Algorithmic Audiences: Navigating Identity, Influence, and Power in the Age of Platformized Media

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Abstract: *Purpose***:** This article investigates the formation and operation of *algorithmic audiences* within platformized media environments, focusing on how processes of identity, influence, and power intersect to shape audience behaviour. It seeks to theorise the algorithmically produced publics that emerge from data-driven engagement on social media, streaming services, and online gaming platforms.

Methods: The study employs a critical conceptual synthesis of current literature in media studies, platform capitalism, and communication theory, supported by illustrative case studies of user-platform interactions. Through thematic analysis of secondary sources (2017–2023), it maps how algorithmic recommendation systems, identity performances, and influence mechanisms mutually reinforce each other to establish dynamic audience configurations.

Results: Findings reveal that algorithmic audiences are neither passive recipients nor purely autonomous actors, but *datafied hybrid entities* produced through collaborative interplays of user self-presentation, platform logics, and commercial surveillance. Identity construction increasingly depends on visibility metrics, while influence is redistributed through opaque recommendation architectures producing echo chambers and filter bubbles. Power asymmetries deepen as platforms gain control over information flows, data extraction, and behavioural manipulation, raising serious ethical and regulatory concerns.

Conclusion: Algorithmic audiences represent a paradigm shift in the understanding of contemporary media publics. Their emergence compels scholars and policymakers to move beyond traditional audience theories and to confront new questions surrounding data ownership, platform governance, and audience agency in the age of automated curation. Future research must address how regulatory frameworks and ethical design interventions can protect user autonomy while ensuring transparency and accountability within platformised media ecosystems.

Keywords: Algorithmic Audiences, Digital Identity, Media Platforms, Influence Mechanisms, Data Privacy, Datafied Hybrid Entities, Media Ecosystems.

1. INTRODUCTION

Algorithmic audiences enable the investigation of situated, overlapping, and continually reconfiguring trans-medial assemblages of media exposure, data capture, and response (N. Cohen, 2018). Each assemblage has a unique regime for the creation and negotiation of identity, as well as associated mechanisms for the delineation of influence and the exercise of power. In this introductory overview, we examine the concept of algorithmic audiences across these three dimensions. For the digital-age newsreader, public-service radio listener, streaming homesteader, favorite foodie Instagrammer, or online-gamer-turned-twitchy-broadcaster, media encounters are intertwined with digital information practices, capture events, and social-network actions. The configurations of data assemblages that crystallize from this conglomeration establish a situationally contingent audience. We broadly term these dynamic configurations algorithmic audiences.

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2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Algorithmic audiences refer to collections of publics whose practices of content consumption, creation, and circulation on networked media platforms become continuously responsive to algorithmic content prioritizations (N. Cohen, 2018). Fully acquainted with the interpersonal, cultural, commercial, governmental, civic, and other contexts in which a given platform and its content circulate, usersque-politique may—by conscientiously manipulating their media habits—manage the identity-making logics of such platforms in the pursuit of greater attention and influence (Szulc, 2019). This configuration of digital publics provides a means of examining the interrelations of identity, influence, and power at the intersection of culture, technology, and data. As such, a preliminary review of the relevant media platforms offers a historical overview of the technological and cultural conditions under which algorithmic audiences have emerged.

2.1. Defining Algorithmic Audiences

Within digital commerce and media, algorithms shape the delivery of content to speakers, writers, audiences, users, and consumers. Media, commerce,

and entertainment habits are informed by the platforms that determine content exposure. These platforms track online interaction, behavior, and habits, providing valuable information to marketers and content providers. Modern search, map, and purchase platforms do not translate social input into neutral output; instead, platforms emphasize the relationship between user and system, controlling the architecture of the information system. Readers and consumers account for the functioning of algorithms when interacting online. They engage selectively, actively rejecting certain results or reversing platform recommendations by buying specified products, for example. The effects of active and aware users appear to extend only so far: refuting metadata does not defeat it, and such behavior makes expectations that much more difficult to ascertain. In failing to attend to the role of what might otherwise be called, borrowing from a Gen-X neologism, an audience, contemporary theorization confronts the question of content from a rather singular point of departure (N. Cohen, 2018). A conceptual definition of the algorithmic audience follows from a perspective that is as attentive to platform logics as it is to human actors. Algorithmic audiences convene as people and platforms arrange and rehearse relational data through an ongoing process of engagement and disruption.

2.2. Historical Context of Media Platforms

Early theoretical contributions to platform studies considered a networked model of a media infrastructure in which platforms step in between producers and consumers of products, intervalize flows, and coordinate and mediate the movement of cultural goods and commodities (N. Cohen, 2018). Early notional developments of the concept of a digital platform include Web-based software intermediaries that facilitate consumer-to-consumer interaction and constitute a venue or a channel for interactions among users. An arrangement to infrastructure or gateways, platforms are pivotal in coordinating and governing social and economic interactions on the Internet. More recent investigations consider portal sites, cyberspaces, and social networking sites as major forms of platforms; proprietary software platforms such as Microsoft, Apple, Google, and Steam; and commercial platforms such as AirBnB, Uber, and Upwork. The establishment and evolution of a platform-turn have also inspired substantial commentary in the context of Internet ecosystems, value and extractive logics, and more broadly related to entrepreneurial opportunities and to contemporary “digital capitalism”. The considerable rise in the proportion of Internet traffic mediated by recommendation and filtering platforms is corroborated by statistics of distinct user audiences for a short number of screens over the years. Especially salient in balancing the mediation of access between media entrepreneurs and users, and surging as the largely preferred way for audiences to encounter and navigate content, today’s platform economy and consequently the organization of a number of media sectors is affected by three related trends: flexibilization, aggregation, and entrainment. Elastic and modular production characterized by aggregate platforms for on- demand, many-to-many distribution occupying intermediary positions inside overall networks—formerly punctuated by the arrangement of a number of well-defined sectors—redefines a great range of media circuits in a context of increasingly entrained consumer behavior to the advantage of a limited number of highly structured content environments.

3. IDENTITY FORMATION IN DIGITAL SPACES

In the digital media-saturated West, the self bears a clear mark of mediatization (Szulc, 2019). Profiles and identities on social media platforms have lost their presumed link to the real-world person. Unlike user-generated content—produced content that is social and collective by nature—digital profiles are usually shaped for individual display. However, in a continuously evolving environment, combinatorial logics may change the relation of consumption and production, social and individual, collective and singular, to where the distinction between profile and content is blurred. A dynamic digital media environment reshapes the overall media landscape and leads to the emergence of a new generation of media platforms. As media platforms become the dominant vector of digital communication, they actively participate in expanding, transforming and organizing symbolic resources.

3.1. Self-Presentation and Digital Identity

Digital spaces have become increasingly significant venues for identity formation and cultural participation. According to (Szulc, 2019), platforms encourage users to create abundant yet anchored selves, reflecting the datafication imperative to capture information about specific individuals. Media and identity formation remain co-constitutive, with media extending and diversifying the symbolic resources through which individuals construct identities and loosening the link between identity and physical location. These

dynamics render identity projects more reflexive and identities more fragile, raising concerns about authenticity and ontological security. Furthermore, the proliferation of digital media has spread the practice of explicit self-performance quasi-indiscriminately, which situates self-presentation as perhaps the most widely shared feature of online communication and as a central aspect of digital identity.

3.2. The Role of Anonymity

Identity is one of the key characteristics distinguishing humans from other living species. Individuals typically possess complex psychological personalities structured around characteristic behaviors, values, attitudes, and aptitudes that foster a sense of individuality. The Internet offers new opportunities for identity construction. Some studies consider identity as the web-based self or digital identity, encapsulating all online representations of a person. While others question a clear divide between online and real identities, research concentrates on personal representations and identity performance in digital spaces. Digital platforms accommodate this by providing varied channels for self-expression, from continuous life updates and real-time shared experiences to constant stream curation and artistically constructed digital editions.

Digital identity also impacts the composition of algorithmic audiences: 'hidden' algorithmically spotted audience profiles become known, quantifiable, and thus targetable. Yet, not all expressions take the form of explicit personal self-presentation. Anonymity confounds the individual and defies the notion of a fixed essential identity. It announces an internal contradiction by simultaneously asserting and concealing the self; in other words, it openly presents what it does not show. Characterized as an absence capable of producing presence, a non-entity participating in discourse, or a process foundational to the social constitution of subjectivity, anonymity is similarly conceptualized as a social condition intrinsically tied to the necessity of belonging to a community. Anonymous online communication exercises the power of influential or even viral messages barely demanding a social commitment. The urge to remain clandestine stems from resistance to overwhelming surveillance and obsessive identity politics. Anonymity has the potential to destabilize capitalist hierarchies by challenging personality cults, allowing movements to articulate a democratic utopia of horizontality, reciprocity, and solidarity. However, exclusion and oppression become possible when anonymity is employed to evade accountability and discriminate against marginalized groups.

4. INFLUENCE MECHANISMS

Media platforms feature interactive spaces, hosting collections of identity actors and other entities alongside the data used to describe and classify each. Algorithms organize, prioritize, and distribute the available content to generate individuals' unique and changing perspectives on the world. Every contribution can play some role in shaping the audience's future impressions, feeding an inexhaustible system of influence with the potential for dramatic change. Even algorithms intended to surf on existing waves of popularity will inevitably introduce variations that alter the course of reality as seen through the media platform. In summary, algorithms 'act as mediators of power that enable and constrain audience access to content, but they also provide tools that audiences can use to appropriate and resist platform logics' (Etienne & Charton, 2023). These mechanisms produce evidence that 'media environments [actively] reorient perception, production, and circulation within constrained choices and probabilities' (N. Cohen, 2018).

4.1. Algorithmic Recommendations

Algorithmic recommendations significantly shape audience influence. Digitized audiences increasingly rely on personalized suggestions to discover news, music, and creators. Methods including search trends, collaborative filtering, and natural language processing contribute to the aggregation of preferences and personalized content delivery. Algorithms assist the preselection process desired by human actors, acting as cognitive accelerators and helping users reach sought-after content more quickly (Roth, 2019). Assessments must compare user behavior with and without algorithms to gauge their exact role. While the goal is to maximize participation and satisfaction, the alignment with users' initial interests remains uncertain. For instance, YouTube's emphasis on maximizing view time may not correspond to original preferences. The potential narrowing of information and interactions through algorithmic mediation continues to be a subject of critical inquiry. Advances in recommendation systems introduced finer-grained interaction options, such as Instagram's adoption of TikTok's nuanced reactions, enabling more differentiated user feedback. Interface changes allow algorithms to better differentiate engagement, with early observations

noting that emojis were weighted more heavily than likes in content distribution (Meßmer & Degeling, 2023). Platform affordances influence but do not fully determine user behavior, underscoring the importance of analyzing actual usage alongside technical features. Large-scale recommender systems incorporate multiple algorithms across different components rather than relying on a single technique.

4.2. Echo Chambers and Filter Bubbles

Individuals tend to avoid information that may disprove their opinions or beliefs, contributing to the formation of echo chambers on social media platforms (Alatawi *et al*., 2021). Echo chambers emerge as bounded media spaces that both amplify shared messages and insulate them from rebuttal. These environments are characterized by networks of users who share similar opinions, exclude outside voices, and discredit dissenting views. They differ from filter bubbles, in which content is algorithmically personalized to individual preferences, in that members of echo chambers actively exclude and discredit opposing opinions, distrust outside sources, and where exposure to counterevidence can paradoxically reinforce the chamber.

Social media's facilitation of communication and content sharing—the foundation of digital platforms designed explicitly to connect users—also promotes the spread of misinformation, often referred to as fake news. AI development and personalized content recommendations have further enabled echo chamber formation. Concerns about the attendant social effects, including polarization, fake news propagation, and misinformation, have sparked renewed interest in online echo chambers.

Filter bubbles are forms of intellectual isolation arising from algorithms that tailor content according to users' prior choices (Figà Talamanca & Arfini, 2022). Conversely, echo chambers are groups maintained by the users themselves; these can and do exist offline but are widened online by the tendency to interact only with those holding similar beliefs. The echo chamber notion applies to entire social networks, forming when users connect and exclude outsiders, whereas filter bubbles occur at the individual level, developing as users consume particular information and communicate within homogeneous networks. Both concepts posit significant societal impact, whether through technologically deterministic or behaviorally incentivized dynamics; each draws attention to the potential deleterious effects of digital technologies on daily life.

5. POWER DYNAMICS

With 83 percent of all news access now coming through social media platforms, the ways in which people find and track information has dramatically shifted (Gilani *et al*., 2020). The control over information flows that comes with this platformization has consequently become a site of contest over media power. Referring to the increasing capability of platforms in gathering personal data and implementing surveillance, notes that "the question of media power can be reframed to highlight platforms not as engines of [media] production but of media control." Audiences predictably face the risk of excessive and unwitting exposure, as well as the resulting privacy breaches and commercial exploitation, raising questions about ownership and control vis-à-vis platform providers. Given the deepening, cross-media engagement and sheer mass of personal data, the issue has been even more pronounced with algorithmic audiences, who are kept on streaming platforms for considerable periods while their minute-by-minute responses are monitored and recorded. Data leakage has raised further concerns, as the Facebook-Cambridge Analytica scandal has value for suivi (long-term tracking of users) as well as for lieu (locating users in a map of their online and offline mobility).

5.1. Control of Information

Platforms have a governing function and exert informational control by regulating circulation. The distinction between speech curation for hosting (deciding if a given content will exist) and for navigation (deciding what draws user attention) is critical. While traditional media relied on such factors for headline selection, Big Data technologies now enable precise, instantaneous tracking and adjustment of content based on user interaction (Grafanaki, 2019).

Governance presupposes structural coherence and comprehensive oversight, yet platform operators are limited in apprehending the complexity of the barriers their policies erect and the scope of the consequences. The algorithm itself constitutes the principal mechanism for enacting control and conducting surveillance—the layered structure of protocols/EULAs serves chiefly as a legitimating apparatus.

5.2. Surveillance and Data Privacy

Surveillance capitalism presents a dramatic departure from previous models—Amazon, Google, and Facebook leverage rich but restrictive data to create unparalleled value (Sujon, 2019). Zoetanya Sujon frames these services as platform empires, wherein a small cadre of firms dominate digital infrastructures and extract vast amounts of data. Throughout history, culture has been fused with advertising, a trend amplified under conditions of monopoly—platform empires combine data-colonial practices with surveillance capitalism to shape contemporary urban space, society, and daily life.

Social media, functioning as platform empires, erect ‘‘digital fences’’ around internet existence, deeply integrating users into their delimitations; the resulting environments resemble incarceration more than exodus. Freemium business models underpin these dynamics, enabling pervasive data collection that erodes intrinsic social functions, inhibits participation, and mechanisms of escape; consequently, digital ecosystems increasingly morph into platforms for data production rather than arenas for social interaction.

6. CASE STUDIES

Case studies serve to exemplify the operation of influence and the associated power structures within algorithmic audiences. Social media platforms, streaming services, and online gaming represent key sites for examining the interplay of identity, influence, and power in algorithmic exposure. Participants shape identity through the creation and management of personal content, with the maintenance of anonymity and non-disclosure often playing a central element on social media. Streaming content creators are generally identifiable, but their content curation and topical association nonetheless contribute to the presentation of a digital self, while online gaming guilds facilitate the formation of collective identities. Influence is mostly exercised by directing attention to individual items of digital media, a process frequently amplified by reputational or monetization schemes; marketing, purposefully misleading “clickbait”, and the propagation of misinformation are characteristic byproducts. As a consequence, these contexts also provide concrete examples of the vulnerabilities and centralized control of power revealed by the analysis in Section 7.

6.1. Social Media Platforms

Social media platforms constitute one of today’s most important social, cultural, economic, and political spaces. They enable citizens and consumers to connect, share, search, collaborate, and participate in a range of online activities. Data on their users are collected, mined, and used to build consumption profiles for direct or indirect marketing purposes. The accounts that users are invited to set up on such platforms are “profiled” according to social groups that help shape their attitudes, aspirations, and interests. Yet, according to Szulc (Szulc, 2019), “profile-making activities, and the languages and technologies employed to act them out, play a far more complex role than simply underpinning matchmaking; profiles are one of the principal mechanisms through which identities are constituted, rather than simply expressed”. Recent scholarly observations also point to the transformation of engagement with social media platforms from a moment of “expansion” to a period of “systematized enrichment” that privileges central content creators and critical users. This development would limit participation and restrict the diversity of platforms, users, and content.

For many media and communication scholars, the shift from analogue or fire-digital media to digital media, in which the construction, distribution, and consumption of public media content have been largely reconfigured, has generated new platforms (including Google, YouTube, WeChat, Instagram, and TikTok) that have become crucial sites of media activity. As a direct result, the audience has re-emerged as a concept deserving closer scrutiny. For a long time, classical understandings of the audience as constituting a specific type of media phenomenon and population date back to the emergence of the mass media and communication industries during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. At the same time, however, the “old” mass or empirical notions of such audiences have lost some relevance in the new context, given the tendency of the “new” “platformized media” to solicit continuous and personally tailored engagement across a diverse set of site-specific nodes. As (N. Cohen, 2018) reminds us, cultural studies scholars have also made important contributions to the re-examination of the media audience and its relationship with the media text: “While active audience theories have been important for overcoming mass communication theories of the passive audience, the role of the audience in contemporary media such as video games, social network sites and internet browsers still remains undertheorized”.

6.2. Streaming Services

As streaming services consolidate market shares and profit margins, the associated platforms expand rapidly and exert corresponding degrees of power (Eriksson & Johansson, 2017). Streaming services dispense music, movies, television programs, games and other content to subscribers via the internet, eavesdropping on consumption activities, absorbing preference data and recommending further content accordingly. Many streaming services rely on trackers embedded in content, listening devices attached to physical objects, explicit declarations of preference, privacy-invasive settings and other sources to evaluate user proclivities. Frameworks for in-home monitoring and non-consensual audio surveillance can infer information about activities and events outside the home.

6.3. Online Gaming Communities

Online games can be more than entertainment. They can build connections online and form real-world friendships for financially challenged college students, especially if access to computers is limited to a campus computing lab. Players avoid exposing their gender and may pretend to identify as male to circumvent harassment. Different communities exist across platforms, and a gamer identity is maintained through forums, social media, and games. Assumptions of homogeneity and mutual understanding should be avoided, since outsiders often hold misconceptions.

7. AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

In algorithmic configurations, coherent and consistent engagement is essential. Models gain the ability to influence users when patterns become predictable, enabling calculated responses. Variability in engagement hinders this process. Consequently, sustaining steady and focused participation secures a degree of influence by supporting 'calculated output' (Li *et al*., 2023). Three principal mechanisms facilitate algorithmic amplification: content creation, curation, and community formation. Individuals can create content directly from an existing audience—building, for instance, a music platform start-up or an influential Instagram account. Content curation involves augmenting a profile with information and items sourced online or in the physical world. Community interactions—online or offline—provide an even greater scope for enhancement, potentially enabling the construction of an extensive network extending hundreds or thousands of kilometers from the initial platform (Sampaio Helin, 2018).

7.1. Content Creation and Curation

Mediated communication is a two-way process. When researching media accessibility, Clayman and Heritage (2002) stress the important role of the audience. For sociologist Zygmunt Bauman, it is impossible to imagine the activity of broadcasting a way of understanding the world without the existence of an audience. In all societies, “the linguistic or symbolic stimulus […] only ‘makes sense’ when it is ‘means of communication’ addressed to a potential audience” (Bauman, 1986). Any media message sent but lacking an audience does not meet the criteria to be considered communication.Digital media broaden the scope for forming groups with which one can interact. In the case of social media, the individual constructs a network by inviting friends or contacts to join his or her personal or professional virtual space. Subsequently, others seek to expand their network by accepting people they do not know during the Facebook configuration, for example. This specific situation greatly resembles the construction of a small-group audience that is interested in what the individual can contribute. The network created becomes an audience that turns legitimate when it attests to the social success of the one who claims ownership of the account. Because these interactions depend on an expectation of reputation, a reciprocal relationship is established: the user ‘‘likes’’ other people to be “liked” and therefore made visible to others. Maintaining or increasing visibility becomes a central objective for most, if not all, social media users (Erin Duffy *et al*., 2021). Content discovery is a central activity for consumption across platforms, emerging as an entry point for users to identify media items for purchase, viewing, or listening. At the same time, the act of content discovery is a significant aspect for how media providers can retain attention and engagement on their platform venues. These multiple co-existing content discovery pathways have led to platforms developing algorithmic recommendation systems for the identification of relevant, related, and/or personalized content in the delivery, routing, and exposure of media items (Grafanaki, 2019).

7.2. Community Building and Interaction

An important question for autonomous media forms is how audiences engage with and influence media. Since the rise of “digital publics,” media scholars have

studied the effects of media exposure on the formation of cultural, ideological, and political identities, emphasizing the heterogeneous, collective, and enacted nature of publics ((Roel) Lutkenhaus *et al*., 2019). Three key questions arise in discussions of algorithmic audiences. First, what counts as an audience member in platforms that facilitate online communities? Second, what forms of engagement foster a collective audience rather than an aggregation of individuals? Third, how do audiences influence platforms and the content they offer? Since the 1990s, systems like portals have encouraged users to contribute content and interact with each other, fostering a self-generating media environment. As social media became ubiquitous and integrated with platforms, interactions like tweets, likes, and comments contributed to collective audience identities and community building. Different tasks, such as gaming or watching on-demand TV, offer diverse practices for forming communities. Even without direct interaction, routines of following the same websites, series, or streams can create unexpected fan communities. Platforms therefore offer various routes for agency and participation: individuals may influence algorithms through tuning and curation efforts or obtain acknowledgment and recognition as fan or community members—a process that, in turn, strengthens social as well as algorithmic identities (Rathnayake & D. Suthers, 2018).

8. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The production of digital inequalities raises pressing questions about the responsibility of companies that provide media platforms and offer access to algorithmic audiences. Large segments of the population approach public debate and commerce through commercial media platforms, expecting straightforward and benign information flows directed by personalized, probabilistic data and machine learning. Yet, algorithmic solutions carry stronger societal and legal obligations than those attached to a mere sales point. On most platforms, users do not acquire ownership of the data they share but consent, under platform provider discretion, to participate in advertising and commercial schemes. Service providers may reallocate data flows and access rights for various reasons, including security and epidemiological concerns. When algorithmic assignments lack moral or legal justification, the subjective and fragmentary organization of audiences they manufacture may prove confining, deeply affecting social, political, and cultural existence (Roth, 2019). Regarding the dissemination of fake news, false engagement, bot activity, and misinformation, it remains an open question how companies wielding such political and economic influence across countries can and must assume responsibility for the platforms they operate (Eckles, 2022).

8.1. Manipulation and Misinformation

Algorithmic information accord platforms great power to shape people's media experience, yet audiences remain responsible for interpreting and responding to mutable information environments. This combination leads audiences to engage with various persuasive tactics and informational biases on a routine basis (N. Cohen, 2018). Because digital media platforms maintain sensitive information on most of the population, platforms can re-purpose wide data sets for monetization or censorship, facilitate cyber violence, reinforce retrograde social norms, and exert influence at near-totalitarian scale. Yet platforms frequently conceal their inner workings behind vague explanations and inscrutably complex algorithms. Data collectors dearly hope people continue disclosing personal details into poorly designed and controlled systems, and much of contemporary society trains people to become over-informed yet under-familiar with the mechanisms of information environment formation.

8.2. Responsibility of Platform Providers

Platform providers possess extensive knowledge of user behaviors and preferences. In principle, this knowledge positions them to act in the collective interest—supporting scientific inquiry, enhancing democratic communication, providing public goods, managing disasters, or limiting harmful behaviors. The feasibility of a unilateral "benevolent dictator" depends on the platforms' willingness to bear such responsibilities. However, whereas public-goods provision to selective venue members creates value, stewardship of public-communications infrastructure generates externalities and liabilities from the economic activities of politically interested parties (Bayer, 2019). Consequently, a social-license mandate or regulatory mandate seems essential for platform providers to undertake serious stewardship.

Content moderation constitutes a critical function shaping online speech and significantly influences speech content (Grafanaki, 2019). Platforms curate or govern speech through content-moderation policies that establish detailed—and often opaque—rules determining whether specific content can be hosted

and remain on the platform. These policies play a decisive role in whether content can exist or continue to be hosted, irrespective of user interaction. Algorithms that structure content must not apply viewpoint discrimination; content-selection algorithms should offer user options and foster diversity. Advertisements—including political advertisements—must be clearly distinguishable from voluntary content, with advertisers remain identifiable. Additionally, platforms should ensure that accounts are registered by humans rather than artificial-intelligence agents or bots and must identify virtual personalities or trolls. Meticulous implementation of data-protection regulations is imperative, with providers responsible for protecting users' personal data, preventing hacking and leaks, and informing users about data-processing practices, including opt-out possibilities.

9. FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Built on the discussion of power and ethical considerations, this section examines the trajectories offered by emerging technologies and regulatory frameworks. Audiences are already in continual epistolary exchange with platforms, with algorithmic audiences constituting the real subject of platformized media. The audiencing of data-generated personas conjoins the historical work of media platforms in structuring exposure with more recent concerns about data ownership and privacy. A framework based on identity, influence, and power remains a promising way for critics, researchers, and media educators to track, evaluate, and assess the siempre evoluant future of algorithmic audiences (N. Cohen, 2018).

9.1. Emerging Technologies

Algorithmic audiences represent a new hybrid form of cultural participation in which individuals' choices about self-presentation are combined with platform-generated information, processing, and classification. Using these forms of participation allows for the production of a new form of influence that arises as a result of the continuous and ongoing power to shape individual and collective attention, filtered and moderated by media platforms. These continuous and ongoing processes make it difficult for users to disentangle their own preferences and choices from the mechanisms of influence that exist within the platform, creating a model of influence that is more difficult to escape than it is in other types of media mediation. The concept of algorithmic audiences therefore represents a theoretical framework to better understand the conditions of media participation within a platformized media environment (N. Cohen, 2018).

Algorithmic audience research focuses on three main concepts: identity, influence, and power. Identity (section 2.1) examines the ways in which individuals present themselves on platforms, using a variety of rhetorical and expressive means to shape their public persona. Influence (section 2.2) attends to the mechanisms of content selection and dissemination, exploring how algorithms mediate attention and engagement. Power (section 2.3) assesses the asymmetrical capacities of platforms to direct behavior, structure experience, and monitor activity. These concepts are introduced and synthesized through an overview of the historical trajectory of media platforms (section 2.4), situating the emergence of algorithmic audiences within a broader sociotechnical development.

The beginning of the 21st century has seen a dramatic increase in the use and adoption of digital networking technologies in everyday life. Many of the practices that are now commonplace on the Internet—including email, forums, web browsing, or file sharing—originated before the year 2000, but the rapid expansion of fiber optics, the availability of cheaper computers and home routers, and the development of new social networking and distribution systems during the first decades of the new century drove a much more widespread adoption of technology and media at the societal level. The evolution of platforms and their infrastructures during this period brought with it an unprecedented level of technological, economic, and logistical coordination among geographic regions and cultural territories. Broadband networks and services emerged as a decisive infrastructure, providing the structural conditions for a wide range of everyday uses and practices. New services emerged alongside the infrastructure, transforming many creative sectors and enabling a dramatic growth in the consumption of on-demand media through the Internet.

9.2. Regulatory Frameworks

The algorithmic logics that platformized media circulate are of regulatory importance, as ranks structure how digital identity and influence develop. Algorithmic audiences possess inescapable, multi-dimensional power. Collective intention drives relationships, attracting resources under a common identity (Eckles, 2022). Source control—by platforms regulating, limiting, or obstructing information—adds

power. Platforms can screen users' capacities to cultivate new forms of prosumer participation and mediate relations by embedding mechanisms of collaboration into their interface. The combination of algorithmic curation and platform governance therefore guides, shapes, and shapes the conditions for collective action. Platforms, as privileged regulators of content and traffic, constitute an additional power source, emphasizing core dynamics of technological rule. One method to better modulate content regulation in light of the public debate about digital sovereignty is the separation between sponsors (paid content) and community members (organic content). Platforms should maintain a clear distinction between the two, such as positioning paid content below organic posts. Such constraints apply to platforms as to any political speech under the First Amendment, allowing Constitutional regulation of online priorities (Grafanaki, 2019). A possible framework consists of the three poles of regulation: Algorithms set the rules; platforms exert surveillance; and lawmakers legislate the ecosystem. Regulations could impose additional transparency requirements, as well as non-discrimination and auditability obligations from platforms to stakeholders.

10. CONCLUSION

The construction and operation of algorithmic audiences are crucial to understanding how digital identity, influence, and power relations evolve within platformized media. Media platforms maintain direct relationships with user-commodities and mediate informational flows between participating organizations, actors, and audiences. Upon entering the platform, individuals create a digital self that transforms into a digital commodity available to others. Governing this digital self remains challenging, and in many situations, anonymity emerges as the only alternative. Data-gathering algorithms influence the circulation of content and connectivity on social media, while recommendation algorithms determine the dissemination and access to information on video-sharing platforms and streaming services. Although users' algorithmic preferences remain largely opaque, their effects can be traced by examining the circulation of content, forms of connectivity, and psychological dispositions. During the transition from platformization to platform-mediated media, a series of power relations take shape: individual power relates to the capacity for self-definition; platform power controls information dissemination and communication channels; and governmental power leverages data collection for political and economic control. Les usages communes across social media, streaming services, and online gaming reveal crucial characteristics of algorithmic audiences and the often-obfuscated power dynamics within platformized media. Algorithmic audiences engage in creation, curation, and community formation on social media; they act as capacity-building, regulatory savvies, and intermediaries on streaming platforms; and they adopt roles such as performers, leaders, and newcomers in online gaming contexts. Together, these framing devices induce a continuous rearticulation of relations between identity, influence, and power within contemporary media environments (N. Cohen, 2018).

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