concerning representation in the sample, as representatives of marginalised communities might not be sufficiently included.

<sup>81</sup> H. Giroux, *Totalitarian Paranoia in the Post-Orwellian Surveillance State*, cit.

<sup>82</sup> I make a similar argument together with my co-author in a previous publication about the drivers behind the use of smart surveillance in smart cities. L. Melgaço and R. Van Brakel, *Smart Cities as Surveillance Theatre*, in *Surveillance & Society*, vol.19, n. 2, 2021, 244.

<sup>83</sup> A.K. Martin, R. Van Brakel. and D.J. Bernhard, *Understanding Resistance to Digital Surveillance: Towards a Multidisciplinary Multi-actor Framework*, in *Surveillance & Society*, vol. 6, n. 3, 2009, 213.

<sup>84</sup> J.C. Scott, *Resistance without Protest and without Organization: Peasant Opposition to the Islamic Zakat and the Christian Tithes*, in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 29, n. 3, 1987, 417.

<sup>85</sup> J. Gilliom, *Overseers of the Poor: Surveillance, Resistance, and the Limits of Privacy*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2001.

<sup>86</sup> J. Rose, *Musicians Demand Ticketmaster Ban Facial Recognition at Concerts*, in *Vice*, 9 September 2019, [www.vice.com/en/article/musicians-demand-ticketmaster-ban-facial-recognition-at-concerts](http://www.vice.com/en/article/musicians-demand-ticketmaster-ban-facial-recognition-at-concerts).

<sup>87</sup> S. Ooghe, *Gezichtsherkenning Zit Straks Overal: ‘Zonder Het Te Beseffen Geef Je Een Grondrecht Op. Dat Is Een Bewuste Strategie Van Politici’* in *De Morgen*, 5 May 2022, [www.demorgen.be/nieuws/gezichtsherkenning-zit-straks-overal-zonder-het-te-beseffen-geef-je-een-grondrecht-op-dat-is-een-bewuste-strategie-van-politici~b3c28343](http://www.demorgen.be/nieuws/gezichtsherkenning-zit-straks-overal-zonder-het-te-beseffen-geef-je-een-grondrecht-op-dat-is-een-bewuste-strategie-van-politici~b3c28343).

<sup>88</sup> S. O’Brian, *Protesters Gather at Citi Field for Rally Against Use of Facial Recognition Technology at the Stadium*, in *QNS*, 22 August 2024, <https://qns.com/2024/08/citi-field-protest-facial-recognition>.

<sup>89</sup> E. Ekins and J. Gigi, *Nearly a Third of Gen Z Favors the Government Installing Surveillance Cameras in Homes*, *Cato Institute*, 2023, [www.cato.org/blog/nearly-third-gen-z-favors-home-government-surveillance-came-ras-1](http://www.cato.org/blog/nearly-third-gen-z-favors-home-government-surveillance-came-ras-1).

<sup>90</sup> K.C Hoover et al, *Surveillance, Trust, and Policing at Music Festivals*, cit.

<sup>91</sup> V. Steeves, S. McAleese and K. Brisson-Boivin, *Young Canadians in a Wireless World, Phase IV: Talking to Youth and Parents About Online Resiliency*, in *MediaSmarts*, Ottawa, 2020; S. Livingstone, R. Nandagiri, and M. Stoilova, *Digital by Default: Children’s Capacity to Understand and Manage Online Data and Privacy*, in *Media and Communication*, vol. 8, n. 4, 2020, 197.

Based on the above analysis I argue that it is more likely that processes of acculturation go in tandem with resistance and unintentional control. Young people can simultaneously be in processes of acculturation to certain types of surveillance (social media) while showing resistance to other types (facial recognition), which in turn is dependent on the social reality youth inhabit. A rhizomatic approach shows how children are always relational and intersectional and therefore have different experiences with surveillance depending on their intersecting identities as I argued above. As acculturation is shaping practices and creating new attitudes to surveillance, processes of acculturation need to be taken up when studying FRT, its impact and how it should be governed. Increasingly the culture of surveillance is entrenched in legislation and policy both as the result of intentional and unintentional desires. The AI act, for instance, as I discussed above, apart from protecting fundamental rights is at the same time enabling more surveillance such as FRT. In addition, when shifting the analytic gaze to children it becomes clear that the AI act does not address children at all regarding potential harms of algorithmic surveillance. Finally, the impact of acculturation and normalisation on governance should be addressed together with the impact on youth. The risk of “surveillance inertia”, which is creeping into governance as norms get set and practices and tools become entrenched<sup>92</sup> needs to be taken seriously as this leads to surveillance technologies such as FRT increasingly being placed beyond inspection, reflection, contestation.<sup>93</sup>

## **5. Conclusion**

The aim of this article was to explore the impact of the acceleration of and acculturation to the use of facial recognition technologies at sporting and cultural events on youth. From the overview given it has become clear that the use of FRT at these events is accelerating and that new regulation such as the European AI act is paving the way for even more use of FRT at sporting and cultural events. I argued that ‘grand’ theories of acculturation and normalisation are too limited to understand the

full nuanced picture of the impact on youth and that a rhizomatic approach helps to shine light on processes of resistance, dispersed power relations and the necessity to take seriously the socio-technical situatedness of surveillance and its relational subjects such as youth. Future research is needed that explores more in depth how people and especially to what extent children and young people and minority groups are influenced by acculturation processes and their lived experiences of FRT. Currently, these voices are often missing in research and policy discussions about FRT.

<sup>92</sup> W. Hartzog, *Privacy's Blueprint: The Battle to Control the Design of New Technologies*, Boston, MA, Harvard University Press, 2018.

<sup>93</sup> B. Goold, I. Loader and A. Thumala, *The Banality of Security: The Curious Case of Surveillance Cameras*, in *British Journal of Criminology*, cit., 2013.

