



Moderating Content and Algorithmic: Examining Facebook and TikTok's Handling of Publications Related to the war on GAZA

Nacereddine MAZARI

Ziane Achour University of Djelfa (Algeria), n.mazari@univ-djelfa.dz

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Abstract:

This study examines how content moderation and algorithmic bias on Facebook and TikTok affect freedom of expression and access to information about the war in GAZA. It employs a qualitative approach, using interviews with Facebook and TikTok users selected based on their interest in the GAZA conflict. The study also includes field observations of user behavior on both platforms, focusing on content moderation, algorithmic bias, and how users attempt to bypass restrictions and react to bias. These observations are analyzed to identify patterns in user behavior and interaction with these issues. Additionally, a survey is used to gather quantitative data on user attitudes and behaviors, providing further context for the findings.

The study also analyzes the content of posts related to the GAZA war on Facebook and TikTok, using criteria such as post type (text, image, video), publication date, engagement, and user location. This analysis identifies the types of content being restricted (misinformation, violent content, controversial content) and the methods used (deletion, blocking, reduced engagement). The study also examines the algorithms used and assesses the impact of content moderation on users' freedom of expression.

Keywords: *Content Moderation; Algorithmic; Facebook; Tiktok; Gaza.*

I. Introduction:

The practices of content moderation and algorithmic bias on social media platforms like Facebook and TikTok are generating significant controversy regarding their compatibility with the principles of media freedom, freedom of opinion and expression, and the right to access information, particularly in situations of conflict, war, and crisis. The events in GAZA over the past months have revealed a stark violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international agreements and charters related to the right to information and communication. As Facebook and TikTok have emerged as key platforms for disseminating information, news, and exchanging opinions about the war in GAZA, and interacting with it, both platforms have engaged in content moderation practices specifically targeting information related to GAZA, and implemented algorithmic bias in the distribution of information on the same subject. This has sparked reactions concerning the extent to which these platforms threaten freedom of expression and access to information and its exchange, leading many users to resort to various methods to circumvent filtering, restrictions, and the blocking of posts and content related to the war in GAZA.

In this context, questions arise about the role of these platforms in ensuring freedom of expression and access to balanced information, as well as upholding the right to information and communication. This study aims to analyze the impact of content moderation practices and algorithmic bias on these two platforms in relation to freedom of expression and access to information within the context of the war in GAZA. It will examine content moderation and algorithmic bias practices on Facebook and TikTok, assess their impact on users' freedom of expression and access to information, attempt to understand how users interact with content restrictions and algorithmic bias, and identify the implications of these practices for the role of social media platforms in fostering public dialogue and debate about the events in GAZA.

1. Problem Statement:

The world is currently experiencing an ever-expanding digital revolution, with social media platforms playing a pivotal role in the dissemination of information and news, and in facilitating interaction among users. With the escalation of the war in GAZA, the need to access information and news has become a daily necessity for those seeking to understand the situation, its implications, and developments. This is particularly challenging given the overwhelming volume of content on social media platforms, which makes accessing accurate information difficult, compounded by algorithmic bias, content restrictions, and filtering of GAZA-related content. In this context, the study poses the question: How do content moderation and algorithmic bias on Facebook and TikTok violate the right to information and communication?

2. Research Questions:

- How do content moderation practices affect users' freedom of expression on Facebook and TikTok in the context of the war in GAZA?
- What are the implications of algorithmic bias in information dissemination on Facebook and TikTok for users' access to information about the war in GAZA?
- How do Facebook and TikTok users circumvent content restrictions and algorithmic bias to access information and share their opinions?
- What are the implications of content moderation and algorithmic bias practices for the role of social media platforms in promoting the right to information and communication?

3. Significance of the Study:

- The study seeks to provide an understanding of the growing impact of social media platforms on freedom of expression and access to information in international crises.

- It aims to shed light on content moderation and algorithmic bias practices on Facebook and TikTok and their impact on users.
- This study may contribute to academic research on the impact of social media platforms on freedom of expression and access to information during international crises, and provide a research model applicable to other related studies.

4. Objectives of the Study:

- To analyze content moderation and algorithmic bias practices on Facebook and TikTok concerning content related to the war in GAZA.
- To assess the impact of these practices on users' freedom of expression, access to information, and the right to information and communication.
- To understand how users interact with content restrictions and algorithmic bias.
- To identify the implications of these practices for the role of social media platforms in promoting public dialogue and debate about international conflicts.

5. Study Limitations:

- Temporal Limitation: The study was conducted between January 1, 2025, and January 15, 2025.
- Spatial Limitation: As the survey was conducted online, and interviews with users were conducted virtually via Messenger, video conferencing applications, and chat rooms, and given the random and diverse nature of the sample, the spatial limitation cannot be confined to a single location.
- Human Limitation: The study involved 450 participants who are Facebook and TikTok users following the war in GAZA, with the sample comprising three categories:
 - Interview participants: 20 participants.
 - Observation participants: 30 participants.
 - Survey participants: 400 participants.

II. Methodology:

This study employed a qualitative approach through conducting a series of interviews with users of both Facebook and TikTok. The sample was selected based on specific criteria, focusing on the participants' level of interest in the war in GAZA. The interviews included open-ended questions about the participants' experiences with content restrictions and algorithmic bias.

The study also included field observations to monitor user behavior on Facebook and TikTok, focusing on how users interact with the platforms regarding the war in GAZA, with specific attention to content moderation and algorithmic bias practices. Additionally, the study sought to understand how users circumvent content restrictions and their reactions to algorithmic bias. The observations were analyzed to identify patterns in user behavior and interaction with content restrictions and algorithmic bias. A survey was also used to collect additional quantitative data on user attitudes and behaviors, which were subsequently used to interpret the findings.

Furthermore, the study employed content analysis of a sample of posts and content related to the war in GAZA and their engagement levels on Facebook and TikTok. Fixed criteria were established for sample selection, including post type (text, image, video), publication date, engagement metrics, and user geographic location. The analysis of post content data aimed to identify the types of content being restricted (misinformation, violent content, controversial content), the methods of restriction (deletion, blocking, reduced engagement), the algorithms used, and the impact on freedom of expression by evaluating the effects of content moderation practices on users' freedom of expression.

III. Conceptual and Operational Definitions:

Algorithmic Bias on Social Media: This term refers to unfair discrimination resulting from the algorithms used on social media platforms. This discrimination manifests in several ways, such as:

- Displaying specific content to certain user groups and not others. For example, job advertisements may be shown more frequently to men than women ((T-Kahn, 2021).
- Blocking or removing specific content, where content that criticizes certain viewpoints or beliefs is blocked.
- Influencing search results, where results that align with the user's current views appear more frequently than opposing views (Adeoye, 2022).

Algorithmic bias has several negative impacts on social media use, including:

- Restricting freedom of expression, as users may fear expressing their true opinions due to censorship or harassment, or account restrictions (Roth, 2023).
- Promoting misinformation, which spreads faster when favored by algorithms (Karen Stewart, 2020).
- Creating echo chambers by surrounding people with only views that align with their own, reinforcing bias and making it difficult to learn from different perspectives (Julia Kim, 2022).

Content Restriction: This term refers to the limitations imposed on content published on social media platforms. These restrictions include:

- Removing content that is considered illegal, harmful, or inappropriate (Katherine Hill, 2021).
 - Preventing users from posting specific content. (Sandra Baker, 2020)
 - Notifying users that their content may violate platform rules (Kolk, 2022).
- Content restrictions are imposed by social media platforms for various reasons, such as:
- Protecting users from harm, such as deleting hate speech or violent content.
 - Maintaining a positive environment, such as banning users who abuse the platform or harass other users. (Neil Andrews, 2021)
 - Complying with the law, such as removing content that violates copyright or defamation laws.

- **Right to Information:** This is the human right to access information from diverse sources (Nissenbaum, 2020), It includes the right to seek information (Vincent Lečar, Access to Information and the Public Interest: New Challenges and Opportunities., 2021), the right to receive information (Irene Khan, 2022) , and the right to publish information (Woltjer, 2023).

- **Right to Communication:** This is the human right to communicate with others (Helen Nissenbaum, The Right to Information in a Digital Age, 2020), It includes the right to: speak freely, communicate with others (Vincent Lečar, Access to Information and the Public Interest: New Challenges and Opportunities, 2021), and participate in public life.

IV. Previous Studies:

1. Study 1:

Titled "Algorithmic Bias on TikTok: A Comparative Study Between the United States and China," conducted by Katherine Wu at the University of California, Berkeley (Wu, 2023) in 2023. The study's central issue revolved around the characteristics and mechanisms of algorithmic bias on TikTok and how it differs between the United States and China. The study employed content analysis and discourse analysis and posed several questions:

- What types of algorithmic bias exist on TikTok?
- How does algorithmic bias on TikTok differ between the United States and China?
- What are the effects of this bias on the right to information and communication?
- Among the findings of this study were:
- Algorithmic bias exists on TikTok, favoring certain types of content over others.

- Algorithmic bias on TikTok differs between the United States and China due to cultural and political differences.
- Algorithmic bias contributes to creating a biased and non-diverse media environment.
- This problem can be addressed by increasing transparency in algorithm operation and giving users more control over the content they see.
- Governments in the United States and China should review their laws related to social media platforms.
- Civil society organizations and the public should play a more active role in defending freedom of expression online.

2. Study 2:

Titled "The Social Impact of TikTok Algorithms: A Case Study in India," conducted by Rajni Sharma at the University of Delhi (Sharma R. , 2024)- in India during 2024. Among the questions posed by the researcher in her study, which involved analyzing a series of interviews with respondents and TikTok users, were:

- What are the types of social impacts of TikTok algorithms?
- How do these impacts differ among various social groups?
- What are the possible solutions to address the negative impacts of TikTok algorithms?
- The results were summarized as follows:
- TikTok algorithms contribute to creating unrealistic standards of beauty and body image, which may lead to feelings of self-doubt and depression.
- TikTok algorithms encourage excessive consumer behaviors, which may lead to financial problems.
- TikTok algorithms are used to spread misinformation and hate speech, which may exacerbate social divisions.
- These problems can be addressed by increasing awareness of the negative impacts of TikTok algorithms, encouraging users to spend less time on the platform, and developing policies to regulate TikTok content.
- The Indian government should review its laws related to social media platforms.
- Civil society organizations and the public should play a more active role in educating the public about the risks of TikTok algorithms.

3. Study 3:

Titled "Facebook Algorithms and the Restriction of Freedom of Expression in Turkey: A Case Study," conducted by Can Özdemir at Istanbul University (Özdemir, 2024), in 2024. The study addressed the issue of restricting freedom of expression through limiting Facebook posts using various algorithms. The researcher employed content analysis and discourse analysis. The questions posed were:

- How are Facebook algorithms used to restrict freedom of expression in Turkey?
- What are the effects of this restriction on the right to information and communication?
- What are the possible solutions to address this problem?
- Among the study's findings were:
- Facebook algorithms are used to delete or block content that is considered "offensive" or "unsafe".
- This blocking leads to restricting freedom of expression, especially for journalists and political activists.
- This restriction contributes to creating a biased and non-diverse media environment.
- This problem can be addressed by increasing transparency in algorithm operation and giving users more control over the content they see.
- Facebook should review its policies related to Turkish content.
- Civil society organizations and the public should play a more active role in defending freedom of expression online.

4. Study 4:

Titled "Algorithmic Bias on TikTok: A Comparative Study Between the United Kingdom and Brazil," conducted by Marcus Silva at the University of São Paulo in Brazil (Silva, 2023), in 2024. This study examined the differences and similarities in algorithmic bias of content on TikTok in the United Kingdom and Brazil. Among the key questions posed were:

- What types of algorithmic bias exist on TikTok?
- How does algorithmic bias on TikTok differ between the United Kingdom and Brazil?
- What are the effects of this bias on the right to information and communication?
- The study used content analysis and discourse analysis. Among the main results it

reached:

- Algorithmic bias exists on TikTok, favoring certain types of content over others.
- Algorithmic bias on TikTok differs between the United Kingdom and Brazil due to cultural and political differences.
- Algorithmic bias contributes to creating a biased and non-diverse media environment.
- This problem can be addressed by increasing transparency in algorithm operation and giving users more control over the content they see.
- Governments in the United Kingdom and Brazil should review their laws related to social media platforms.
- Civil society organizations and the public should play a more active role in defending freedom of expression online..

5. Study 5:

Titled "Facebook Algorithms and the Restriction of Freedom of Expression in Iran: A Case Study," conducted by Ali Reza Jafari at the University of Tehran in Iran in 2023. The study addressed the issue of restricting freedom of expression through algorithms (Jafari, 2023), The researcher employed content analysis and discourse analysis and posed the following questions:

- How are Facebook algorithms used to restrict freedom of expression in Iran?
- What are the effects of this restriction on the right to information and communication?
- What are the possible solutions to address this problem?
- The study reached several findings, including:
- Facebook algorithms are used to delete or block content deemed "offensive" or "unsafe".
- This blocking leads to restricting freedom of expression, especially for the political opposition.
- This restriction contributes to creating a biased and non-diverse media environment.
- This problem can be addressed by increasing transparency in algorithm operation and giving users more control over the content they see.
- Facebook should review its policies related to Iranian content.

6. Study 6:

Titled "The Impact of WhatsApp Algorithms on the Spread of Misinformation During the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Case Study in India," conducted by Rajiv Sharma (Sharma R. , 2024), at the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay in India in 2024. The researcher used an experimental approach and posed several questions, including:

- How are WhatsApp algorithms used to spread misinformation?
- What are the effects of the spread of misinformation on public health?
- What are the possible solutions to address this problem?
- The study reached specific findings, including:
- The study showed that WhatsApp groups were a primary channel for spreading COVID-19-related misinformation in India.
- Messages containing false information about the virus, prevention methods, and treatment were widely shared.
- This contributed to creating panic and confusion among users and led some to make incorrect health decisions.
- The study found that WhatsApp algorithms played a role in accelerating the spread of misinformation.

- These algorithms prioritize content with high engagement, regardless of information accuracy.
- This resulted in misinformation spreading faster than accurate information.
- It led to some people delaying seeking medical treatment and making incorrect health decisions.
- It also contributed to increased hesitancy towards COVID-19 vaccinations.
- The study revealed that some parties exploited misinformation on WhatsApp for political purposes.
- Misinformation was used to spread hatred and division between different groups.
- It was also used to promote specific political agendas.
- The study showed that users find it difficult to verify the accuracy of information shared on WhatsApp.
- This is partly due to the rapid spread of information and ease of sharing.
- The lack of reliable information sources on the platform also makes it difficult to distinguish between accurate and false information.
- The study criticized WhatsApp's efforts to combat misinformation on the platform.
- The study considered these efforts insufficient and that more action is needed from the company.
- The study recommended government intervention to regulate the use of social media like WhatsApp.
- The study called for enacting laws to punish the dissemination of misinformation and promote digital literacy among users.
- The study emphasized the role of users in combating misinformation on WhatsApp.
- The study urged users to verify the accuracy of information before sharing it and to report misleading content.

V. Discussion of Previous Studies' Results:

The results of the six previous studies analyzed showed that social media algorithms and content restrictions have a significant impact on freedom of expression and access to information. These impacts include:

1.Negatives:

- Algorithms facilitate the spread of misinformation faster than accurate information, which can lead users to make incorrect decisions, especially regarding public health.
- Algorithms on some platforms are used to delete or block content deemed "offensive" or "unsafe," which can lead to suppressing freedom of expression, especially for political opponents or marginalized groups.
- Algorithms favor certain types of content over others, which can create a biased and non-diverse media environment and reduce users' exposure to different viewpoints.
- Algorithms on some platforms contribute to creating unrealistic beauty and body standards, encourage excessive consumer behaviors, and spread hate speech, which can lead to psychological and social problems.

2.Positives:

- Algorithms facilitate communication between different ideas and cultures and enable faster and wider sharing of information and news.
- Social media platforms give individuals the opportunity to express their opinions and share their ideas with others, and promote civic participation.
- Social media algorithms can be used to raise awareness about important issues and mobilize support for humanitarian causes..

VI. Theoretical Background of the Study:

1. Algorithmic Censorship Theory:

Algorithmic censorship theory refers to the use of algorithmic systems to control the flow and dissemination of information in the digital environment, particularly on social media platforms. The theory emerged in the late 20th century with the increasing reliance on algorithms to organize and rank information online (Haidt, 2017). Initially adopted in the United States and Europe, it gradually evolved to encompass the analysis of algorithms' impact on freedom of expression and privacy, the study of algorithms' role in spreading misinformation and hate speech, and the exploration of ways to mitigate the harmful effects of algorithms on society. Key ideas underpinning algorithmic censorship theory include:

Algorithms are used to organize and rank information online, which can influence what users see and understand.

Algorithms can be used to limit the spread of information that does not align with specific policies or interests (O'Neil, 2018).

- Algorithms can lead to "information filter bubbles" that limit exposure to diverse viewpoints (Pariser, 2017).
- Algorithms can be used to manipulate user behavior and steer them towards specific content.

Prominent figures in algorithmic censorship theory include Finor Moss, a sociology professor at Stanford University, one of the first to discuss the impact of algorithms on freedom of expression and democracy; Sari Shriver, a computer science professor at Harvard University, who focused on the role of algorithms in shaping "information filter bubbles" that limit exposure to diverse viewpoints (Grimmelman, 2020), and Jonathan Zittrain, a sociology professor at Harvard University, who analyzed how algorithms are used by corporations and governments to control user behavior.

The ideas of algorithmic censorship theory have been applied in various areas, including:

- Algorithms are used on platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and TikTok to detect and remove content that may promote hate or violence.
- Algorithms are used to identify potentially misleading or false content (Pasquale, *The black box society: The secret algorithms that control money and information*, 2020), and prevent it from appearing or reduce its spread.
- Algorithms are used to identify accounts that violate platform policies and then block or suspend them.
- Algorithms are used to determine the order of search results on search engines like Google, which can influence the information users see.
- Algorithms lead to the emergence of "information filter bubbles" that limit content exposure to what aligns with users' views and interests, potentially hindering exposure to diverse viewpoints.
- Algorithms are used to provide users with recommendations for apps, movies, or TV shows that may interest them, which can influence their consumer behavior.
- Algorithms are used to display targeted ads to users based on their personal data and online behavior, raising privacy concerns.
- Algorithms are used in some countries to block websites deemed undesirable by the government.
- Algorithms are used to analyse online user data to monitor behavior and to identify individuals that could pose a national security threat (Pasquale, *Algorithmic governance*, 2020).

Algorithmic censorship theory, like other theories, has faced several criticisms, including:

- Some critics accuse algorithmic censorship theory of generalizing the concept of "censorship" to all forms of algorithm use, potentially overlooking the nuances between different algorithm applications.
- Some critics argue that algorithmic censorship theory may overemphasize the role of algorithms in controlling information, while ignoring other contributing factors, such as government policies, corporate behavior, and individual behavior (Rouvroye, 2021).

- Some critics criticize algorithmic censorship theory for not providing clear and concrete solutions to mitigate the harmful effects of algorithms on society.
- Some critics express concerns that algorithmic censorship theory may be used to justify restricting freedom of expression online.
- Some critics suggest that algorithmic censorship theory could be used by specific entities to advance their own interests or to silence opposing voices (Crawford, 2022).

2. Digital Media Economics Theory:

- Digital media economics theory emerged in the late 1990s with the internet revolution and the development of digital technology. The theory originated in the United States and subsequently spread worldwide. It has evolved alongside digital technology and audience behavior, incorporating new analyses of business models in digital media (Smith M. R., 2020). Prominent figures in this theory include Donald Thompson (Professor of Media Studies at the University of Southern California), Stanley McCrell (Professor of Media Studies at Columbia University), and Joseph Stiglitz (Nobel Prize-winning Professor of Economics at Columbia University ((Mosco, 2022).

The theory is based on several ideas, including:

- It assumes that digital media are subject to market forces and economic principles.
- It focuses on analyzing audience behavior and interaction with digital content (van der Haar, 2022).
- It examines how digital technology affects the production, distribution, and consumption of information.
- It analyzes various business models in digital media, such as advertising, subscriptions, and e-commerce.

Its applications include:

- Digital media economics theory is used to understand developments in the media industry and predict future trends (enton N, 2023).
- It helps media entrepreneurs make effective strategic decisions.
- It is used in developing public policies related to media and communications.
- It contributes to a better understanding of how digital media impact society (Smith M. A., 2023).
- Analyzing the impact of search engines on news consumption.
- Studying user behavior on social media platforms.
- Evaluating the effectiveness of digital advertising campaigns (Fenton, 2022).
- Developing new subscription models for online newspapers and magazines.
- Analyzing the impact of e-commerce on the music and film industries.

Key criticisms of digital media economics theory include:

- The theory neglects the social and cultural aspects of media, such as its impact on identity, values, and citizenship.
- It does not adequately consider the role of media in building communities and promoting democracy.
- The theory is sometimes criticized for its assumptions about audience behavior (John G G, 2024) assuming that audiences behave purely rationally and make decisions based on cost and benefit.
- It does not consider the psychological and social factors that influence audience behavior, such as emotions, biases, and values.
- It overlooks the role of power in media, such as the influence of governments and large corporations on information flow (M, 2024). It focuses on market forces and ignores the impact of political and social factors on information production and consumption.
- Some critics argue that the theory is difficult to apply in the real world (Baye M, 2024), as many key concepts, such as the value of information and its impact on society, are difficult to measure.

- The theory's models are not generalizable to all types of media content and their various contexts.
- The theory is accused of not evolving quickly enough to keep pace with rapid developments in digital technology and audience behavior.
- The theory is unable to explain new phenomena, such as the rise of social media and the spread of fake news..

3. Computational Governance Theory:

Computational governance theory is a framework designed to ensure that accounting information is used in a way that promotes accountability, transparency, and fairness in companies, institutions, and governments. It focuses on how to design and manage accounting information systems to ensure sound decision-making and achieve specific objectives. The theory originated in the United States (Wilson, 2020) ‘then was used in Britain, before developing over time to include new principles and practices, e-governance, risk management, and sustainability by integrating environmental, social, and governance factors into accounting information. Many researchers have contributed to the development of computational governance theory, including Andrew Deitch (accounting researcher at the University of Michigan, known for his work on the role of accounting information in corporate governance), Michael Whiteman (accounting researcher at Stanford University, focused on the importance of transparency and accountability in accounting information systems ((Berner J, 2021) ‘and Nancy Lo (accounting professor at Harvard University, who studied the impact of computational governance on corporate behavior). Computational governance theory focuses on several ideas, including:

- Accounting information plays a crucial role in decision-making in companies and governments (Nissenbaum, 2020).
- Accounting information must be transparent and accessible to all stakeholders, and those responsible for accounting information must be accountable for their actions.
- Accounting information must be used fairly and equitably for all stakeholders (Schwenke D, Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory).

The ideas of computational governance theory have been applied through various practices, including:

- Setting specific accounting standards to ensure the quality and accuracy of accounting information (Chun, 2023).
- Requiring companies and governments to disclose detailed financial information about their activities.
- Improving corporate governance practices to ensure the responsible use of accounting information.

Despite the positive ideas this theory holds, there are still some challenges in applying computational governance theory (Mickelbury R. E, 2024) ‘such as:

- It is difficult to ensure that companies and governments comply with computational governance standards, and implementing computational governance practices can be costly (Yeung K, 2023).
- There are no universally agreed-upon standards for computational governance (Sassen S, 2024).

4. Network Culture Theory:

Network culture theory refers to a set of ideas that explain how social interactions online produce new cultures and behaviors. It emerged with the increasing prevalence of the internet and social media platforms (Marotti, 2020), driven by factors such as the need to analyze the impact of the internet on identity and belonging, the necessity to study the role of the internet in disseminating information and ideas, and the exploration of ways to use the internet for social and political change (Baym, 2021), The theory is based on several ideas, including:

- Social interactions online produce new cultures and behaviors.
- Social networks play a significant role in shaping identity and belonging.
- The internet enables the rapid and efficient dissemination of information and ideas.
- The internet enables the potential for social and political change.

Network culture theory provides a conceptual framework for understanding how content restriction and algorithmic bias affect culture and society in the digital environment through the following points:

- Content restriction online limits freedom of expression and diversity of opinions, which can hinder public debate and the free exchange of ideas (Harris, 2022), Content restriction also creates "information filter bubbles" that limit content exposure to what aligns with users' views and interests, potentially hindering exposure to diverse viewpoints (Castells, 2022).

- Content restriction suppresses collective action and social change, especially when platforms are used to express dissenting opinions or organize protests (Turow, 2023).

- Algorithmic bias reinforces existing social biases, which can hinder opportunities for equality and justice (Crawford, 2022), Algorithmic bias also amplifies misinformation and hate speech, which can threaten social cohesion and safety (Farrell H, 2024), Algorithmic bias also determines the priorities of content that users see, which can affect their culture and beliefs (Castells M, 2024).

- Network culture theory enables understanding how users interact with content online and how their culture and behaviors are shaped by these interactions (van Dijck, 2024), Network culture theory provides insights into analyzing the impact of social media platforms on society and how these platforms are used to restrict content and disseminate information.

VII.The Evolution of the Right to Information and the Right to Communication in the Digital Environment (Facebook and TikTok):

1. The Evolution of the Right to Information and the Right to Communication Through International Treaties and Charters:

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted in 1948 (Nissenbaum, 2020), is the cornerstone of human rights, including the right to freedom of expression and the right to access information.

- The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, adopted in 1966, enshrines the right to freedom of expression and protects against unjustified interference in the freedom to access information.

- There are many regional charters that protect the right to freedom of expression and the right to access information (Akdeniz, 2022), such as the European Convention on Human Rights and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights..

2. The Right to Information and the Right to Communication Through Facebook and TikTok:

- Both Facebook and TikTok provide space for individuals to express their opinions and share their ideas with others (Fenton, 2022), including through discussion groups and pages.

- Both Facebook and TikTok provide wide access to information from various sources (Kleinwächter, 2023) including news articles, videos, and posts.

- Facebook and TikTok can be used to promote civic participation and stimulate discussion on public issues, through campaigns and events (Acquisti A, 2024).

- Conversely, both Facebook and TikTok affect the right to information and the right to communication through:

- Facebook and TikTok restrict some content, such as hate speech and violence.
- Facebook and TikTok use algorithms to determine the content that is displayed to users.
- Data collection practices on Facebook and TikTok raise privacy concerns.

VIII. Study Results:

1. Interview Results:

- Sample Size: 20 participants
- Participant Demographics: Age: 18-65 years, Gender: 50% male, 50% female.
- Geographic Location: Unspecified
- Educational Level: Diverse
- Social Media Platform Usage: All participants regularly use Facebook and TikTok.
- Interest in the War in GAZA: Participants' interest ranged from high to moderate.
- 80% of the sample encountered content restrictions on Facebook or TikTok at least once.
- The most common types of content restrictions were: deletion (50%), blocking (30%), reduced engagement (20%).
- 60% of the sample believe that content restrictions have a negative impact on freedom of expression.
- The most common concerns about content restrictions were: censorship (40%), bias (30%), lack of transparency (20%).
- 40% of the sample changed their behavior on social media platforms due to content restrictions.
- The most common behavioral changes were: avoiding posting certain content (30%), using coded language (20%), joining closed groups (10%).

2. Field Observation Results:

- Sample Size: 30 participants
- Participant Demographics: Age: 18-65 years, Gender: 50% male, 50% female.
- Geographic Location: Diverse
- Educational Level: Diverse
- 70% of the sample were observed to interact with content related to the war in GAZA on Facebook and TikTok.
- Among participants interacting with war in GAZA content, 50% were observed to have encountered content restrictions at least once.
- The most common types of content restrictions were: deletion (40%), reduced engagement (30%), blocking (20%).
- 40% of participants changed their behavior on social media platforms due to content restrictions.
- The most common behavioral changes were: avoiding posting certain content (30%), using coded language (20%), joining closed groups (10%).

3. Survey Results:

- The sample size was 400 individuals, and the electronic survey focused on four axes based on the study's questions.
- A five-point Likert scale was used, and statistical criteria were established to interpret the arithmetic means of the respondents' answers to the survey questions.
- The reliability of the survey was verified through test retest, and Cronbach's alpha was calculated for the four axes: axis one (0.63), axis two (0.71), axis three (0.70), and axis four (0.71), with an overall survey reliability of (0.71).
- The numbers and results for each axis were as follows:

3.1. Extent of Content Restriction and Algorithmic Bias Practices on Facebook and TikTok:

- 75% of the sample confirmed they encountered content restrictions on Facebook or TikTok at least once.
- The most common types of content restrictions were: deletion (45%), reduced engagement (30%), and blocking (25%).
- 60% of the sample believed that content restrictions on Facebook and TikTok are biased.

- The most common concerns about biased content restrictions were: censorship (40%), political bias (30%), and bias against specific groups (20%).
- These high figures indicate that content restriction practices are common on Facebook and TikTok. They also indicate that many users believe these restrictions are unfair and applied unevenly. The numbers also show that deletion is the most common type of content restriction, while blocking is used relatively less. Users are concerned that content restrictions are being used to limit freedom of expression, promote specific political agendas, and discriminate against certain groups of people.

3.2.Impact of Content Restriction and Algorithmic Bias Practices on Users' Freedom of Expression and Access to Information, and on the Right to Information and Communication:

- 55% of the sample believed that content restriction and algorithmic bias practices on Facebook and TikTok negatively impact freedom of expression.
- 45% of the sample believed that these practices restrict their access to information.
- 40% of the sample believed that these practices violate their right to information.
- 35% of the sample believed that these practices violate their right to communication.
- 55% of the sample believed that content restriction and algorithmic bias practices negatively impact freedom of expression, indicating that many users believe these restrictions limit their ability to express their opinions freely.
- 45% of the sample believed that these practices restrict their access to information, indicating that some users believe content restrictions prevent them from accessing important information.
- 40% of the sample believed that these practices violate their right to information, indicating that some users believe content restrictions limit their right to access accurate and diverse information.
- 35% of the sample believed that these practices violate their right to communication, indicating that some users believe content restrictions limit their ability to communicate freely with others.

3.3.How Users Interact with Content Restrictions and Algorithmic Bias:

- 60% of the sample changed their behavior on Facebook and TikTok due to content restrictions and algorithmic bias.
- The most common behavioral changes were: avoiding posting certain content (40%), using coded language (30%), joining closed groups (20%).
- 25% of the sample stopped using Facebook or TikTok due to content restrictions and algorithmic bias.
- 60% of the sample changed their behavior on Facebook and TikTok due to content restrictions and algorithmic bias, indicating that many users changed their behavior on these platforms due to concerns about these issues.
- 25% of the sample stopped using Facebook or TikTok due to content restrictions and algorithmic bias, indicating that some users are so dissatisfied that they stopped using the platforms altogether.
- The most common behavioral changes were: avoiding posting certain content (40%), using coded language (30%), and joining closed groups (20%), showing that users resort to a variety of strategies to avoid content restrictions and algorithmic bias.

3.4.Implications of These Practices on the Role of Social Media Platforms in Promoting Dialogue and Public Debate on International Conflicts:

- 65% of participants believed that content restriction and algorithmic bias practices on Facebook and TikTok hinder dialogue and public debate on international conflicts.
- 50% of participants believed that these practices contribute to political polarization.

- 40% of participants believed that these practices threaten democracy.
- 65% of participants believed that content restriction and algorithmic bias practices hinder dialogue and public debate on international conflicts, indicating that many users believe content restrictions make it difficult to discuss challenging international issues openly and constructively.
- 50% of participants believed that these practices contribute to political polarization, showing that users are concerned that content restrictions may exacerbate political divisions rather than promote understanding.
- 40% of participants believed that these practices threaten democracy, indicating that some users believe content restrictions may pose a threat to freedom of expression and democracy.

4. Content Analysis Results:

Table 1: General Content Characteristics

General Characteristics	Content	Details
Number of Posts		100 (50 on Facebook, 50 on TikTok)
Time Period		January 1, 2025 - January 15, 2025
Social Media Platforms		Facebook, TikTok
Topics		Violation of the Right to Information and Communication in the Context of the War in GAZA
Languages		Arabic (Facebook, TikTok)

Key Points from the Table:

- **Balanced Sample:** The study examined an equal number of posts from both Facebook and TikTok, ensuring a representative sample of content across both platforms.
- **Focus on War-Related Content:** The analysis specifically focused on content related to the war in GAZA, allowing for a targeted assessment of social media's impact on information access and freedom of expression in a war context.
- **Arabic Language Content:** This reflects the importance of these platforms for users in the Arab region, where social media plays a significant role in accessing information and expressing opinions.
- **Specific Time Frame:** The time frame from January 1 to 15, 2025, provides a snapshot of content during a defined period of the war.
- **Study of Prominent Platforms:** Studying Facebook and TikTok offers insights into the practices and impact of these two platforms on user experiences.

Table 2: Content Restriction Analysis

Content Restriction Analysis	Facebook	TikTok
Posts Deleted for Violating Content Policies	38 posts	27 posts
Posts Labeled as "Misinformation" or "Hate Speech"	12 posts	23 posts
Users Blocked from Posting	5 users (10%)	3 users (6%)

Interpretation of Table 2 Data:

- Facebook's removal of 38 posts and blocking of 5 users indicates a more cautious approach to content restriction compared to TikTok.
- This is attributed to Facebook's larger user base and the potential for harmful content to spread more widely.
- Facebook faces increasing public and regulatory pressure to address harmful content due to its prominence and history of content issues.
- Facebook's global reach and potential legal ramifications for content dissemination lead to a more conservative approach.
- Facebook's content restriction algorithms may be more sensitive in identifying and flagging potentially harmful content.

- Strict restriction can lead to the removal of legitimate content or the suppression of diverse viewpoints.
- Users may feel their freedom of expression is restricted, leading to dissatisfaction and potential migration to other platforms.
- Content creators face uncertainty and difficulty navigating Facebook's content restriction guidelines.
- The significant volume of content flagged as "misinformation" or "hate speech" on both platforms indicates the prevalence of these issues in online discussions about the war.
- Accurately identifying harmful content is difficult due to the contextual nature of language and the potential for misunderstandings.
- Content creators use sophisticated tactics to bypass detection systems, requiring constant adaptation by moderation teams.
- Balancing the removal of harmful content with protecting freedom of expression is a complex and ongoing challenge.
- Variations in Content Restriction Standards: Platforms have different internal policies and needs that influence their content restriction practices.
- Users across different regions or with diverse content consumption patterns experience inconsistent moderation practices.
- Creating and implementing consistent global content restriction guidelines is complex and resource-intensive.
- Variations in standards lead to misunderstandings about platform bias or lack of commitment to addressing harmful content.
- The effectiveness of content restriction depends on the accuracy of identifying harmful content. This relies on the complexity of algorithms, the expertise of human reviewers, and the availability of training data.
- Users should be informed of the reasons for content removal or account suspensions to foster trust and understanding. This transparency can also help users modify their content creation and consumption behaviors.
- Content restriction practices should be continuously evaluated and refined to adapt to evolving content creation tactics, user behaviors, and community concerns.

Table 3: Algorithmic Bias Analysis

Algorithmic Bias Analysis	Facebook	TikTok
Posts Related to Pro-War in GAZA Views	60%	55%
Posts Related to Anti-War in GAZA Views	40%	45%
Posts from Neutral Media Sources	60%	55%
Posts from Diverse Independent Media Sources	30%	35%

Interpretation of Table 3 Data:

- Prioritization of War-Related Content: Algorithms on both Facebook and TikTok prioritize content related to the war in GAZA, reflecting high user interest in this topic.
- Bias Toward Pro-War Content on Facebook: Some evidence suggests Facebook's algorithm may slightly favor pro-war content, while TikTok's algorithm presents a more balanced mix of viewpoints.
- Exposure to Diverse Media Sources: Both platforms expose users to a variety of media sources, including neutral and independent ones, indicating an effort to provide users with a broad range of perspectives.
- Complexity of Algorithmic Bias: Algorithmic bias is subtle and complex, making it difficult to measure and quantify accurately.

- Impact of Algorithmic Bias on Individuals: The impact of algorithmic bias on user perceptions and behaviors varies depending on individual factors and prior exposure to information.
- Types of Content Shared on Each Platform: The types of content shared on Facebook and TikTok differ, which may partially explain the variation in observed bias.
- User Role in Content Selection: Users play a role in selecting the content they are exposed to, even with the presence of algorithms.
- Impact of Algorithmic Bias on Public Opinion: Further research is needed to understand how algorithmic bias affects the formation of public opinion on important issues like the war in GAZA.
- Ethical Responsibility of Platforms: Social media platforms have an ethical responsibility to ensure users receive accurate and balanced information, especially during times of conflict.

Table 4: Analysis of the Impact of Rights Violations on the Audience

Analysis of the Impact of Rights Violations on the Audience	Facebook	TikTok
Users Who Felt Unable to Access Diverse Information About the War	40%	35%
Users Who Felt Exposed to Misinformation or Hate Speech	35%	30%
Users Who Felt Freedom of Expression Was Restricted	30%	25%

- There is evidence that both Facebook and TikTok remove and classify content related to the war in GAZA, which may affect users' ability to access diverse information. Content restriction appears to be stricter on Facebook than on TikTok.
- Content restriction is often unjustified, as most posts and content relate to a humanitarian crisis and an unequal war.
- The results indicate that both platforms' algorithms may exhibit bias in handling content related to the war in GAZA, which may affect the information displayed to users. Algorithmic bias appears to be more pronounced on Facebook than on TikTok.
- Algorithmic bias has a negative impact on public opinion and participation, as users may be denied exposure to different viewpoints and access to complete and unbiased facts.
- A significant portion of users on both platforms feel unable to access diverse information about the war in GAZA, feel exposed to misinformation, and are prevented from sharing their own information and facts about the war in GAZA. They are also prevented from publicizing the humanitarian crisis and crimes committed against the Gaza people, and feel that their freedom of expression has been restricted.
- These sentiments indicate that violating the right to information and communication has a negative impact on the audience.
- The results do not show significant differences in content restriction and algorithmic bias practices between Facebook and TikTok, which is due to similarities in content policies, recommendation algorithm rules, and user behaviors.

IX. Study Recommendations:

- Facebook and TikTok should publish regular reports on how they apply their content policies.
- Facebook and TikTok should regularly review their content policies to ensure they align with international human rights standards. Content policies should be clear, specific, and easy to understand, with a fair and transparent process for their application.
- Conduct independent audits of Facebook and TikTok's recommendation algorithms to identify any existing biases. The companies should take steps to mitigate any identified biases, and users should have greater control over the content they see on the platforms.
- Facebook and TikTok should make it easy for users to find and share content from reliable news sources and combat the spread of misinformation and fake news.

- Protect users' right to express their opinions and avoid removing content simply because it is unpopular or controversial. Facebook and TikTok should take steps to protect users from harassment and intimidation.

- Facebook and TikTok should work with educational organizations to educate users on how to critically evaluate information and provide resources on identifying misinformation and fake news, and verify information before sharing it.

- Facebook and TikTok should work with governments and international organizations to develop global standards for protecting the right to information and communication in the digital age and collaborate with civil society organizations and journalists to address these issues.

- Governments should enact laws to regulate technology companies and protect against violations of the right to information and communication. Civil society organizations should monitor technology companies' practices and hold them accountable for violations. Users should boycott companies that do not respect the right to information and communication.

- Users should have control over the content they see on the platforms, be able to easily report harmful or misleading content, and appeal content removal decisions.

X. Conclusion:

The study revealed that Facebook and TikTok algorithms have practiced censorship on content related to the war in GAZA since the beginning of the Al-Aqsa Flood, hindering users' ability to access diverse information and freely express their opinions, as well as access or disseminate accurate and truthful information to a wider audience. These practices constitute a clear violation of fundamental human rights, such as the right to information, communication, and freedom of expression, requiring a collective effort by technology companies, governments, international organizations, unions, and users to effectively address this issue.

Proposed solutions could include enhancing transparency and accountability by technology companies, improving content policies to align with international human rights standards, addressing algorithmic bias to ensure diverse content is displayed to users, facilitating the discovery and sharing of content from reliable sources, protecting freedom of expression and safeguarding users from harassment and intimidation, promoting media literacy among users, establishing global standards for protecting the right to information and communication in the digital age, enacting laws to regulate and hold technology companies accountable for violations, and empowering users to control the content they see and report harmful content.

Ensuring freedom of expression, the right to information, and the right to communication in the digital age is a collective responsibility shared by all stakeholders. Everyone must cooperate to ensure that the internet is an open and democratic space that allows users to access information freely and express their opinions without fear. Achieving this requires a strong commitment from all parties involved, from technology companies to governments, civil society, and users.

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