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Paper: “Who Decides What We See? Algorithms, Platforms, and the Transformation of Cultural Production in the Social Media Age”

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Peer review:

Reviewer 1: Julio Costa Pinto
University of Santiago de Compostela, Spain

Reviewer 2: Arburim Iseni
State University of Tetovo, Republic of Macedonia

Reviewer 3: Blinded

Reviewer A:
Recommendation: Accept Submission

The TITLE is clear and it is adequate to the content of the article.

The title is clear, catchy and directly relates to the article's central issue: the role of algorithms and digital platforms in the selection, visibility and transformation of cultural output.

The ABSTRACT clearly presents objectives, methods, results, and conclusions.

The summary provides a relatively comprehensive overview of the main components of a scientific abstract. However, it would be advisable to explain more clearly in the abstract that the study is based on a critical review/synthesis of the literature and that no original empirical data were collected.

There are a few grammatical errors and spelling mistakes in this article.

The academic English is, on the whole, good, and the article is written in a consistent style. However, there are some very long sentences. For example, several paragraphs contain multiple subordinate clauses and successive bibliographical references. There is a need for greater consistency in the use of hyphens and the formation of compound terms, for example: editorially-driven, visibility-optimisation, platform-paternalism.

The study METHODS are explained clearly.

The "Methods" section clearly states that the article adopts a qualitative, conceptual and interpretative methodology. However, it should include a brief description of the criteria used for selecting and analysing the literature. This would enhance the conceptual transparency of the work.

The results are clear and do not contain errors.

The article is generally clear and well-structured, although there are some scientific aspects that could be improved. For example, the distinction between "Results" and "Discussion" is clear, but not always distinct. As the article is conceptual and literature-based, some sections presented as "Results" are, in fact, a synthesis and theoretical interpretation of the literature. A brief explanation of the study's limitations and possible avenues for future research could also be included.

The CONCLUSION or summary is accurate and supported by the content.

The conclusion directly addresses the research question set out in the introduction.

The list of REFERENCES is comprehensive and appropriate.

A literature review could be carried out; given the rapid pace of development of platforms and algorithmic systems, it would be advisable to include more recent literature, particularly research published after 2019.

Please rate the TITLE of this paper.

[Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]

5

Please rate the ABSTRACT of this paper.

[Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]

4

Please rate the LANGUAGE of this paper.

[Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]

4

Please rate the METHODS of this paper.

[Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]

4

Please rate the RESULTS of this paper.

[Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]

4

Please rate the CONCLUSION of this paper.

[Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]

5

Please rate the REFERENCES of this paper.

[Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]

4

Overall Recommendation!!!

Accepted, minor revision needed

Comments and Suggestions to the Author(s):

The article has been accepted subject to minor revisions. The article is coherent, relevant and presents a theoretically sound argument.

The limitations identified do not compromise the overall quality of the work, but warrant revisions prior to publication, particularly with regard to methodological clarification, updating and/or expanding the references, and a minor final linguistic revision.

Reviewer B:

Recommendation: Revisions Required

The TITLE is clear and it is adequate to the content of the article.

The title “Who decides what we see? Algorithms, platforms, and the transformation of cultural production in the social media age” is clear, relevant, and consistent with the article’s content. It

accurately reflects the paper's focus on algorithmic selection, platform power, visibility, and changes in cultural production.

The ABSTRACT clearly presents objectives, methods, results, and conclusions.

The abstract clearly presents the objective (examining how platforms and algorithmic logics transform cultural production and visibility), the methodological approach (sociological/conceptual analysis based on documented empirical cases), the main findings (visibility optimization, platform paternalism, and algorithmic power), and the conclusion (the need to understand algorithmic power as both technical and discursive).

However, the methods are described somewhat broadly, and the specific nature of the literature-based methodology could be stated more explicitly.

There are a few grammatical errors and spelling mistakes in this article.

There are a few minor grammatical, punctuation, and stylistic issues, but the article is generally written in strong academic English. These errors do not substantially affect readability or comprehension.

The study METHODS are explained clearly.

The Methods section clearly identifies the study as a qualitative, conceptual, and interpretive analysis and explains the main theoretical framework and sources used. It also explains that no original empirical data were collected.

However, the methodology is not sufficiently detailed or systematic for a rigorous literature-based study. The paper does not clearly explain the criteria for selecting the sources, the scope of the corpus, the search/selection process, or the specific procedures used to synthesize and analyze the literature.

The results are clear and do not contain errors.

The Results section is generally clear, logically organized, and consistent with the stated research question. The discussion of datafication, commodification, algorithmic selection, visibility optimization, and platform paternalism is understandable.

However, because this is a conceptual/literature-based article rather than an original empirical study, the section sometimes reads more like a literature review or theoretical discussion than original "results." Some claims are also strongly dependent on interpretations from the cited studies and would benefit from clearer distinction between the author's synthesis and findings reported by previous researchers.

The CONCLUSION or summary is accurate and supported by the content.

The conclusion is consistent with and supported by the preceding discussion. It directly returns to the research question and summarizes the main arguments concerning cultural production, algorithmic selection, visibility optimization, platform paternalism, and algorithmic imaginaries.

The conclusions are appropriately derived from the literature discussed in the article and do not introduce substantially new claims.

The list of REFERENCES is comprehensive and appropriate.

The references are relevant and generally appropriate for the topic, and the key theoretical works cited in the article are credible and well aligned with the argument. However, the list is not fully comprehensive, particularly for a contemporary article on algorithms, platforms, cultural production, and platform governance.

There are also several places where the article relies heavily on older foundational sources and secondary citations, while more recent scholarship could strengthen the literature review and demonstrate the current state of research.

Please rate the TITLE of this paper.

[Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]

4

Please rate the ABSTRACT of this paper.

[Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]

4

Please rate the LANGUAGE of this paper.

[Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]

4

Please rate the METHODS of this paper.

[Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]

4

Please rate the RESULTS of this paper.

[Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]

4

Please rate the CONCLUSION of this paper.

[Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]

4

Please rate the REFERENCES of this paper.

[Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]

4

Overall Recommendation!!!

Accepted, minor revision needed

Comments and Suggestions to the Author(s):

The manuscript addresses a relevant and timely topic concerning algorithmic visibility, platformization, and the transformation of cultural production in the social media age. The theoretical discussion is generally coherent, the paper is well organized, and the selected literature provides a solid foundation for the argument. The research question is clearly stated and the conclusions are broadly consistent with the discussion.

However, several aspects should be strengthened before publication. First, the Methods section would benefit from greater methodological transparency. Although the authors describe the study as qualitative, conceptual, and interpretive, the criteria used to select the literature and empirical cases are not sufficiently explained. The authors should clarify the scope of the reviewed

literature, the rationale for selecting the cited studies, and the specific procedure used to synthesize and interpret the sources.

Second, the distinction between the author's own analytical contribution and findings or interpretations taken from previous studies should be made clearer. At several points, the Results section reads more as an extensive literature synthesis than as a presentation of distinct analytical findings. The authors should emphasize more explicitly what new conceptual insight this article contributes to the existing literature.

Third, the reference list is relevant but could be broadened and updated with more recent peer-reviewed scholarship on algorithmic visibility, recommender systems, platform governance, cultural production, and algorithmic power. Where possible, the authors should also consult and cite primary sources rather than relying on secondary citations.

Finally, the manuscript would benefit from a careful proofreading for minor grammatical, punctuation, and stylistic issues. Overall, the manuscript has merit and addresses an important issue, but strengthening the methodological explanation, clarifying its original contribution, updating the literature, and making minor language corrections would improve its academic quality and publishability.

Reviewer C:
Recommendation: See Comments

The TITLE is clear and it is adequate to the content of the article.

The title, “Who decides what we see? Algorithms, platforms, and the transformation of cultural production in the social media age,” is clear, engaging, and substantially appropriate to the content of the manuscript. It identifies the central concern of the article—the influence of digital platforms and algorithmic systems on cultural production, content selection, and visibility. The opening question effectively attracts readers’ attention while establishing the broader sociological and communicative significance of the research topic. The subtitle further clarifies the article’s conceptual orientation by identifying algorithms, platforms, and cultural transformation as its principal areas of investigation.

The title is consistent with the manuscript’s theoretical discussion of platformization, algorithmic culture, datafication, commodification, algorithmic selection, and platform paternalism. It also reflects the article’s interdisciplinary relevance to media and communication studies, cultural sociology, and critical platform studies. Importantly, the manuscript examines not only how algorithms influence the visibility of cultural content but also how platform companies exercise discursive and institutional power over cultural producers.

Nevertheless, the title could be marginally more precise in communicating the article's qualitative, conceptual, and interpretive methodology. Although the present wording may suggest a broad empirical investigation of audience exposure, the manuscript primarily synthesizes previously published research and documented cases. Overall, the title is informative, academically relevant, and adequately aligned with the manuscript's objectives, theoretical framework, and principal arguments. I consider the title appropriate, with only a minor recommendation to clarify the article's conceptual-review orientation if greater methodological precision is desired.

The ABSTRACT clearly presents objectives, methods, results, and conclusions.

The abstract provides a coherent and informative overview of the manuscript and communicates its principal objectives, theoretical orientation, major arguments, and concluding implications. The research objective is identifiable: to examine how digital platforms and their algorithmic logics transform the production, selection, visibility, and reinterpretation of cultural content. The abstract appropriately situates this objective within the concepts of platformization and algorithmic culture, thereby establishing the study's relevance to contemporary media and communication research.

The methodological approach is partially communicated through the statement that the article reconstructs the transformation from editorial gatekeeping to algorithmic selection through a sociological perspective and documented empirical cases. However, the methodology could be presented more explicitly. The abstract does not clearly identify the study as a qualitative, conceptual, and interpretive review or explain that it synthesizes previously published research rather than collecting original empirical data. A concise statement identifying the comparative synthesis of existing studies and documented cases across journalism, digital gaming, music streaming, fashion, and online video would improve methodological transparency.

The principal findings are adequately represented through the discussion of visibility-optimization strategies, platform paternalism, and the discursive and material power of digital intermediaries. The concluding argument—that algorithmic power operates through both technical infrastructures and public discourse—is particularly relevant and clearly expressed. The abstract also establishes the broader implications for cultural governance and public value. Overall, the abstract is well structured, conceptually strong, and substantially aligned with the manuscript. Nevertheless, it would benefit from a more explicit methodological statement and a sharper distinction between the findings synthesized from previous research and the author's conceptual contribution. These revisions would strengthen its precision, transparency, and usefulness to prospective readers.

There are a few grammatical errors and spelling mistakes in this article.

The manuscript is generally written in clear, formal, and academically appropriate English. Its terminology is consistent with the conventions of critical platform studies, media sociology, and communication research. The argument is logically organized, and the author demonstrates a strong command of the relevant theoretical literature. No pervasive spelling problems are immediately apparent in the reviewed text. However, several grammatical, punctuation, and stylistic issues require editorial attention before publication.

In particular, some sentences are excessively long and contain multiple subordinate clauses, parenthetical expressions, and citations. This occasionally reduces readability and makes the principal argument difficult to follow. For example, the discussion of platformization in the Introduction and the extended theoretical analysis in the Discussion would benefit from sentence restructuring. Certain passages also contain awkward constructions or punctuation choices, including comma-heavy lists and inconsistent handling of compound modifiers. The manuscript should additionally be checked for consistency in citation punctuation, author-date formatting, capitalization, and reference-list presentation.

A few expressions may require stylistic refinement to improve precision and fluency, although these should not necessarily be classified as substantive grammatical errors. The terminology and spelling conventions should remain consistent throughout the manuscript, particularly in the use of terms such as “datafication,” “algorithmic visibility,” and “platform paternalism.”

Overall, the language quality is satisfactory for an academic manuscript, and the identified concerns do not substantially undermine its intellectual contribution. I recommend careful proofreading and moderate language editing to improve sentence clarity, punctuation, concision, and stylistic consistency. These revisions should be editorial rather than extensive rewriting.

The study METHODS are explained clearly.

The study methods are explained reasonably clearly, and the methodological approach is broadly consistent with the article’s conceptual objectives. The author identifies the study as a qualitative, conceptual, and interpretive investigation grounded in critical platform studies and the sociology of cultural and communicative processes. The manuscript also clarifies that it does not collect original empirical data but instead synthesizes previously published research and documented cases concerning platformization, algorithmic culture, and cultural production. A notable strength is the use of an analytical framework organized around three dimensions: market structures, governance frameworks, and computational infrastructures. This framework provides a coherent structure for examining how digital platforms influence cultural production and algorithmic visibility. The author also identifies relevant scholarly sources and empirical illustrations from journalism, digital gaming, music streaming, fashion, and online video. The discussion of the study by Petre, Duffy, and Hund (2019), including its analysis of 105 news articles and seven platform documents, further demonstrates engagement with existing empirical research.

Nevertheless, the methodological explanation requires greater precision to ensure transparency and reproducibility. The manuscript does not sufficiently explain the procedures used to identify, select, and evaluate the literature included in the synthesis. Explicit inclusion and exclusion criteria, the scope of the literature search, and the process used to compare and interpret the selected sources would strengthen the methodology. Furthermore, the author should clarify how the three-dimensional analytical framework was applied consistently across the different cases and how the conceptual contribution was distinguished from conclusions established by previous studies.

Overall, the methods are adequately outlined for a conceptual article, but additional clarification of source selection, analytical procedures, and synthesis criteria is recommended to improve methodological rigor and transparency.

The results are clear and do not contain errors.

The results are generally clear, logically organized, and consistent with the principal research question concerning the transformation of cultural production through digital platforms and algorithmic systems. The manuscript presents its findings under relevant thematic headings, addressing datafication, commodification, algorithmic selection, visibility-optimization practices, and platform paternalism. This organization enables readers to follow the progression from the structural mechanisms of platform power to the practical strategies adopted by cultural producers and the broader implications for cultural governance.

A particular strength is the integration of documented cases from journalism, digital gaming, music streaming, fashion, and online video. The discussion of BuzzFeed, Candy Crush Saga, Spotify, Rap Genius, Facebook, Instagram, and Amazon illustrates how algorithmic systems can influence content production, distribution, and visibility. The manuscript also appropriately draws on established scholarly studies to support its principal arguments and connects the empirical illustrations to the concepts of platform dependence, algorithmic culture, and the discursive legitimization of platform authority.

However, some concerns require attention. The Results section primarily synthesizes findings from previously published studies rather than presenting original empirical results. This is appropriate for a conceptual review, but the author should distinguish more explicitly between evidence reported in the cited literature and the interpretations advanced in the present article. Some claims concerning algorithmic power, structural inequalities, and platform governance could also benefit from more explicit connections between the cited evidence and the conclusions drawn. In addition, the lengthy paragraphs and complex sentences occasionally reduce clarity. Although no major factual or analytical errors are immediately apparent from the manuscript's presentation, the accuracy of individual empirical claims and their supporting references would benefit from systematic verification.

Overall, the results are substantially clear and coherent, but minor revisions are recommended to improve precision, readability, and evidentiary transparency.

The CONCLUSION or summary is accurate and supported by the content.

The conclusion is generally accurate, coherent, and well supported by the arguments developed throughout the manuscript. It effectively revisits the central research question concerning how digital platforms and algorithmic systems transform cultural production, content selection, visibility, and user interpretation. The author successfully synthesizes the principal themes discussed in the Results and Discussion sections, including the contingent cultural commodity, algorithmic ranking, platform paternalism, and algorithmic imaginaries.

A notable strength of the conclusion is its integration of the article's theoretical perspectives into a coherent overall argument. It appropriately emphasizes that algorithmic power operates through both technical infrastructures and discursive practices, while recognizing the influence of commercial interests on the distribution of cultural visibility. The discussion of inequalities among cultural producers and the limitations of public accountability also follows logically from the literature and cases examined in the manuscript. Furthermore, the conclusion addresses the broader implications of algorithmic governance for cultural and communication studies.

However, the conclusion would benefit from a more explicit acknowledgment of the methodological limitations associated with a conceptual review based exclusively on previously published research. Because the study does not generate original empirical data, its conclusions should be presented as theoretically informed interpretations of existing evidence rather than as independently established empirical findings. The author could also strengthen the concluding section by articulating more specific implications for future research and platform governance. Overall, the conclusion accurately reflects the manuscript's central arguments and is substantially supported by its content. Minor revisions to clarify the scope of the findings, acknowledge methodological limitations, and specify future research directions would further improve its academic rigor and completeness.

The list of REFERENCES is comprehensive and appropriate.

The reference list is relevant to the subject matter and provides an appropriate theoretical foundation for the manuscript. However, I recommend revision of the references before the manuscript can be considered for publication. The author must conduct a systematic cross-check to ensure that every in-text citation appears in the reference list and that every listed reference is cited in the text, in accordance with the European Scientific Journal's referencing requirements. Particular attention should be given to citations of works discussed indirectly through secondary sources, as well as the accuracy of author names, publication years, article titles, journal titles, volume and issue numbers, page ranges, and DOI information. Conference papers and contributions to edited publications should also be formatted consistently.

The current reference list appears thematically appropriate, but its completeness and bibliographic accuracy cannot be confirmed solely from its relevance to the manuscript. The author should correct any omissions, inconsistencies, or inaccurate bibliographic details and ensure uniform application of the journal's prescribed citation style.

Recommendation: Revision required. The references should not be accepted as fully compliant until the citation-reference correspondence and bibliographic details have been verified and corrected.

Please rate the TITLE of this paper.

[Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]

5

Please rate the ABSTRACT of this paper.

[Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]

4

Please rate the LANGUAGE of this paper.

[Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]

4

Please rate the METHODS of this paper.

[Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]

5

Please rate the RESULTS of this paper.

[Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]

5

Please rate the CONCLUSION of this paper.

[Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]

5

Please rate the REFERENCES of this paper.

[Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]

4

Overall Recommendation!!!

Accepted, minor revision needed

Comments and Suggestions to the Author(s):

The manuscript addresses a relevant and timely topic concerning the influence of digital platforms and algorithmic systems on cultural production, content visibility, and platform governance. Its engagement with platformization, algorithmic culture, and platform paternalism provides a valuable theoretical foundation, while the examples drawn from journalism, digital gaming, music streaming, fashion, and online video enhance its interdisciplinary relevance. However, several revisions are necessary to strengthen the manuscript's methodological transparency, analytical precision, and overall scholarly quality. First, the author should clarify the literature selection process, including the criteria used to identify, select, and evaluate the sources included in the conceptual synthesis. Second, the Results section should more clearly distinguish findings derived from previously published empirical studies from the author's own interpretations and theoretical contributions. Third, the abstract should explicitly identify the conceptual-review methodology and summarize the principal contribution more precisely. The author should also improve readability by shortening lengthy sentences, refining punctuation, and ensuring consistent academic language throughout the manuscript. Particular attention must be given to the reference list: every in-text citation should correspond to a reference-list entry, and every listed reference should be cited in the text. All bibliographic details and DOI information should be verified for accuracy and consistency with the journal's requirements. Finally, the conclusion should acknowledge the limitations of relying exclusively on existing literature and identify specific directions for future empirical research. Overall, the manuscript has potential, but revision is required before it can be recommended for publication.
