The International Journal of Press/Politics
1–23

DOI: 10.1177/19401612251370924
journals.sagepub.com/home/hij
Sage

New/s Gatekeepers: The Impact of Social Media Algorithms on Arab TV News Coverage

Alyaa Anter[1] and Nermeen Ibrahim[2]

Abstract

Drawing on gatekeeping theory and platform governance, this study examined Arab journalists' perspectives on news gatekeeping via social media, the challenges they faced when covering politically sensitive events, and the strategies they employed to address those challenges. A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining in-depth interviews with twenty-four Arab multimedia journalists, social media specialists, and managers, along with an online survey of 171 Arab journalists from four Arab countries. The results revealed that the participants perceived algorithms as powerful intermediaries that considerably influenced their professional practices and news values on social media. They reported their experiences of shadow banning and content removal, particularly when reporting on Arab political issues such as the Palestinian issue. Journalists have reported that they must either adapt to the algorithmic dynamics or employ strategies to circumvent the algorithmic restrictions on Arab news coverage. This study underscores the need for greater transparency in algorithmic curation to ensure the fair representation of diverse voices in political news coverage.

Keywords

algorithmic gatekeeping, platform governance, Arab journalists, algorithmic transparency, algorithmic bias

[1]College of Mass Communication, Ajman University, United Arab Emirates
[2]Faculty of Mass Communication, Ahram Canadian University, Egypt

Corresponding Author:
Alyaa Anter, College of Mass Communication, Ajman University, P.O.BOX:346 AJMAN, United Arab Emirates.
Email: a.anter@ajman.ac.ae

Introduction

Social media platforms have emerged as dominant gatekeepers that filter, prioritize, and moderate news through algorithmic systems. Their algorithms, which are driven by machine learning, personalize news feeds to maximize user engagement and retention. However, their influence raises concerns about bias, misinformation, centralization of information control, and the shaping of public conversations (Martin 2019; Revigliol and Agosti 2020). Algorithmic gatekeeping and platform governance are inherently interconnected, shaping how information is distributed, prioritized, and controlled online. Governance policies establish regulatory guidelines; however, the algorithms decide the content that is amplified, marginalized, or entirely removed. Although journalists, users, and activists are considered the primary news gatekeepers on social media, platforms act as centralized algorithm-driven gatekeepers. This dynamic consolidates the power of private technology companies, whose decisions can reinforce biases, fuel misinformation, and shape political and social discourse in ways that may not align with democratic values.

This study focused on the specific challenges that Arab journalists face in navigating the algorithmic curation of news, particularly when reporting on politically charged Middle Eastern events. By examining their experiences and strategies in counteracting the algorithmic moderation systems, this study contributes to the discourse on algorithmic gatekeeping and digital journalistic practices.

While prior research has examined how algorithms affect users by exploring phenomena, such as filter bubbles, echo chambers, algorithmic news selection, and trust in news recommender systems (Blassnig et al. 2024; Lim and Kim 2024; Neyazi et al. 2023; Rader and Gray 2015; Scheffauer et al. 2024), few studies have addressed how journalists perceive and respond to algorithmic influence. Research on the journalists' perspectives of the algorithmic moderation of political news and related concerns about fairness, bias, and transparency is limited (Bucher 2018). This study sought to address this gap by examining the Arab journalists' perceptions of algorithmic gatekeeping, their satisfaction level with algorithmic curation, and the strategies that they adopt to overcome the challenges in reporting politically sensitive news. The findings offer insight into algorithmic curation, challenges in reporting Arab issues, and strategies for amplifying and activating Arab narratives. These findings contribute to the discussions on platform governance, mitigating biases, and fostering fair representation in Arab news coverage.

Literature Review

Gatekeepers of Social Media News

The classic gatekeeping theory explores how decision-makers control the flow of information and shape public perceptions by selecting, timing, and organizing the content. However, it is no longer adequate to describe news dissemination in the digital age, where users play an influential role (Meraz and Papacharissi 2013; Shoemaker

2020; Wallace 2018). Concepts, such as networked and algorithmic gatekeeping, are now used to describe these disruptions. The former prioritizes user engagement and affects content visibility (Karlsson et al. 2022; Meraz and Papacharissi 2013), whereas the latter emphasizes the role of algorithms as dominant gatekeepers, thereby affecting both the journalists' and the users' interactions on social media (Bucher 2018; van Dalen 2023). Researchers have highlighted the role of new gatekeepers in social media news. Wallace (2018) proposed a digital gatekeeping model that identified journalists, individuals, strategic professionals, and algorithms as the key players. Algorithms function within centralized systems, granting platforms substantial control over content visibility and dissemination (Wallace 2018). Karlsson et al. (2022) identified three main gatekeepers in online news: news media (journalists/editors), social actors (users), and platform algorithms that prioritize engagement to maximize advertising revenue. Each gatekeeper follows a distinct logic that shapes the public information flow (Karlsson et al. 2022). Russell (2019) noted that Silicon Valley platforms now act as intermediaries, controlling news distribution through algorithms.

Gatekeeper interactions influence the journalists' agendas and disrupt the classic gatekeeping models. Makady et al. (2022) highlighted that audience interaction demonstrates the power of audience gatekeeping in an algorithmic news ecosystem and the power dynamics between content creators and consumers. Networked gatekeeping theory posits that politically active users blend agenda-driven interactions with journalists to shape their narratives (Xu and Feng 2014). A holistic view emphasizes understanding gatekeeper interactions and their collective impact on information flows (Shoemaker 2020). van Dalen (2023) explored how social media algorithms affect content diversity and misinformation by advocating for trustworthy algorithms and literacy training to support democracy. News gatekeeping must consider the influence of major platforms, such as Facebook, Google, Twitter, and YouTube, as "supra-gatekeepers" (Shoemaker 2020).

No prior studies have explored the evolving news gatekeeping theory from the perspective of Arab journalists' social media practices, particularly in relation to sensitive political conflicts. Although studies have identified the three main types of digital gatekeepers, their interactions in terms of the Arab journalists' environments remain underexplored.

Platform Governance: The Politics of Algorithmic Moderation

Algorithmic gatekeeping is intertwined with social media governance policies, which use an opaque algorithmic system for content moderation on social media. In networked gatekeeping, platforms are the giant gatekeepers that control news publishing and visibility politics. Although governance politics should consider the public interest, they occasionally operate at the cost of free speech and social equality. Klonick (2017) argued that social media companies now function as the "new governors" of public discourse, creating and enforcing rules that moderate and govern online speech. Consequently, platforms enforce governance through punitive measures, such as suspension, removal, and shadow bans, which reflect uneven governance (Duffy and

Meisner 2022). Gorwa (2019) differentiated the "governance of platforms" that focuses on the internal mechanisms through which the platforms regulate user behavior from the "governance of platform companies" that focuses on the external regulatory and political frameworks that govern the platforms' corporate entities. van Dijck (2021) used the metaphor of a tree to illustrate platform ecosystems as layered structures that work together to sustain digital governance. It emphasizes how power is concentrated in the key platforms that control the data flow and shape the dynamics across sectors.

In January 2018, Facebook revised its algorithms to prioritize posts from friends over news content. Similarly, YouTube's recommendation algorithms favor entertainment over news, revealing the biases in the personalized feeds (Huang and Yang 2024). Algorithmic opacity challenges the users, fuels shadow-banning concerns, and highlights the tensions around hidden moderation (Savolainen 2022). For example, Meta has been criticized for censoring Palestinian voices through an algorithmic bias (Human Rights Watch 2023: 3).

During the Arab Spring, Twitter's algorithms enabled networked gatekeeping, allowing both elite and nonelite actors to shape the information flow (Meraz and Papacharissi 2013). By contrast, the politics of platforms have changed, as both small and large news outlets have experienced declines in the Facebook referral traffic after the 2018 algorithm change (Bailo et al. 2021).

The shift toward algorithmic gatekeeping on social media represents a significant change in how the news is curated and disseminated. Traditional gatekeeping is rooted in journalistic values, whereas algorithmic gatekeeping prioritizes engagement and platform-specific logic, posing challenges for news organizations in maintaining editorial control and journalistic integrity (Bucher 2018; Napoli 2019; Tandoc and Vos 2015).

Social media algorithms perform editorial roles, influencing the visibility of the news by prioritizing engaging content over newsworthiness or accuracy (Presuel and Sierra 2019). Journalism adapts to algorithmic control by producing emotion-evoking and shareable content (Bailo et al. 2021). However, these algorithmic pressures can often lead news organizations to prioritize sensational content, compelling them to adjust their practices in response to the algorithms by reshaping the practices, workflows, and audience relationships (Bucher 2018).

Kuznetsova and Makhortykh (2023) demonstrated that Facebook's algorithms reduced exposure to Russia Today's (RT) anti-Biden propaganda content during the 2020 election by prioritizing reputable US sources in the search results. However, the news feeds continued to favor RT content based on the user engagement. Legacy news organizations in European countries invest in social media, thereby balancing the risks and the rewards while adapting to the algorithm changes and platform uncertainties to achieve editorial and commercial goals (Cornia et al. 2018). Therefore, the media coverage of social media algorithms is predominantly negative, focusing on the risks related to political influence, opinion formation, and data protection (Saurwein et al. 2023). Srivastava (2023) concluded that states and Big Tech engage in complex

relationships, including interdependence (e.g., state reliance on corporate algorithms), circumvention (e.g., Big Tech resisting the state overreach), and curtailment (e.g., state regulation of Big Tech).

Algorithmic Moderation of the Arab Political News Coverage

While Arab news organizations prioritize the Arab regional issues, they face major barriers to disseminating Arab narratives, particularly in politically charged contexts. This situation has raised concerns about the concentration of power in digital spaces and the impact of platforms on activism (Abokhodair et al. 2024). Bias involving artificial intelligence (AI) content moderation in Arabic is a technical and political issue that significantly affects the inconsistent moderation of Arab human rights activism on Facebook (Elswah 2024).

Some studies have shown that Arab activists and users encounter algorithmic political content moderation, including the removal of activists' content while allowing harmful or terror-related material (Elswah 2024), content restriction, shadow banning, content deletion, and account suspension (Abokhodair et al. 2024). Human Rights Watch identified six political censorship patterns between 2021 and 2023, including postremoval, account suspension, and shadow banning, which affected the nonviolent content supporting Palestine. These actions tend to restrict the engagement and visibility without notifying the users (Human Rights Watch 2023). The situation faced by the Arab journalists is similar to that of the activists. Fahmy et al. (2024) highlighted that algorithmic censorship on social media has hindered the Palestinian journalists' ability to report from conflict zones. Despite employing various strategies to circumvent these restrictions, the limitations imposed by digital platforms are a major barrier (Fahmy et al. 2024). A tech-savvy approach can help journalists navigate algorithmic biases and ensure that their voices are globally heard (Mohydin 2023).

Activists use algorithms to achieve their political goals through amplification (boosting visibility), evasion (bypassing moderation), and hijacking (disrupting uses; Treré and Bonini 2024). Creators employ various strategies to maintain visibility, including self-censorship, experimentation, and circumvention of platform policing. However, some become resigned to the unpredictability of the algorithms, feeling frustrated and overwhelmed (Duffy and Meisner 2022). Journalists' responses to algorithmic curation also appear in negative media coverage, which places pressure on the platforms to make changes to maintain their legitimacy and user trust (Marchal et al. 2024).

Similarly, journalists face challenges in promoting political narratives and increasing their visibility on social media. To counter the algorithmic censorship, news organizations may adopt activist strategies. Although networked gatekeeping involves multiple actors, the distribution of power among them is unequal. Algorithms weaken the roles of journalists and users and hinder the flow of political content, thus requiring the journalists' and users to adopt evolving strategies to overcome these barriers.

Ethical Considerations in Algorithmic Journalism

Unlike traditional media, social media platforms lack embedded public-interest principles in their design and operation, which could affect their role in supporting democratic processes (Napoli 2015). Algorithmic gatekeeping and platform governance shape the online information flow, with the governance-setting guidelines that the algorithms enforce. This concentrates the power in private tech firms, which often lack transparency. Algorithmic decisions can raise concerns regarding fairness, accountability, and the need for regulation.

Researchers have emphasized the consideration of ethical standards in algorithmic journalism. Presuel and Sierra (2019) argued that social media platforms should embrace ethical responsibilities, such as traditional media, promoting freedom of expression, transparency, and the public's right to information.

Transparency: Researchers have called for greater transparency in social media algorithms. Singh et al. (2020) emphasized the need for transparency throughout the software development lifecycle from the data collection to the algorithmic decision-making. Similarly, Donghee et al. (2022) advocated transparency in social media algorithms and data practices, arguing that user trust in algorithmic news increases when data usage and recommendation processes are clear. Reviglio and Agosti (2020) proposed "algorithmic sovereignty," promoting user control over algorithms while recognizing that complete transparency may be both impractical and undesirable. Gillespie (2019) cautioned that complete transparency risks system manipulation and influences the user behavior. Suzor et al. (2019) emphasized the importance of platforms that provide clear information regarding the users' decisions. Similarly, Jhaver et al. (2019) demonstrated that explanations for content removal could educate the users about the community norms and foster more constructive participation.

Fairness: Researchers stress that algorithms are nonneutral and can reinforce societal bias. Martin (2019) argued that developers infuse their values into algorithms, leading to biased outcomes that can strengthen the existing social inequalities. Regarding fairness in algorithmic systems, Huang et al. (2023) called for mechanisms that address both technical issues and social outcomes. Similarly, Kordzadeh and Ghasemaghaei (2021) emphasized that algorithmic bias shapes fairness perceptions and requires better design and regulations. However, platforms tend to prioritize profit over fairness (Kasy 2024). This trend prioritizes commercial agendas over free discourse; however, resistance is possible through human linguistic complexity, alternative platforms, and legal rights (Cobbe 2021).

The role of AI in amplifying biases and disinformation is a major concern. Shin et al. (2022a, 2022b) questioned the notion that AI personalization resolves ethical challenges, highlighting the importance of understanding the sociotechnical complexities of the algorithmic systems. Similarly, Hermann (2022) cautioned against issues, such as echo chambers, selective exposure, and privacy risks in AI-driven personalization, calling for transparency and accountability to mitigate societal bias.

Research Questions

Building on the above theoretical discussions of networked and algorithmic gatekeeping; platform governance; the algorithmic moderation of Arab political news; and ethical considerations of fairness, transparency, and accountability, this study aimed to address the following:

First, in-depth qualitative interviews were conducted to address the following research questions:

RQ1: How do Arab journalists perceive and experience algorithmic moderation and the role of new gatekeepers in shaping political news coverage on social media platforms?

RQ2: Which ethical considerations, such as fairness, transparency, and bias, do journalists associate with algorithmic content moderation in the context of Arab political reporting?

Second, the online survey was designed to address the following research questions:

RQ3: Which strategies do journalists use to navigate or counteract algorithmic restrictions when covering politically sensitive topics?

RQ4: How satisfied are journalists with the algorithmic curation of Arab political news, both in general and across different social media platforms?

Methods

This study employed a mixed-methods approach that integrated in-depth qualitative interviews with a quantitative survey. This approach allowed us to formulate survey questions based on insights from semistructured interviews with social media journalists working in Arab TV news channels, complemented by a literature review.

Qualitative Approach

Semistructured in-depth interviews were conducted in Arabic via Zoom and later translated into English for the data analysis. We recruited twenty-four participants, including the heads of social media departments, social media news editors, specialists, and TV operators, from Arab TV news channels and platforms with social media accounts. The participants were selected using snowball sampling. Data saturation was reached after twenty-four interviews, as no new themes or insights emerged.

The sample selection captured diverse experiences across different models and covered four Arab countries: Egypt, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Saudi Arabia,

and Qatar. The qualitative study sample encompassed Arab news platforms and channels with diverse ownership models.

1. *Privately owned channels*: ELQahira Elekhbarea and CBC Extra News; TV channels owned by United Media Services (UMS), broadcasting from Egypt; Al Ghad: news channel broadcasting from Egypt and London with Emirati funding; Sada El Balad: TV channel and news website owned by an Egyptian businessman, operating from Egypt; Al Sharq: Saudi news channel and portal launched in 2020 through a television channel and a diverse range of digital news platforms (headquartered in Riyadh with offices and studios in Egypt and the UAE); and Al Hadath Alyoum: TV channel owned by an Egyptian businessman.
2. *State-funded national channels*: Al Jazeera: a Qatari news television network, based in Doha and founded by Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani in 1996; and the Nile News Channel, an Egyptian news television channel launched in 1998.
3. *Privately owned news platforms*: Al Watan, an Egyptian news portal published by Al-Mustaqbal Publishing, Distribution, and Journalism Company, a subsidiary of UMS and established in 2012; and Nabd, an Arabic news platform founded in 2012 and headquartered in Dubai, with offices in various Arab capitals.

These channels engage with various social media platforms and provide valuable insight into how Arab news organizations navigate algorithms. Participants had a minimum of four years of experience in social TV, averaging twelve years, with experience ranging from four to twenty-six years. All the participants were highly educated and held at least a bachelor's degree, with 40 percent specializing in mass communication. The participants were predominantly male (twenty-one males and three females), reflecting the gender composition of social media departments. Their ages ranged from twenty-six to forty-six years.

Journalists were recruited through the authors' network and volunteered without expecting any compensation. To uphold both accuracy and confidentiality, their identities were anonymized, allowing them to freely share their professional experiences under this assurance. Oral consent was obtained from all the participants. This study was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the Ajman University.

The in-depth interviews, conducted between August 2 and September 30, 2024, lasted from forty-five to sixty minutes and were manually recorded, transcribed, and analyzed for recurring themes. A mixed inductive and deductive thematic analysis approach was employed, which combined the data- and theory-driven methods. This hybrid approach enabled the exploration of emerging themes while testing the existing theories. The participants were familiarized with the key terms and phrases to facilitate the development of the resonant codes and themes. The primary themes identified included the algorithmic curation of news on social media, algorithms as new gatekeepers, politicization of algorithms in Arab news, ethical considerations, and algorithmic adaptation versus resistance tactics.

Quantitative Approach

An online survey was conducted using snowball sampling, a nonprobability sampling technique in which the existing participants help recruit additional participants from their network. This approach is considered appropriate for hard-to-access populations, such as journalists, when researching sensitive topics or during periods of heightened political tension (Atkinson and Flint 2001). Recruitment challenges the participants' preoccupation with covering escalating events in Gaza, Lebanon, and Syria and, for some, a lack of familiarity with the survey topic. The survey was completed by 171 participants from eleven nationalities: Egyptian, Emirati, Syrian, Palestinian, Iraqi, Moroccan, Algerian, Tunisian, Jordanian, Lebanese, and Yemeni. We relied on an online survey sent to our network and posted it on the journalists' WhatsApp groups. The survey was conducted from October 1 to December 30, 2024. It comprised seven sections designed to assess various aspects of social media algorithms and their impact on Arab news coverage.

1. *Algorithms' power*: Six statements assessed the journalists' perceptions of the influence of algorithms on news visibility and distribution (Supplemental Table S1).
2. *Audience's power*: Five statements explored how the journalists perceived the audience's role in influencing algorithmic prioritization (Supplemental Table S1).
3. *Journalists' power*: Four statements regarding the journalists' perceived ability to influence news distribution through algorithms (Supplemental Table S1).
4. *Fairness of representation*: Four statements, including one negative one, measured the perceptions of fairness in algorithmic content prioritization, especially concerning Arab issues (Supplemental Table S2).
5. *Perceived bias*: Three statements (including one negative one) addressed concerns about algorithmic bias in filtering and prioritizing Arab news content (Supplemental Table S2).
6. *Perceived transparency*: Three statements, including two negative ones, evaluated the perceptions of transparency in social media algorithms (Supplemental Table S2).
7. *Satisfaction with algorithmic curation*: This scale measured the journalists' satisfaction with the algorithmic curation of Arab news coverage on social media platforms in general and across platforms (Supplemental Tables S3 and S4).

Participants rated their agreement on a scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). For the seventh section, the study used a five-point scale with options ranging from "Very Dissatisfied" to "Very Satisfied." The reliability of the scale was confirmed using Cronbach's alpha values, which ranged from 0.709 to 0.912, indicating internal consistency. The correlation coefficients for the statements within the scales ranged from 0.297 to 0.776, showing positive correlations across all the scales. All significance values were below 0.05, confirming the measurement validity and accuracy.

Online Survey Sample Characteristics

SPSS 26 was used to extract the descriptive statistics. The survey sample consisted of 112 males (65.5 percent) and 59 females (34.5 percent). The age distribution was as follows: twenty-two to thirty-five years: 36 percent, thirty-six to forty-five years: 39 percent, forty-six to sixty years: 22 percent, and above sixty years: 2 percent.

Regarding the professional experience, 64 percent had more than ten years of experience, 19 percent had one to five years, 15 percent had five to ten years, and 2 percent had less than one year of experience. Job roles included news editor (40 percent), news anchor (14 percent), director/producer (12 percent), social media specialist (9 percent), multimedia journalist (8 percent), and news reporter (7 percent).

The sample comprised journalists working across news channels and platforms. Representation included Arab news channels and platforms owned by four Arab countries: Egypt, UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar, including the Egyptian Television News Sector (12.3 percent), Al-Qahera Al Ekhbarea and Al-Jazeera (8.2 percent each), Al-Arabiya (7.6 percent), CBC Extra News (6.4 percent), Telegraph Egypt (5.8 percent), Al-Ghad and Al-Bawaba News (4.7 percent each), and other Arab news channels and platforms, including Al-Sharq, Sky News Arabia, Sada El-Balad, Al Youm Al Sabea, and Al Watan. The sample also included journalists working in international news channels broadcasting in Arabic (6.4 percent), namely BBC Arabic, Al-Hurra, RT, and CNN Arabic. This diverse sample highlights the broad scope of the media environments represented in this study.

Results and Discussion

In-depth interviews provided a rich, qualitative exploration of how algorithms in social media affect the dissemination and visibility of news and how Arab news channels and platforms interact with the content, particularly regarding conflicts and political issues.

Journalists' Perceptions of the Algorithmic Curation and Its Impact on Arabic Content

Arab news journalists perceive algorithmic curation as a powerful force influencing the visibility and distribution of news, offering benefits, such as audience targeting. However, challenges include the restricted freedom of expression, particularly on sensitive topics, as platforms limit the reach of the content. This selective suppression raises concerns about media freedom and the diversity of opinions in the digital space. For example, P3 revealed that, "Algorithms can restrict the news visibility and freedom of expression, especially on sensitive issues, such as the Palestinian–Israeli conflict."

The participants also raised concerns about social media algorithms misinterpreting Arabic content, resulting in unjustified restrictions on sensitive topics. They noted that

AI's reliance on keyword recognition often fails to grasp nuanced meanings, leading to unintended penalties. This reflects the broader challenges of AI systems that lack a contextual understanding of language and images, as highlighted by Elswah (2024), who framed AI moderation in Arabic as both a technical and a political issue. This concern was shared by P3: "AI algorithms often flag specific words without context, such as banning a cooking video for saying 'burn'." Similarly, P4 shared, "Instagram's algorithms flag photos without any contextual awareness." These examples reflect the broader inadequacies of the algorithmic systems in processing nuanced language contexts and accurately interpreting images within Arab political and cultural contexts.

Journalists' Perceptions of the Power of New Gatekeepers

Several participants identified the evolving role of algorithms as powerful gatekeepers in the digital media landscape. They recognized that algorithms increasingly influence the visibility and distribution of the content, assuming a role once reserved for journalists and media institutions. This result is in line with that of Saurwein et al. (2023), which emphasized how algorithms influence news dissemination and consumption, thereby shaping the public perception and opinion formation. As one journalist noted, "Algorithms act as the new gatekeepers, restricting the content reach and imposing penalties" (P2).

However, not all the participants agreed with this characterization. Some argued that algorithms function differently from traditional gatekeepers, suggesting that access to audiences is not completely blocked but contingent on how the content is tailored. As P14 explained, "Algorithms are not mere gatekeepers; they are the gates themselves. Using the correct words, images, and keywords, you can unlock them to reach your audience."

The participants also highlighted how algorithms determine the type of content that is promoted or suppressed, which is often based on user engagement, reinforcing platform-driven rather than editorial decisions. This aligns with the finding of Karlsson et al. (2022), who described algorithms as gatekeepers designed to amplify content that maximizes the audience engagement and, consequently, the advertising revenue. "Social media algorithms are biased by audience preferences" (P14), reflecting the dominance of engagement-driven algorithmic logic.

Serious News Content Versus Popular Content

Participants observed that many social media platforms deemphasize serious news content in favor of lighter and more engaging materials, as they focus on maximizing the user engagement and advertising revenue. This shift has often reinforced entertainment and viral content at the expense of substantive journalism. This trend runs counter to the fundamental editorial values of news organizations that focus on accurate and important news. Journalists have expressed frustration that engagement-focused metrics favor viral content over meaningful reporting. This is consistent with the findings of Bailo et al. (2021) that videos are shareable and evoke emotion-driven engagement

metrics. Saurwein et al. (2023) argued that social media disrupts the economic models of journalism as it competes for advertising revenue and attention. Similarly, Presuel and Sierra (2019) highlighted how algorithms favor entertaining content over news accuracy.

As one participant remarked, "News platforms tend to prioritize entertainment and sports to boost the traffic, influencing the editorial policies and reducing the political news coverage" (P9).

Algorithmic Profit Logic and the Marginalization of Sensitive Political Content

Participants also emphasized that algorithms in social media have influenced news values, mainly due to their profit-driven nature. They were aware that algorithmic curation was more in line with platform profitability than the journalistic values of providing important, fact-based content. Bucher (2018) emphasized that algorithms reshape journalistic norms and strike a balance between objectivity and algorithmic demands. Profit-driven platforms prioritize profitability over fairness (Kasy 2024), as (P16) explained: "Algorithms encourage content with high engagement, such as emotionally charged stories. More serious and detailed news stories get less visibility."

This dynamic becomes particularly challenging regarding politically sensitive and controversial issues in the Arab world. Participants frequently reported facing algorithmic constraints when covering Arab political issues. The algorithms not only influence the content that is promoted but also penalize or limit the reach of the posts that do not align with the platform's policies or profitability metrics. As P9 expressed, "We adjust the content to align with the algorithm preferences to maintain rankings and avoid penalties." While some forms of resistance are possible, such as using linguistic nuances, alternative platforms, or legal advocacy (Cobbe 2021), the current system poses clear challenges to political journalism in the digital age.

Conflict Between Editorial Policies of News Institutions and Algorithms of Social Media Platforms

The qualitative analysis revealed a recurring theme of conflict between the journalists' editorial guidelines and the social media algorithms. While editorial guidelines prioritize accuracy and balance, algorithms focus on user engagement and platform guidelines, which may not align with journalistic values. This discrepancy can result in content suppression, particularly those related to sensitive topics. The findings from the online survey reinforced the qualitative insights into the journalists' perceptions of social media platforms as powerful news gatekeepers. As shown in Supplemental Table S1, the journalists rated the influence of the algorithms (algorithm power: $M=4.02$, standard deviation [SD]$=0.69$) higher than that of the audiences (audience power: $M=3.94$, $SD=0.78$) and journalists (journalists: $M=3.91$, $SD=0.75$), reflecting a perceived power hierarchy in networked gatekeeping, as illustrated in Figure 1.

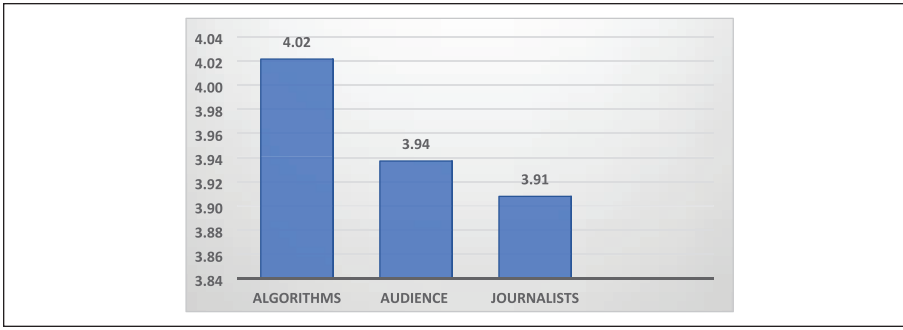

Figure 1. Impact of the news gatekeepers ($N = 174$).

Journalists have reported that the key players control the visibility of the news on social media platforms and influence the algorithmic moderation systems. This circular process is based on algorithms that prioritize the visibility of content with the most significant audience engagement. Therefore, journalists seek to increase audience engagement to boost the visibility of their content. However, this may not always be the case, as it differs for controversial political issues. Qualitative findings show that algorithmic moderation has limited the visibility of news about the Gaza conflict, highlighting the political governance embedded in platform algorithms.

Gorwa et al. (2020) argued that public pressure is an independent mechanism driving policy changes irrespective of the company revenue. Furthermore, the findings of Marchal et al.'s (2024) study underscore the role of public and media pressure in influencing the governance decisions of powerful social media platforms. However, Arab political narratives are restricted from reaching the public. Arab journalists and users on an equal footing cannot compel social media platforms to change their algorithmic moderation policies. Therefore, technical and political challenges to algorithmic content moderation in platform governance regarding opacity, accountability, and fairness exist (Gorwa et al. 2020).

Ethical Considerations of the Algorithms: Fairness and Transparency

Participants expressed serious concerns about the fairness and transparency of the algorithmic systems used by the social media platforms.

Fairness: Participants agreed that social media algorithms, especially on platforms, such as Facebook and Instagram, are biased and limit the visibility of messages that contradict platform policies, particularly on sensitive political topics, such as Arab issues. These platforms often suppress the content related to issues, such as the Palestinian conflict, by either labeling or penalizing it. Journalists have highlighted limitations, such as content discovery restrictions, shadow bans, sensitivity filters, and account restrictions. Algorithmic biases limit the reach of important news stories and suppress political narratives. This aligns with the findings of Abokhodair et al. (2024),

which revealed that keywords, such as "Palestine" and "Al-Aqsa" were flagged, leading to the downgrading or removal of the content. Similarly, Martin (2019) argued that algorithms reflect the biases of the developers and reinforce social inequalities, emphasizing that when the algorithms work as intended, it is not merely about malfunctions but also about ethical issues. As noted by P4, "Platforms have double standards, allowing posts about Ukrainian children but labeling content about Gaza's children as sensitive or supporting terrorism."

These qualitative findings were supported by the survey results. As shown in Supplemental Table S2, the respondents expressed low agreement with the statements about fairness in content representation (fairness of representation: $M = 2.34$, $SD = 0.79$) and moderate concern about the algorithmic bias (algorithmic curation: $M = 3$, $SD = 0.68$). These results confirm the journalists' general perception that social media platforms exhibit biased moderation practices, particularly concerning Arab political issues.

Transparency: Transparency was the main concern, with most participants noting that while social media platforms disclose the general guidelines about their algorithms, the information is often vague and inadequate. They argued that although platforms, such as Facebook and Instagram, offer some insight, their guidelines lack concrete details on how the rules are enforced or the content is curated. This aligns with Hermann (2022) who called for greater transparency and accountability in AI algorithms, which are often difficult to explain. As noted by P9, "Platform policies are not fully disclosed; we learn about them through experience." Similarly, P15 highlighted this dilemma, stating, "Social media platforms publicly announce certain content restrictions; however, the undisclosed restrictions, especially on political content, lack transparency."

Survey responses confirmed these concerns. As reported in Supplemental Table S2, the average rating for platform transparency was low (platform transparency: $M = 2.31$, $SD = 0.67$), with the respondents tending to agree with the negatively worded statements, indicating a broad perception of limited transparency in algorithmic operations.

These findings highlight how the lack of fairness and transparency in algorithmic moderation systems not only undermines journalistic values but also imposes practical challenges in day-to-day reporting, which is compounded by constant algorithmic changes. The participants highlighted the challenges posed by the constant changes in the algorithms on certain platforms that require constant monitoring and adaptation. They reported that social media platforms frequently change their algorithms without sufficient transparency, leaving news journalists in the dark. For example, P1 blamed the platforms: "The frequent evolution of the algorithms makes it hard to maintain content visibility." Consequently, journalists are left navigating an unstable and opaque media environment in which algorithmic systems function as both technical and political gatekeepers, raising critical questions about the fairness and transparency of these platforms.

Politicizing Algorithms: Algorithmic Moderation of Arab Sensitive Political Issues

In-depth interviews with Arab news journalists revealed the consensus that social media algorithms negatively affect the visibility of Arab political issues. Most participants viewed these algorithms as biased, thereby limiting the reach of the Arab perspective. Consequently, editorial policies are designed to circumvent the algorithmic barriers, reduce political coverage, and prompt creative strategies to ensure that critical stories reach the public. Participants agreed that algorithms suppress politically sensitive content, particularly controversial Arab topics, such as the Palestinian–Israeli conflict. Many reported that posts about Arab political issues on social media platforms were either removed or their visibility was reduced due to the social media platforms' policies. For example, P21 explained, "Algorithms biasedly restricted Palestinian content during the Gaza war by banning, blocking, or deleting it." Similarly, P13 stated that "Facebook and Instagram exhibit bias by reducing the reach of the content related to Palestinian issues while favoring the content supporting the opposing side." These findings reflect concerns about the selective amplification of certain political narratives while marginalizing the others.

The suppression of Arab political content directly affects how news organizations manage their editorial policies. Several participants confirmed that the algorithms interfered with the editorial decisions, forcing them to adapt to the policies or avoid certain topics. Some journalists customized the content to fit the algorithmic frameworks, such as changing the language or rephrasing the sensitive topics, whereas the others attempted to bypass the restrictions by splitting the keywords. However, many acknowledged that these efforts often have limited success, as platforms quickly adapt their algorithms to these tactics, making circumvention increasingly difficult.

The situation intensified after the escalation of events in Gaza on October 7, 2023. Participants reported a sharp decline in the visibility of Palestinian-related content and greater platform intervention. As P3 remarked, "After October 7, Facebook imposed stricter restrictions" while P9 shared "After October 7, posts about Palestine saw a sharp decline."

The field survey results supported these qualitative findings. As shown in Supplemental Table S3, most journalists expressed dissatisfaction with the algorithmic curation of Arab news ($M = 3.56$, $SD = 0.96$). Notably, 57 percent of the respondents reported being dissatisfied or very dissatisfied while only 11 percent indicated satisfaction, confirming that most respondents perceived the algorithmic handling of Arab news as challenging.

Platform Biases and the Ownership Factor

Participants also revealed that algorithmic behavior varies by platform and often reflects the political bias of the platform owners. Facebook and Instagram have been cited as amplifying certain narratives while suppressing the Arab perspectives. By

contrast, platforms, such as TikTok, X (formerly Twitter), and Telegram, were viewed as offering greater flexibility and fewer restrictions. This finding aligns with that of Abokhodair et al. (2024), who found that meta-platforms (Facebook and Instagram) exhibited a significant bias in moderating pro-Palestinian content while TikTok allowed more space for activism. As P11 observed, "Facebook and Instagram impose strict limitations on Palestinian content whereas X is more open; meanwhile, TikTok imposes minimal restrictions, and Telegram is more lenient regarding the political issues."

The perceptions of bias, low fairness, and transparency associated with dissatisfaction and the survey findings supported the qualitative results that revealed the journalists' dissatisfaction with the algorithmic curation of news on Arab issues across social media platforms. Supplemental Table S4 revealed widespread dissatisfaction with the algorithmic curation of Arab news on social media, with Facebook being the most criticized, followed by Instagram. This aligns with a qualitative study in which the participants noted that Meta platforms usually restrict the news on Arab issues.

Participants also highlighted the growing digital divide caused by algorithmic dynamics. Smaller news platforms, websites, and individual influencers are more affected by algorithmic restrictions. As P22 revealed, "Smaller news channels suffer more owing to the algorithmic policies compared with the larger channels." Larger outlets benefit from high audience engagement, which mitigates the algorithmic impact. They also have advanced technological systems and political influence; however, these advantages do not significantly affect the coverage of sensitive Arab topics, such as the Palestinian and Lebanese issues.

Navigating Algorithms: Adaption and Resistance

Most participants emphasized the importance of adapting to social media algorithms to maintain their presence and increase the reach of their news content to their target audience. As P4 expressed, "Social media platforms are similar to hotels where you must follow the rules to ensure a peaceful stay."

This analogy captures the essence of the precarious balance that journalists must strike between preserving editorial integrity and conforming to platform-specific algorithmic expectations.

Journalists have developed a range of adaptive strategies to cope with these constraints. One common approach involves modifying the language and presentation of the content to avoid triggering automated moderation systems. This often means avoiding specific politically sensitive terms or altering the phrasing to evade detection without compromising on the core message. Additionally, journalists focus on producing highly engaging content, recognizing that increased audience interaction not only improves visibility but also signals relevance to the platform's algorithm.

The strategic use of hashtags and keywords was another frequently used technique. Journalists can enhance their discoverability by aligning the content with trending topics or algorithmic cues. As P6 explained, "We try to customize our content and use

certain hashtags, keywords, and Search Engine Optimization to reach our audience." However, this process is not static. Participants noted the need to continuously monitor the changes in the algorithmic behavior, requiring regular adjustments to the strategy.

Another adaptation is platform diversification. To mitigate the risk of suppression on any single platform, many journalists deliberately distributed their content across multiple channels. Platforms, such as Telegram, X (formerly Twitter), and TikTok, were valued for offering more flexibility in dealing with politically sensitive topics. By expanding their digital footprint, journalists can reach broader and more diverse audiences while avoiding overreliance on more restrictive platforms, such as Facebook and Instagram.

However, adaptation was not the only response. Several journalists reported the development of resistance strategies aimed at actively bypassing the algorithmic filters. Rather than entirely submitting to the platform logic, they employed creative strategies to circumvent and bypass the algorithmic restrictions on Arab political issues.

A common tactic involved linguistic modifications, that is, breaking up politically sensitive words with symbols or spaces or converting the keywords into images to avoid textual detection. For instance, P12 mentioned that "we try to avoid banned words, such as 'Palestine' by splitting the words or using symbols in the place of letters." Moreover, P20 elaborated that "we use alternative terms, such as 'the Strip' for 'Gaza'."

Despite these efforts, many Arab journalists expressed frustration with their limited control over content dissemination due to stricter algorithmic controls on platforms, such as Facebook and Instagram, which continuously evolve, and the time that it takes to detect the circumvention strategies. This aligns with Fahmy et al.'s (2024) finding that algorithmic censorship hampers the Palestinian journalists' reporting from conflict zones, such as Gaza, despite attempts to circumvent the restrictions.

Limitations and Future Research

This study has several limitations that offer avenues for future research. First, snowball sampling may have led to a selection bias, limiting the diversity and representativeness of the participants. Second, the results may not be fully generalizable, as the study focused on journalists from Arab TV news channels and websites, which may have unique characteristics that may not represent the broader population of Arab journalists. Future research should examine the regional variations in the journalists' experiences with algorithmic moderation, particularly its impact on investigative reporting and sustainability of smaller, independent news outlets. Integrating perception-based insights with the computational analysis of platform algorithms will offer a more comprehensive picture of the gatekeeping dynamics.

Conclusion

This study examined the challenges that Arab journalists face in navigating algorithmic moderation systems, particularly when reporting on politically sensitive issues,

and offers a novel perspective on the imbalance in the power of news gatekeepers operating via social media. Specifically, the study specifically highlights how algorithmic systems dominate network policing, undermining the roles of journalists and audiences in news gatekeeping. Platforms' algorithms exert growing control over news flows and visibility (Saurwein et al. 2023). Social media's algorithmic moderation systems act as dominant gatekeepers, influencing editorial decisions, suppressing dissenting narratives, and disrupting the flow of information flow (Bucher 2018; Karlsson et al. 2022). Furthermore, social media platforms' opaque and biased algorithms pose challenge to editorial integrity through inconsistent enforcement, shadow banning, content removal, and prioritization of politically aligned content over serious journalism (Bailo et al. 2021; Presuel and Sierra 2019; Kasy 2024). Journalists are increasingly assessing and adapting to social media algorithms to navigate and influence the digital media landscape by modifying language, creating engaging content, using strategic hashtags, diversifying platforms, and staying updated on algorithm changes. They also employ circumvention tactics such as splitting keywords and converting text into images to bypass restrictions. Despite significant adjustments to their reporting and dissemination strategies, many journalists have expressed frustration with their limited control over navigating these algorithms that restrict Arab news visibility. This reflects the multifaceted nature of social media platform governance through Silicon Valley companies and the countries' political governments, which are behind the scenes and limit democratic governance that includes all the actors and stakeholders.

Arab journalists have emphasized the dominant role of algorithmic gatekeeping in political news, revealing a power imbalance between journalists, users, and algorithms. Both the qualitative and quantitative findings demonstrate that Arab journalists on TV news and social media platforms perceive bias in the representation of Arab issues and are dissatisfied with the fairness, transparency, and accuracy of their algorithmic curation. Furthermore, they advocate more transparency and fairness to ensure greater accountability. This study found widespread dissatisfaction among journalists with the algorithmic treatment of Arab news across platforms, with varying levels of censorship. The participants perceived Facebook and Instagram as enforcing stricter political restrictions, whereas X and TikTok were seen as relatively more permissive. Algorithms also operate differently depending on the size of the news outlet, with smaller outlets facing greater challenges than larger, more established organizations. Nevertheless, concerns about algorithmic interference in editorial decisions were shared by all participants. Political content is often subject to inconsistent enforcement (Duffy and Meisner 2022), a situation further complicated by its intersection with the broader "governance of platform companies" (Gorwa 2019: 9). This convergence of platforms' policies and geopolitical interests politicizes algorithmic moderation of news and restricts the visibility of Arab political content. This study underscores the need to prioritize transparent, accountable, and equitable algorithmic governance that mitigates bias, supports diverse representation, and empowers journalists to uphold their editorial standards in the evolving digital news ecosystem.

Acknowledgments

We are grateful to the volunteer journalists who participated in the in-depth interviews and questionnaire. We also extend our sincere thanks to the editorial board and the three anonymous reviewers for their valuable feedback.

ORCID iDs

Alyaa Anter https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7600-7864
Nermeen Ibrahim https://orcid.org/0009-0006-1107-7072

Ethical Considerations

We got the approval of Ajman University Research Ethics Committee.

Funding

The authors received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Data Availability

The data supporting the findings of this study can be requested from the corresponding author.

Supplemental Material

Supplemental material for this article is available online.

References

Abokhodair, Norah, Yarden Skop, Sarah Rüller, Konstantin Aal, and Houda Elmimouni. 2024. "Opaque Algorithms, Transparent Biases: Automated Content Moderation during the Sheikh Jarrah Crisis." *First Monday* 29, no. 4: 1–25. https://doi.org/10.5210/fm.v29i4.13620.

Atkinson, Rowland, and Flint, John. 2001. "Accessing Hidden and Hard-to-Reach Populations: Snowball Research Strategies." *Social Research Update* 33, no. 1: 1–4.

Bailo, Francesco, James Meese, and Edward Hurcombe. 2021. "The Institutional Impacts of Algorithmic Distribution: Facebook and the Australian News Media." *Social Media + Society* 7, no. 2: 1–13. https://doi.org/10.1177/20563051211024963.

Blassnig, Sina, Eliza Mitova, Edina Strikovic, Aleksandra Urman, Claes de Vreese, Anikó Hannák, and Frank Esser. 2024. "User Perceptions of News Recommender Systems and Trust in Media Outlets: A Five-Country Study." *Journalism Studies* 25, no. 10: 1182–204. https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2024.2364628.

Bucher, Taina. 2018. "Programming the News: When Algorithms Come to Matter." In *If. . . Then: Algorithmic Power and Politics, ed. A. Chadwick. Oxford Studies in Digital Politics*. Oxford Academic.

Presuel, Rodrigo Cetina, and José M. Martínez Sierra. 2019. "Algorithms and the News: Social Media Platforms as News Publishers and Distributors." *Revista de Comunicación* 18, no. 2: 261–85. https://doi.org/10.26441/RC18.2-2019-A13.

Cobbe, Jennifer. 2021. "Algorithmic Censorship by Social Platforms: Power and Resistance." *Philosophy & Technology* 34, no. 4: 739–66. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13347-020-00429-0.

Cornia, Alessio, Annika Sehl, David AL Levy, and Rasmus Kleis Nielsen. 2018. *Private Sector News, Social Media Distribution, and Algorithm Change*. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism.

Duffy, Brooke Erin, and Colten Meisner. 2022. "Platform Governance at the Margins: Social Media Creators' Experiences with Algorithmic (In)visibility." *Media, Culture & Society* 45, no. 2: 285–304. https://doi.org/10.1177/01634437221111923.

Elswah, Mona. 2024. *Does AI Understand Arabic? Evaluating the Politics Behind the Algorithmic Arab Content Moderation*. Carr Center for Human Rights Policy Research Publications, Harvard Kennedy School.

Fahmy, Shahira S., Mohamed Salama, and Mona Raafat Alsaba. 2024. "Shattered Lives, Unbroken Stories: Journalists' Perspectives from the Frontlines of the Israel–Gaza War." *Online Media & Global Communication* 3, no. 2: 151–80. https://doi.org/10.1515/omgc-2024-0012.

Gillespie, Tarleton. 2019. "Algorithmically Recognisable: Santorum's Google Problem, and Google's Santorum Problem." In *The Social Power of Algorithms*, edited by David Beer. Routledge.

Gorwa, Robert, Reuben Binns, and Christian Katzenbach. 2020. "Algorithmic Content Moderation: Technical and Political Challenges in the Automation of Platform Governance." *Big Data & Society* 7, no. 1: 1–15. https://doi.org/10.1177/2053951719897945.

Gorwa, Robert. 2019. "What is Platform Governance?" *Information, Communication & Society* 22, no. 6: 854–71. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2019.1573914.

Hermann, Erik. 2022. "Artificial Intelligence and Mass Personalization of Communication Content—An Ethical and Literacy Perspective." *New Media & Society* 24, no. 5: 1258–77. https://doi.org/10.1177/14614448211022702.

Huang, Shengchun, and Tian Yang. 2024. "Auditing Entertainment Traps on YouTube: How Do Recommendation Algorithms Pull Users Away from News?" *Political Communication* 41, no. 6: 903–20. https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2024.2343769.

Huang, Yunyou, Wenjing Liu, Wanling Gao, Xiangjiang Lu, Xiaoshuang Liang, Zhengxin Yang, Hongxiao Li, Li Ma, and Suqin Tang. 2023. "Algorithmic Fairness in Social Context." *BenchCouncil Transactions on Benchmarks, Standards & Evaluations* 3, no. 3: 100137. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tbench.2023.100137.

Human Rights Watch. 2023. "Meta's Broken Promises: Systemic Censorship of Palestine Content on Instagram and Facebook." https://www.hrw.org/report/2023/12/21/metas-broken-promises/systemic-censorship-palestine-content-instagram-and.

Jhaver, Shagun, Amy Bruckman, and Eric Gilbert. 2019. "Does Transparency in Moderation Really Matter? User Behavior After Content Removal Explanations on Reddit." *Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction* 3, no. CSCW: 1–27. https://doi.org/10.1145/3359252.

Karlsson, Michael, Elizabeth Van Couvering, and Johan Lindell. 2022. "Publishing, Sharing, and Spreading Online News: A Case Study of Gatekeeping Logics in the Platform Era." *Nordicom Review* 43, no. 2: 190–213. https://doi.org/10.2478/nor-2022-0012.

Kasy, Maximilian. 2024. "Algorithmic Bias and Racial Inequality: A Critical Review." *Oxford Review of Economic Policy* 40, no. 3: 530–546. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxrep/grae031.

Klonick, Kate. 2017. "The New Governors: The People, Rules, and Processes Governing Online Speech." *Harvard Law Review* 131: 1598–1669.

Kordzadeh, Nima, and Maryam Ghasemaghaei. 2021. "Algorithmic Bias: Review, Synthesis, and Future Research Directions." *European Journal of Information Systems* 31, no. 3: 388–409. https://doi.org/10.1080/0960085X.2021.1927212.

Kuznetsova, Elizaveta, and Mykola Makhortykh. 2023. "Blame it on the Algorithm? Russian Government-Sponsored Media and Algorithmic Curation of Political Information on Facebook." *International Journal of Communication* 17: 971–92.

Lim, Chulmin, and Seongcheol Kim. 2024. "Examining Factors Influencing the User's Loyalty on Algorithmic News Recommendation Service." *Humanities & Social Sciences Communications* 11, no. 1: 1–15. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-023-02516-x.

Makady, Heidi, William R. Davie, and Kenneth A. Fischer. 2022. "Algorithms, Analytics, and Metrics: Is Audience Interaction Reshaping Algorithmic Gatekeeping in the Marketplace of Attention?" In *The Emerald Handbook of Computer-Mediated Communication and Social Media*, eds. H. L. Jeremy, K. Freberg, and R. Luttrell. Leeds, England: Emerald Publishing the Limited.

Marchal, Nahema, Emma Hoes, K. Jonathan Klüser, Felix Hamborg, Meysam Alizadeh, Mael Kubli, and Christian Katzenbach. 2024. "How Negative Media Coverage Impacts Platform Governance: Evidence from Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube." *Political Communication* 42, no. 2: 215–33. https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2024.2377992.

Martin, Kirsten. 2019. "Ethical Implications and Accountability of Algorithms." *Journal of Business Ethics* 160, no. 4: 835–50. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-018-3921-3.

Meraz, Sharon, and Zizi Papacharissi. 2013. "Networked Gatekeeping and Networked Framing on #Egypt." *The International Journal of Press/Politics* 18, no. 2: 138–66. https://doi.org/10.1177/1940161212474472.

Mohydin, Ravale. 2023. *Algorithmic Censorship and Israel's War on Gaza*. TRT World Research Centre.

Napoli, Philip M. 2015. "Social Media and the Public Interest: Governance of News Platforms in the Realm of Individual and Algorithmic Gatekeepers." *Telecommunications Policy* 39, no. 9: 751–60. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.telpol.2014.12.003.

Napoli, Philip. 2019. *Social Media and the Public Interest: Media Regulation in the Disinformation Age*. Columbia University Press.

Neyazi, Taberez Ahmed, Sheryl Wei Ting Ng, Mitchell Hobbs, and Audrey Yue. 2023. "Understanding User Interactions and Perceptions of AI Risk in Singapore." *Big Data & Society* 10, no. 2: 1–13. https://doi.org/10.1177/20539517231213823.

Rader, Emilee, and Rebecca Gray. 2015. "Understanding User Beliefs About Algorithmic Curation in the Facebook News Feed." Proceedings of the 33rd Annual ACM Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI'15), ACM. 18–23, Seoul Republic of Korea April.

Reviglio, Urbano, and Claudio Agosti. 2020. "Thinking Outside the Black-Box: The Case for 'Algorithmic Sovereignty' in Social Media." *Social Media + Society* 6, no. 2(1): 12. https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305120915613.

Russell, Frank M. 2019. "The New Gatekeepers: An Institutional-Level View of Silicon Valley and the Disruption of Journalism." *Journalism Studies* 20, no. 5: 631–48. https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2017.1412806.

Saurwein, Florian, Cornelia Brantner, and Leonie Möck. 2023. "Responsibility Networks in Media Discourses on Automation: A Comparative Analysis of Social Media Algorithms

and Social Companions." *New Media & Society* 27, no. 3: 1752–73. https://doi.org/10.1177/14614448231203310.

Savolainen, Laura. 2022. "The Shadow Banning Controversy: Perceived Governance and Algorithmic Folklore." *Media, Culture & Society* 44, no. 6: 1091–109. https://doi.org/10.1177/01634437221077174.

Scheffauer, Rebecca, Manuel Goyanes, and Homero Gil de Zúñiga. 2024. "Social Media Algorithmic Versus Professional Journalists' News Selection: Effects of Gate Keeping on Traditional and Social Media News Trust." *Journalism* 25, no. 4: 755–78. https://doi.org/10.1177/14648849231179804.

Shin, Donghee, Bouziane Zaid, Frank Biocca, and Azmat Rasul. 2022a. "In Platforms We Trust? Unlocking the Black-Box of News Algorithms through Interpretable AI." *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 66, no. 2: 235–56. https://doi.org/10.1080/08838151.2022.2057984.

Shin, Donghee, Michael Hameleers, Yong J. Park, Jeong N. Kim, Daniel Trielli, Nicholas Diakopoulos, Natali Helberger, Seth C. Lewis, Oscar Westlund, and Sabine Baumann. 2022b. "Countering Algorithmic Bias and Disinformation and Effectively Harnessing the Power of AI in Media." *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 99, no. 4: 887–907. https://doi.org/10.1177/10776990221129245.

Shin, Donghee. 2020. "User Perceptions of Algorithmic Decisions in the Personalised AI System: Perceptual Evaluation of Fairness, Accountability, Transparency, and Explainability." *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 64, no. 4: 541–65. https://doi.org/10.1080/08838151.2020.1843357.

Shoemaker, Pamela J. 2020. "Gatekeeping and Journalism." *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Communication*. https://oxfordre.com/communication/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228613.001.0001/acrefore-9780190228613-e-819.

Singh, Lisa, Agoritsa Polyzou, Yanchen Wang, Jason Farr, and Carole Roan Gresenz. 2020. "Social Media Data-Our Ethical Conundrum." *Bulletin of the IEEE Computer Society Technical Committee on Database Engineering* 43, no. 4: 23–38.

Srivastava, Swati. 2023. "Algorithmic Governance and the International Politics of Big Tech." *Perspectives on Politics* 21, no. 3: 989–1000. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592721003145.

Suzor, Nicolas P., Sarah Myers West, Andrew Quodling, and Jillian York. 2019. "What Do We Mean When We Talk about Transparency? Toward Meaningful Transparency in Commercial Content Moderation." *International Journal of Communication* 13: 18.

Tandoc, Edson C., and Tim P. Vos. 2015. "The Journalist is Marketing the News: Social Media in the Gatekeeping Process." *Journalism Practice* 10, no. 8: 950–66. doi:10.1080/17512786.2015.1087811.

Treré, Emiliano, and Tiziano Bonini. 2024. "Amplification, Evasion, Hijacking: Algorithms as Repertoire for Social Movements and the Struggle for Visibility." *Social Movement Studies* 23, no. 3: 303–19. https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2022.2143345.

van Dalen, Arjen. 2023. *Algorithmic Gatekeeping for Professional Communicators: Power, Trust, and Legitimacy*. 1st ed. Routledge.

van Dijck, Jose. 2021. "Seeing the Forest for the Trees: Visualizing Platformization and its Governance." *New Media & Society* 23, no. 9: 2801–19.

Wallace, Julian. 2018. "Modelling Contemporary Gatekeeping: The Rise of Individuals, Algorithms and Platforms in Digital News Dissemination." *Digital Journalism* 6, no. 3: 274–93. https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2017.1343648.

Xu, Weiai, and Miao Feng. 2014. "Talking to the Broadcasters on Twitter: Networked Gatekeeping in Twitter Conversations With Journalists." *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 58, no. 3: 420–37. https://doi.org/10.1080/08838151.2014.935853.

Author Biographies

Alyaa Anter is an associate professor at the College of Mass Communication, Ajman University, UAE. She received her PhD from the Radio & Television Department, Faculty of Mass Communication, Cairo University. Her research interests include digital media, TV news, social media, AI in media production, science communication, and political communication.

Nermeen Ibrahim is an assistant professor at the Faculty of Mass Communication, Ahram Candian University, Egypt. She is a TV director in Egyptian TV. She received a PhD degree from the Radio & Television Department, Faculty of Mass Communication, Cairo University. Her research interests center on image analysis, digital media, using AI in video production, and drama, radio, and TV studies.