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Visions and values of algorithms

A study of how Elon Musk envisions X's algorithms

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Abstract

Recent studies have shed light on how media platform justify their algorithms, highlighting characteristics such as efficiency or neutrality. However, while these contributions are significant, they still need to analyze how platform owners discuss algorithms. In this research I argue that we can gain insights into algorithms' social power by exploring Elon Musk's tweets about his media platform X.

My research is rooted in the theoretical contributions of platform studies and critical algorithm studies. Platform studies provide a lens to understand how the platform economy, driven by data extraction, shapes its features. Critical algorithm studies, on the other hand, highlight the dual role of technology and human intervention in shaping algorithms.

For my methodological approach, I used Actor-Network-Theory (ANT). The point of using this perspective is to analyze algorithms as a network of humans and non-human actors (Bucher, 2018). So, the analysis focuses on what Musk claims about algorithms and actors that can influence this technology, such as buttons, X's special features, journalists or advertisers. The method I applied, thematic analysis, helped identify patterns within the tweets analyzed, summarizing critical features of the data.

The findings suggest three themes. The first is the expectation of algorithms, which explores the conditions that activate algorithms. Second, the enchantment of algorithms, which are the values that legitimize this technology. The third theme is algorithmic adversaries, Musk's accusations against actors that can challenge his interpretation of algorithms. These results imply that owners of platforms imagine how users should activate the algorithms; for example, they may suggest that users should compete to activate algorithms. Also, platform owners can justify their algorithms beyond values like neutrality or efficiency. In this case, there is a relation between algorithms and free speech.

Key words: algorithms, notion of algorithms, Elon Musk, platforms, technology, values

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Table of contents

1 Introduction: Making the algorithms magical

1.1 Algorithms and their relevancy

Algorithms are part of our daily life. They recommend the music we hear on Spotify, the videos we see on YouTube and the content from our friends on Facebook (now called Meta). Banks also use algorithms to measure if someone can receive a loan (Pasquale, 2015). The people who created them, such as media platforms, justify using algorithms in our lives. These justifications are what Beer (2017:7) calls "the notion of the algorithms". However, scholars' research focuses on the platforms' discourses (Roberge & Melancon, 2017; Birbkba & Carlsen, 2016; Meng, 2021; Bilic, 2016) but not necessarily on the discourse of the owners of these platforms. With this in mind, I argue that we can understand algorithms' social power through Elon Musk's tweets about his social media X.

But what are algorithms? First, as Bucher (2018) describes them, algorithms are mathematical instructions, a step-by-step method that defines how to get a specific result, giving specific information. As Broussard (2018) compares them, algorithms are like a recipe. For example, imagine that I give a "like" on a cat photo on social media. The algorithm will process the "like" to deliver me an output, such as recommendations for more photos of little kitties. Second, algorithm performance is defined according to the data on which they were trained (Dignum, 2019). Let us continue with the example above. If social media algorithms are trained only with data about dogs, they will recommend content about dogs. This result is because the algorithms do not know what to recommend beyond images of dogs since their creators train them only under this data. Third, algorithms depend on technology and human intervention (Kitchin, 2017). Furthermore, the people who create algorithms are part of a private or public institution. These institutions also define the actions of the algorithms (Beer, 2017). Again, let's imagine that our imaginary social media algorithms are not trained with cats' images because the company wants to attract dog enthusiasts. What I try to say with this example is that algorithms are a combination of math and human decisions.

But the problem with algorithms is that they often fail. In the United States, according to Eubanks (2017), the welfare institutions use algorithms to decide which citizen needs social assistance. As Eubanks (2017) points out, algorithms frame poor and working-class people as problematic or risky investments, so they are not eligible for certain benefits. This is what Eubanks (2017:15) calls "digital poorhouses"; the ways to automate

economic inequality. Similarly, O'Neil (2018) describes that for ethnic minorities it is harder to get a job when automated systems analyze their names or addresses, which later the algorithms disqualify because it can imply that the person is not a good fit for the company. Noble (2018) also highlights that algorithms from Google recommendations reinforce racism and sexism when their search results recommend pornographic content when someone types "black girls".

Because algorithms fail like many technologies, companies make strategic claims about the efficiency of this technology. However, as Campolo and Crawford (2020) criticize, the discourses that justify algorithms give unrealistic ideas about their qualities. Companies portray algorithms as super accurate, neutral, or efficient (Campolo & Crawford, 2020). However, this is not the case with this technology. For Broussard (2018), the enthusiasm the tech sector creates around their creations can negatively affect society. This enthusiasm legitimizes companies to produce poorly designed technology, which, instead of facilitating everyday life, makes it worse (Broussard, 2018). This is a problem. Using algorithms to "improve" decision-making can negatively affect people's lives. So, as Beer (2017) explains, the notion of algorithms is relevant for this technology because it incorporates them into our social life.

In this context, platforms' claims are relevant to understanding how algorithms are normalized. Platforms influence millions of people's interactions through their algorithms (van Dijck et al., 2018). They also extract users' data to sell to third parties (Srnicek, 2017). Still, people consider them cultural and economic role models (Lovink, 2019). This is because they normalize their automated systems by highlighting values such as community or friendship (van Dijck, 2013). Or claiming that their companies add value to people's lives (van Dijck et al., 2018). Although we know what platforms say to justify their actions, we do not know how their owners normalize their technologies, such as algorithms.

1.2 The case of Elon Musk's X platform

One case that can help us understand how owners of platforms legitimize algorithms is Elon Musk's tweets about the algorithms of his platform X. Musk is, according to Bloomberg (2024), the wealthiest man on earth. He owns the electric car company Tesla, SpaceX, which produces rockets and spacecraft, and AI companies like xAI (Browne, 2023; Hirsch, 2015; Reuters, 2024). On 25 April 2022, he closed the deal to acquire the

microblogging platform Twitter (now X) for 44 billion dollars (Milmo et al. 2022). By this time, Twitter had 368 million users worldwide (Dixon, 2023). Some of Musk's actions have caused controversies. For example, he reinstalled the influencer Andrew Tate, who violated Twitter's norms and is now accused of women trafficking (Ghaffary, 2023) and has insulted the advertisers of this platform (New York Times Events, 2023). The massive layoffs Musk made this social media unable to protect some of its users from child and sexual exploitation, harassment campaigns, and misogynistic attacks (Spring, 2022). After Musk became the owner of X, the average rate of hate speech increased (Hickey et al., 2023: 3) and simultaneously, his interactions with right-wing users increased by 1690% (Martini, 2023).

However, before Musk's acquisition, Twitter already had problems. It is a platform that encourages user competition to achieve popularity (van Dijck, 2013). Furthermore, as van Dijck illustrates (2013), the platform did not have a precise economic business, and there was no clear idea of how to restabilize users' interactions. Another problem is that Twitter's environment was becoming toxic, so the platform moderated the content circulating inside it (Gillespie, 2018). Nevertheless, Musk's intentions about the platform seem different, as he claims to transform this space into the "everything app" (Milmo & Hawkins, 2023).

1.3 Aim and research question
This research aims to explore how Elon Musk's envisions X's algorithms. The intended outcome is to explore how the owner of a platform like X evokes algorithms, their supposed use, and the values under which they are legitimized. The results from this research can provide a nuanced perspective into Beer's (2017: 7) "notion of algorithms" from the perspective of a platform's owner. To achieve this goal, I follow the theoretical contributions of platform theory, which emphasizes how platforms automate our way of socialization (van Dijck, 2013). Platforms tend to highlight the public value they add to society to hide their private interests (van Dijck et al., 2018)

I also use the contributions of Critical Algorithm Studies, where authors such as Bucher (2018) suggest analyzing the elements that influence the algorithms; also, these theories recognize the role of human subjectivity in defining algorithms (Crawford, 2021). Methodologically, I adopt Actor-Network-Theory (ANT), which defines social phenomena as a web of human and non-human agents, according to Latour (2007).

Sometimes, different actors in this web of relations dispute how a technology such as an algorithm should act (Crawford, 2016). So, how are these networks held together? For Law (2009), discourses define what connections are easier and which are harder to make (Law, 2009). At this point, Beer's (2017) concept of notions of algorithms becomes relevant since it helps to understand Musk's expressions about algorithms.

Research questions:

My main research question is:

- How does Elon Musk, through his X account, envisions the platform's algorithms?

My sub-research questions are:

- How does Elon Musk suggests users should use X's algorithms?
- How are actors that dispute X's algorithms represented by Musk?
- How does Musk use public values to justify X's algorithms?

2 Literature review

Keeping in mind that I argue that we can understand algorithms' social power through Elon Musk's tweets about his social media X, in the first part of this chapter, I review previous work related to platforms. In the second part I comment on research related to algorithms, their power and how their creators speak about this technology. Also, I review research about people's perception on algorithms and what do we know about X's algorithms.

2.1 Platforms
Platforms

To understand Elon Musk's claims about algorithms, we must consider that he is immersed in the platform ecosystem. For this system to be accepted, platforms use values from participatory culture to legitimize themselves (van Dijck, 2013). Also, platforms make strategic claims to present themselves as neutral (Gillespie, 2012). However, at the beginning of platforms, not all researchers have considered the internet to be negative.

For authors like Dahlgren (2009), citizens could create new spaces for participation on the internet. Groups of people could use the internet to share expressions about topics ignored by institutional politics. The internet allowed contesting neoliberal discourses (Dahlgren, 2009). Similarly, Castells (2012) argues that we can hear new voices since gatekeepers, like traditional media, can no longer define which opinions should be public.

However, authors like Dahlgren (2009) and Castells (2012) missed the point that the internet can contest neoliberal norms and simultaneously produce spaces subjected to neoliberal premises. Castells's (2012) and Dahlgren's (2009) theories cannot explain at what moments these spaces may reproduce companies' interests. Indeed, Castells (2012) and Dahlgren (2009) published their contributions when Web 2.0 began. Nevertheless, now, big companies dominate the internet, as van Dijck et al. (2018) indicate. These companies create mechanisms that shape users' interactions to increase their profits (van Dijck, 2013). As Corner (2011) explains, media institutions are inside broader patterns of power, such as the platform economy in this case.

The platform economy is one of the broadest patterns of power that influences these kind of media. According to Zuboff (2019:11), "surveillance capitalism", the extraction of private experiences as data, is the cause that shapes our relationships inside platforms.

The problem for Zuboff (2019) is that platforms gather as much data as possible to predict users' behavior. Moreover, because platforms have enough data about the users, they can influence their behavior, for example, by targeting advertising (Zuboff, 2019).

Zuboff's (2019) arguments have several problems we should consider. The main problem is that she assumes platforms can directly change people's behavior through targeted ads. This argument does not correspond with what we know regarding limited and dynamic media effects (Valkenburg et al., 2016). Also, as Lovink (2019) mentions, only negative perspectives on platforms do not enable solutions to our problems. This problem is the case with Zuboff's (2019) work, too. Zuboff (2019) is correct that data extraction is at the heart of the economic model of platforms, but she overestimates their effects.

Nevertheless, the work I just mentioned helps us see a broader economic context shaping platforms. As a matter of fact, according to Srnicek (2017), platforms have historical relevance regarding the global economy. This author sustains that the platform economy is the solution to the manufacturing crisis to revitalize capitalism growth (Srnicek, 2017). In this sense, Srnicek (2017) explains that platforms are considered a model of economic success. Srnicek (2017) also attach this success to data extraction. However, he adds that platforms benefit from network effects, where the more users a company has, the more valuable it gets because it attracts even more users (Srnicek, 2017).

The relevancy of Srnicek (2017) is that he sees algorithms as crucial in this economy and not only as a means of manipulation. The relevancy is that because platforms extract vast quantities of data, they need algorithms to process and add value to it (Srnicek, 2017). So, the algorithms of the platforms are relevant to enhancing the platform's economy. However, the main weakness of Srnicek's (2017) theory is that he does not explain the role of users and workers in this big picture. Fuchs (2014) argues that users play an active role since they are "working" to produce content and generate insights about relevant information. So, the economy of platforms such as X depends on users' work.

Since platforms like X shape people's interactions to generate revenue, we should ask ourselves how they legitimize their actions. van Dijck (2013) argues that when platforms recognize their position as providers of services, they incorporate social values like friendship, community and sharing. With this in mind, we can understand the enthusiasm of authors like Dahlgren (2009) or Castells (2012) about the emerging Web 2.0. As van Dijck (2013) and Gillespie (2012) explain, platforms make strategic claims to position

themselves as an alternative space. van Dijck (2013) clarifies, platforms stress neutral values to hide their intention to automate people's interactions.

I would add that platforms justify their mechanisms, not only their image. Some authors, such as Bucher and Helmond (2018), call these mechanisms affordances. A relevant contribution from Bucher and Helmond (2018) is the idea that platforms establish a meaning between their features and users. This perspective helps us understand that Musk tries to define what X's features should mean to users. However, the meanings platforms want to impose are not always shared by users (Bucher & Helmond, 2018). Instead, platforms such as X and its users create these meanings together.

Another concept that aids in our understanding of platforms' mechanisms is the notion of "architectures". Bossetta (2018: 473) defines architectures as the protocols of platforms that shape user actions. However, a drawback of this concept is that it implies that platform mechanisms operate independently of power relations. van Dijck (2013) counters this, stating that platforms evolve in tandem with users, leading to debates on the nature of these architectures. For instance, Zhang et al. (2023) examine how users and platforms engage in "push-and-pull" dynamics to define the actions of algorithms. Additionally, van Dijck et al. (2018) highlight the conflicts between supranational, national, or local governments and platforms over their activities, further illustrating that these architectures are contested.

Additionally, certain platform features are more relevant than others. I argue that algorithms may be the most significant for these companies. Since for Gillespie (2018), platforms differ from the rest of web pages because they moderate or filter the content shared in these spaces. Platforms can carry out this activity through automated processes (algorithms) or human decisions (Gillespie, 2018). Through this mechanism, platforms ensure a safe place for users from harmful content. Another point that makes algorithms the most relevant architecture of platforms is what Srnicek (2017) already mentioned: algorithms add value to the data analyzed. Also, for van Dijck et al. (2018) algorithms can personalize the content that users consume so they can spend more time on the platform. The limitation of this literature is that it is not concerned with the role of platform owners, such as Elon Musk, to justify this specific architecture, which is where my research is stands. In the next section, we will delve into what algorithms are, their power and discourses.

2.2 Critical Algorithm Studies

2.2.1 Algorithms

Svensson (2021: 129) describes the culture of programmers as a place where technology can do everything. It is a narrative where programmers view themselves as wizards. "Like magicians on stage, programmers perform tricks with their skills in more or less mind-blowing demonstrations of new technology" (Svensson 2021: 129). The problem suggested earlier is that algorithms are not magical. Algorithms result from human intervention, often with flawed ideas. Furthermore, a network of data and human exploitation sustains these computational systems. The companies that produce these technologies need tales of magic to sell their products and to normalize their services. As Stivers (2001:3) reminds us, "magic succeeds as a self-fulfilling prophecy: belief in magic makes it seem efficacious".

A Persian mathematician and astronomer, Abdullah Muhammad bin Musa al-Khwarizmi, indirectly coined the term in the 9th century (Bucher, 2018). Since then, different translations reformulated the term. It was only in the middle of the XX century that algorithms were defined as we know them today due to the rise of coding language (Kitchin, 2017). Computational scientists defined them as a "set of defined steps that, if followed in the correct order, will computationally process input (instructions and/or data) to produce a desired outcome" (Kitchin, 2017, p.16). Authors like Broussard (2018) or Bucher (2018) compare algorithms with recipes: if you have these ingredients, you will have this dish. This metaphor explains that algorithms are a procedure to find a relationship between data and an input. In the end, as Broussard (2023) explains, machine learning and algorithms are math.

However, they are more than math since people who have their own interests, values, and ways of understanding reality create algorithms. For example, Elon Musk develops algorithms according to what he considers necessary and his idea of how this computational system should work. There is literature that questions how algorithms reproduce racist bias against the black community (Broussard, 2023; Noble, 2018), sustain class inequalities (O'Neil, 2016; Eubanks, 2018) or reinforce sexist criteria for job selection (Crawford, 2021). Thus, an algorithm does not result from magic or independent tech guys lacking any ideology. Instead, algorithms result from economic systems, tech culture, platform dynamics and their leader's perspectives about the world.

The companies that produce algorithms depend on various systems of oppression to sustain their technologies. Crawford (2021) warns us that algorithms, such as those used in AI, depend on extracting natural resources or user data. Authors such as Leavy (2018) highlight gender inequalities in the technological sector, which limits the participation of women in this sector. Chen (2022) and Svensson (2021) sustain that software engineers embrace libertarian principles of work and entrepreneurship. Prodnik (2021) points out that companies integrate algorithms in the dynamics of competitive algorithms because more data represents the competitive advantage of their algorithms over other companies. However, Crawford (2021), Chen (2022), Svensson (2021) and Prodnik (2021) are not worried about how companies normalize their participation. Nevertheless, these authors show conditions that influence the people who create algorithms and, therefore, the algorithms themselves. This research helps us understand algorithms in broader systems of exploitation instead of only seeing them as math.

However, I find problematic that the literature of algorithms deals with human subjectivity from the concept of "bias". I think this concept seems insufficient to explain the algorithms and their power. As Airoldi (2021: 20) criticizes, the idea of bias assumes that the decisions behind the algorithms were incorrect due to a lack of objectivity. Using "bias" to explain algorithms does not question why we use algorithms in some aspects of our social life or who wins by implementing them. Furthermore, as authors like Bucher (2018), Crawford (2021) and Airoldi (2021) sustain, algorithms are as good as the data they use. Nevertheless, Gillespie (2014) adds that companies decide how to desiccate data. This implies a subjective decision on accommodating data for the algorithm to read. Airoldi (2021) even suggests that data, in the end, is human-made. This argument means that we print our evaluations of the world in the data we produce.

It seems imprecise to reduce forms of domination such as classism or sexism as a matter of biases because it implies that solutions are a matter of objectivity and not politics. These problems are too complex to be reduced as a matter of subjectivity or objectivity. Cognition studies use bias to point out bad decisions from individuals, as Kanheman (2011) describes. This author understands bias as part of our thinking, not as something unique or rare (Kanheman, 2011). The creation of algorithms implies technology and human subjectivity. If we frame algorithms' problems as a matter of bias, we imply that there is an ideal objective technology. However, this is not the case, as a network of people intervenes to create algorithms (Crawford, 2021).

Musk's expressions about algorithms thus are more than a personal bias; they also reflect ways of knowing, culture, norms, or even social structures. Crawford (2021) suggests that the problem of algorithms is not biased databases (although relevant). The subjectivity problem is more profound, such as epistemologies that legitimize the building and execution of algorithms in our lives. One example of this argument is emotion recognition through facial expressions. This theory, recognizing people's inner emotions through facial expressions, has been widely criticized because it assumes a causal relation between what we feel and express externally. Still, research has proven that we can perform with our faces and use the context to express our feelings, not only our facial expressions (Barret et al. 2019). Crawford (2021) states that implementing these technologies based on erroneous theory is not only because of bias but also because software engineers consider people's faces as measurable objects to know reality. This idea is what Gillespie (2014: 177) calls "epistemological premises", which are the philosophical premises that the makers of algorithms have about knowledge, how to measure it and order it.

The people who create the algorithms are part of society, they reproduce values or world vision from social structures that influence them. This dynamic is relevant because the companies that produce algorithms depend on various systems of oppression to sustain their technologies. Crawford (2021) warns us that algorithms, such as those used in AI, depend on extracting natural resources or user data. Authors such as Leavy (2018) highlight gender inequalities in the technological sector, which limits the participation of women in this sector. Chen (2022) and Svensson (2021) sustain that software engineers embrace libertarian principles of work and entrepreneurship. Prodnik (2021) points out that companies integrate algorithms in the dynamics of competitive algorithms because more data represents the competitive advantage of their algorithms over other companies. Crawford (2021), Chen (2022), Svensson (2021) and Prodnik (2021) are not worried about how companies normalize their participation. Nevertheless, these authors show conditions that influence the people who create algorithms and, therefore, the algorithms themselves. This research helps us understand algorithms in broader systems of exploitation instead of only seeing them as math.

So, because the owners of algorithms and the algorithms themselves may reproduce power relationships, then this technology is disputed by different actors. Musk and the software engineers are concerned about what the government, journalists and activists may say about their technologies. There is a plurality of actors who try to understand and

influence what the algorithms do or, as Crawford (2016) asks, can algorithms be agonistic? What this means is that companies create algorithms to produce winners and losers. So people want to get the best of them, or at least the best of its promises (Crawford, 2016). In this context, Crawford (2016) explains that a plurality of actors struggle to influence the algorithms. In line with Mouffe (1999), we could also say that algorithms are at the centre of conflict, where we may find friends and adversaries disputing algorithms' material implications. As Mouffe (1999: 755) explains, there is a dimension of constant "angonism", where people dispute opposite world views to pick on. Moreover, according to Mouffe (1999), depending on which position a person supports defines his or her political identity. So, how Musk views his adversaries can tell us something about how he sees algorithms.

However, companies protect their position of power in these conflicts by obscuring what their algorithms do. For some authors like Pasquale (2015), Eubanks (2018) or O'Neil (2016), algorithms are powerful because they are a black box; we do not have access to big companies' code since that is what gives them their competitive advantage against other companies. The result is that users, journalists, and politicians find it hard to resist or influence algorithms' power since they need to learn how they work. For example, if a bank does not give me a loan because of the algorithm's fault, it would be hard to counter-argue this decision because I do not know how the algorithm made the decision.

I do not share this argument. I agree that we cannot access the code of algorithms; however, as I argued, people are involved in creating the algorithms. Analyzing their claims should tell us something about the algorithms. Bucher (2018) fights against the idea that algorithms are a black box. She finds the metaphor as part of the strategies of technological companies to produce "unknowns", claims to disguise algorithms as too complex to know. Cotter (2022:1227) supports this argument through his "black-box gaslighting" concept. This term means that media platforms persuade users that algorithms cannot be known, which protects them from criticism (Cotter, 2022). If the algorithm is "unknown", how can the complaints have validity? However, if we explore the expressions about algorithms, we can learn about them.Therefore, the case of Musk's public expressions about algorithms is an entry point to avoid the black-box problem.

Another argument that intends to obscure algorithms is that we cannot make conclusions about their actions because they are multiple. Amazon, Meta, and Google are constituted by various algorithms that help them manage the information on their platforms. Kitchin

(2017) indicates that these companies have multiple algorithms that work simultaneously and that the software engineers edit them constantly. Companies like Netflix execute two different algorithms for different users to see which works best; this is what they call A/B tests (Bucher, 2018). With this plurality of algorithms, it is not easy even for the same people who work in these companies to explain the totality of algorithms. For example, it is almost impossible for a student to describe how his university works, even though he studies there. Nevertheless, not because the student needs help explaining how his university works, it means it is impossible to describe the logic of some departments with the help of the dean, for example. The same applies to algorithms. We may not understand the totality of X's algorithms, but we can explore and describe how his owner understands parts of them.

2.2.2 What algorithms do

By analyzing how algorithms work, we can understand their influence on society. However, algorithms influence society because sometimes they fail. Broussard (2018) argues that algorithms are powerful because they are poorly designed. This argument means that people who create algorithms may create undesirable effects from this technology (Broussard, 2018). The makers of algorithms consider that for every problem we have, there must be a technological solution. Therefore, algorithms may be the answer to several of our problems (Broussard, 2018). This vision is what Broussard (2018:14) defines as "technochauvinism", which is a vision rooted in computational science thinkers who believe in technology as the solution to every problem.

Even though algorithms fail, authors like Zuboff (2019) have exaggerated their effects by claiming that algorithms can manipulate human behaviour. As König (2022) describes concerning ad targeting, there are two tales of algorithms. One is a theoretical story about algorithms as a means of manipulation. The second story from empirical studies is that algorithms are ineffective in changing people's behaviors. When researchers exaggerate the influence of algorithms in terms of effects, they reproduce ideas of media as harmful agents only, reviving theories like the hypodermic needle or magic bullet. Research has shown (Diakapopulus, 2019; Nyhan, 2023; Bail, 2021) that social media algorithms have limited effects.

The point is to give a just dimension of algorithms and not exaggerate their capabilities. For Gillespie (2014), the relevancy is that algorithms manage knowledge and how we should access this knowledge. This power implies that people must adapt to the

algorithm's rules to access or share knowledge (Gillespie, 2016). When Musk defines new criteria for X's algorithms, people must adapt to these new changes. Gillespie (2016:64) highlights that some actors make strategic actions to be "algorithmically recognizable", which means that people shape their daily practices to enact the algorithm. The relevancy of this research is that we must modify our practices so the algorithm can "see" us. For example, for Bucher (2012), Meta can be considered a regime of visibility, where the users who want to be on top of the news feeds must act according to the algorithms' rules. Groups that try to make their agenda visible must consider that they produce content for the public and the algorithms (Proferes &Summers, 2019). However, this research only considers practices to be visible. Meng (2021) highlights that algorithms from the Chinese platform, Bytedance, give a higher ranking to content related to the ideology of the State media. In this case, the practices of people to get or avoid information recommended by the algorithms are also relevant.

So, the power of algorithms is that it influences people's practices to engage in platforms whether to access to content or to be visible. As Bucher (2018) sustains, algorithms are everywhere and mediate our daily relationships, with music, movies or social relations. Most of the things we do in the digital are mediated by algorithms. We are reordering our social life to give space to algorithms (Svensson, 2023; Bucher, 2018; Neyland, 2019). However, it is not clear how to call to this phenomenon. Neither do they explain what holds together algorithms and people.

I argue that what holds together algorithms and people are norms. Algorithms may produce certain ways of engagement. In this context, algorithms can produce norms, or as Hydén (2021:410) calls them, "algonorms". Hydén (2021) explains that algorithms are normative; they suggest how we should engage to them. As the author remembers, norms have implicit expectations. This means that, users act according to what they expect the algorithm will do. The limitation with Hydén (2021) argument is that he considers that norms are explicit. This author sees algorithms only from a technological point of view, and not as a human invention. But because algorithms are a human invention, we can analyze what Musk claims about algorithms to have an idea of the practices he wants to normalize. Another entry point are users, who may share the algorithms' norms with themselves (Bishop, 2019). So, norms are made explicit in specific moments; they are not always tacit.

Another limitation of Hyden (2021) is that he doesn't problematize one crucial aspect of the also norms: where do they come from? Sometimes norms are imposed, or at least, the ones who are more powerful have higher chances to make their norms valid (Vergara, 2020). In this sense, big platforms have an advantage over other actors related to the algonorms. They create the algorithms, they are the first ones to suggest what algorithms are and how they should work. That is why Richterich (2018) warns us against reproducing the norms of big technological companies since they produce the values of private interest and not the common good. This means that using algorithms for our own benefit is not enough, rather, we must question why they work the way they do?

2.2.3 Notion of the algorithms

Because algorithms promote norms that benefit big technological companies, these same companies need to legitimize their algorithms as efficient, objective, and precise. Otherwise, the magic of this technology will disappear. As Beer (2017:7) distinguishes, algorithms have power in material terms, in what they do, but there is also the power of "notions of algorithms". These notions are the claims that legitimize how algorithms are being used, their norms, characteristics, and, therefore, their definitions.

Despite the relevance of this kind of claims, the literature on algorithms doesn't explore how the people who own big technological companies envision their algorithms. The primary sources that researchers have used are companies' documents (Roberge & Melancon, 2017; Birbkba & Carlsen, 2016; Neyland, 2016; Meng, 2021; Bilic 2016), public policy (Mead & Barbosa, 2023; Seyfert, 2022) or ethnographies and interviews of medium size companies (Neyland, 2019; Bucher, 2017; Henriksen & Bechmann, 2020) to mention a few. These investigations show us that despite the owners of big platforms being in the public discourse, academic research doesn't consider their discourse as a window to understanding how norms of algorithms are impose. Instead, research focuses on a plurality of sources and actors that are not necessarily the ones who own this technology.

However, the positive aspect of this is that it shows that algorithms are a contested technology by different actors. Musk is one of many defining the algorithm of X, but multiple voices dispute what this technology should do. Then, the sum of this research tells us that we should understand Musk's discourse in conflict with other actors. This recommendation means analyzing what he says about the algorithm and what he says about other agents such as activists, journalists, or politicians. In this sense, the theoretical

contribution of Crawford (2016) comes back again: algorithms are agonistic; they are a dispute technology, but not only how they work, as Crawford (2016) suggests, but also in terms of how they are evoked. As different research shows, when a public institution or a company implement algorithms, they can ben contested by activists, politicians or journalists (Meng, 2021; Mead & Barbosa, 2023).

So, companies must deploy strategies if various players dispute their technologies through public discourses. If Musk defends the neutrality and efficiency of X's algorithms, he must develop ways of convincing governments and journalists that this is true. For Bucher (2018:57), companies adopt a strategy to make the algorithm secret with phrases like "not even the people who make them know how they work". Bucher (2018) shows that companies use criteria of expertise to convince their audiences. Other researchers point out that companies enchanted the algorithms' capabilities to obscure how they work (Campolo & Crawford, 2020; Natale & Ballatore; Neyland, 2016; Rehak, 2021). Most of these works have valuable theoretical debates but do not deliver systematic evidence about how companies' discourses present the algorithms. However, theoretical perspectives are helpful, too, because they help us explain how different actors express their power related to algorithms. For example, Campolo and Crawford (2020) claim that companies enchanted their algorithms as magical objects through super accuracy or neutrality claims, giving algorithms symbolic power about their capabilities. So, the more complex an algorithm seems, the more mystical and incontestable.

Another aspect that the research of algorithms shows is that depending on which actor talks about algorithms, the discourse will have its specificities. This point makes a case for Elon Musk more relevant because he is the wealthiest man on earth, according to some sources (Bloomberg, 2024), so this characteristic will also influence how he understands algorithms. For example, Seyfert (2022) found that the European Union and the state of Germany frame algorithms as a technology that shapes people's behavior, because this frame, which is about effects, gives reasons to governments to regulate technological companies. In contrast, Birbkak and Carlsen (2016) describe that Google discourse about their algorithms is in terms of efficiency to avoid State regulations. This research displays the contrast of discourse according to the actors that express them.

We should understand Elon Musk's discourse as performative as well. He may recognize that to convince journalists and governments, then he may appeal to these actors' values or ideologies. As Meng (2021) describes, because algorithms depend on various

relationships with several users, journalists, and politicians, companies may weaponize values or principles related to these actors to legitimize their features. Musk may acknowledge that the government will pressure him if his company doesn't comply with specific requirements or principles. Journalists and activists will develop narratives against the company if the algorithm promotes harmful content. In this sense, Gillespie (2018) is right to claim that platforms are performative in terms of their community norms. However, they are also performative when they communicate or defend their algorithms. As Henriksen and Bechman (2020) argue, companies' workers that employ algorithms need to perform truths about the capabilities of their technologies.

To summarize research discussed above analyzes algorithms as a stable and monolithic object rather than as a network of relationships, the conclusions need to relate the discourse of algorithms with other elements, such as ideologies or how the creators see the users they are working with. If we accept that a plurality of elements constitutes algorithms, whether humans or non-humans, shouldn't we also analyze how the owners of algorithms refer to these elements? Maybe we won't get a discourse for every aspect of the algorithm network, like work or mining exploitation, but we may find owners expressions related to platforms interfaces, traditional media, or societies' values. As Bucher (2018) recommends, when we investigate algorithms, we should look at the relations and not only the algorithm itself.

2.2.4 Believing in the magic of algorithms

Here we will explore how people think about algorithms. If they recognize their superhuman capabilities, if they consider algorithms are fair or bias. This will help us understand how the discourses about algorithms are normalized by people. Also, it will help us understand in what ways a person can resist the power of algorithms.

Platforms use different values and discourses to normalize their algorithms, not only discourses related to technology but also ideologies and societal values. Despite the plurality of actors involved in disputing the algorithms and the variety of forms discourses can take, researchers limit what people understand from these discourses to awareness. The research helps us understand that algorithms are not as black boxes as their makers claim, but only this aspect is explored.

People's recognition of algorithms clarifies that users are not passive and that they can influence this technology since algorithms depend on people's inputs. Bucher (2018, p.16)

argues that "people certainly constrain or enable the algorithm's capacity to do things as well". For this author, users feel through their daily experiences how algorithms work and how they should develop. Bucher (2018, p. 113) calls these reflections "algorithmic imaginary", which makes users aware of this technology. Thus, this concept implies that people can resist how companies want users to engage in their platforms. However, for us to recognize what users are resisting, we must be able to identify the discourse of platforms about the algorithms; otherwise, we may think that being aware of the algorithm is the only way to resist it.

Furthermore, "algorithmic imaginaries" can also be a process worked in groups instead of individual awareness, something implicit in Bucher's work. It could also be a social process where various users work together to activate algorithms of specific platforms. Different research shows that influencers and fans inform themselves about what actions influence the algorithm so they can share it with their networks (Bishop, 2019; Zhang, et al. 2023; Karizat, et al. 2021). People even work in communities, as Zhang (2023) reveals, to delegate tasks to achieve the visibility of a user or content. Most of this research focuses on users who produce content constantly or form part of specific cultural groups, such as fans or influencers. Not users in general.

Researchers have used surveys to analyze what people understand by algorithms to understand users in a broader way. Zarouali et al. (2021) found that younger, highly educated men are more aware of algorithms in the Netherlands. The relevant aspect of this research is that the ones relying on family or friends as sources have more misconceptions than those relying on mass media, personal experiences or school. This result suggests where the algorithmic discourses are circulating and what institutions are trying to explain what algorithms are. This fact may influence how Musk refers to these institutions, high education, and media since they contested the definitions of algorithms.

Also, as I just pointed out, some people are more aware of the algorithms. Their awareness modifies their resistance to platforms norms of engagement. Zaroulai et al. (2021) point out some people are more aware due to their background. Gran et al. (2021) arrived at similar conclusions also through a survey; higher levels of education correlate with more algorithmic awareness in Norway. The research doesn't question whether people engage with platforms, increasing our perception of algorithms. How an influencer engages with X differs from that of a politician. Do these forms have any relation with algorithmic awareness?

The limit with the research just quoted is that people's resistance to discourses of algorithms is reduced to be awareness. Other practices or discourse could also help us understand what engagements are at play, what platforms want to influence, and what experiences users defend. For example, Ytre-Arne and Moe (2021) concluded that people's irritation is the main sentiment towards the algorithms. Even though users feel they can't do anything to change it, it motivates them to engage in different ways with the platforms. Awareness only explains some sides of the relationship between people and algorithms. Zang (2021) and Gillespie (2016) mention that people develop several practices to trick the algorithm. So, we can't reduce resistance only as awareness but as plural practices. Because of this, Zang (2021) argues that platforms implement constant changes to their spaces to gain control over users, which the author calls push-and-pull for visibility. This concept brings us to audience studies such as Hill (2019, p.4), who mentioned that push-and-pull dynamics is about producers influencing audiences to certain plot lines or forms of engagement, whether audiences decide, as a resistance, what elements of the content incorporate into their lives. Similarly, users decide under which conditions to incorporate the algorithms, not only as visibility, as Gillespie (2016), Bucher (2018), or Zang (2021) mentions, but as other forms or practices. Therefore, the dynamic of push-and-pull platforms will justify or influence this plurality of practices and not only obscure their algorithms. Yet, to understand this dynamic, we still need to explore how the owners of algorithms imagine how people should engage in their platforms.

2.2.5 The dispute about X's algorithms

As with any other platform, Twitter has gone through several changes. However, there is a constant in how the company represent the algorithms to the public. One of the few analyses of Twitter's algorithm as a network of relationships is the work of van Dijck (2013), who explains that even though Twitter didn't have a coherent economic model, the company showed algorithms as neutral under the bottoms of "follow" or special features as "trending topics". The contribution of van Dijck (2013) is relevant since it shows us that behind the platform's intention to present its algorithm as neutral, behind interfaces or buttons, the criteria to activate the algorithm was subjective because it gave privilege to accounts that were more popular than others. This decision implies that people who were popular outside this platform will become popular inside the platform. Therefore, these users will have an algorithmic boost. As Bucher (2018) remembers, popularity calls for more popularity, so it wasn't true that Twitter's algorithms were

neutral, rather, its criteria picked winners and losers. Another implication of van Dijck's (2013) work is that it highlights internal features of the platform, like bottoms or trending topics, as part of the network of algorithms. However, the author doesn't help us to see what the owners say about these features or how they imagine users should use Twitter to enact the algorithm.

Recently, empirical studies about Twitter's algorithms focused more on their effects than how their owner legitimizes them. Research by Huszar (2021) and Bartley (2021) focuses on the consequences algorithms have over content. These approaches consider the algorithms as something already given rather than an assemblage of elements. Because of this limitation, these studies connect few relations around Twitter's algorithms, so they are framed autonomous from human intervention and more like a black box that influences people. The consequence of this research is that we need to explore how Twitter justifies their algorithms, which is what my research intends to do from Elon Musk point of view.

However, it is still valuable to recognize the effects of Twitter's algorithms to have a precise dimension of its power; if we pay attention to their impact, it would be easier to assess what the discourse of algorithms is normalizing. For example, Pathak and Spezzano (2023) analyzes through an experimental methodology that popularity-based and network-based recommendation algorithms benefit the spread of misinformation. The consequences of this kind of study are that Musk will have to deal with the problems algorithms have; these issues influence the Government, journalists, activists, and users' expectations about what the owner of Twitter has to say related to harmful content and their spread thanks to algorithms.

Twitter's algorithms have always been flawed. So, Musk's expressions may address the algorithm's influence and the moments this technology fails, which it has several times. For example, Fosch-Villaronga et al. (2021) suggests that algorithms suffered from gender bias since they misgender 20% of users, especially gay men and straight women. Huszar (2021) sustains that Twitter's algorithm benefits the spread of right-wing politicians and media over their left-wing counterparts. Also, Bartley et al. (2021) indicated that personalized timelines promote popular tweets rather than the latest ones.

Thus, because Twitter's algorithms have problems in practice, there are norms on how people should use them to get the best from them. Research shows us that only some

things the user does on Twitter have value for the algorithm. In a way, Musk, through his tweets, can normalize "the correct" way of influencing algorithms. For example, Bandy and Diakopoulos (2021) explained that if content promotes external links, algorithms would give them less visibility than content without external links. This effect implies that it imposes norms of engagement to the user if they want to be visible and defines which kind of content users will see the most. Because this study focuses on the effects of algorithms over content, the researchers do not problematize to whom it benefits this effect. Traditional media and journalists who rely on web pages to sustain their economies are affected by less visibility in spreading their news. Another point will be to analyze how Musk relates to media or journalists; this may tell us if this algonorms continues from Twitter to X or if it will change.

Also, because algorithms are agonistic, they awaken conflicts due to how they manage ways of knowing; therefore, different players are interested in what Twitter's algorithms do. In this sense, Calice et al (2023) evaluate how the accusations of bias towards traditional media have been translated to accusations of Twitter's algorithms. Furthermore, the article provides evidence of how partisan cues lead to the perception of algorithms. Although this research doesn't problematize the qualities of Twitter's algorithm or who influences these biases, it shows ideological disputes over how an algorithm should work. Furthermore, it shows that people are aware of the political implications of algorithms. As Burrel et al. (2019) describe, users apply narrow principles to explain whether algorithms work fine. As we argued a few pages above, algorithms are not only math, but they also express the values of their creators. What is at stake in Twitter's algorithms is ways of understanding order, communication, and knowledge.

However, these studies are minimal, so there is not too much we can say about Twitter's algorithm and the debates different actors have about it. However, this doesn't imply that users are passive when interacting with the algorithms. Proferes and Summers (2019) mention Wikileaks actions as an example of an organization aware of the power algorithms have concerning visibility. Also, other works demonstrate how opinion leaders use their popularity to advance their agendas (Russo & Gobbo, 2023), and how traditional media experiment with the algorithms to make their news viral (Diaz, et al 2021). This research takes as the subject of study specialized users, like traditional media or activists, people who work with making their arguments persuadable and visible; that's why the awareness of the algorithm is instrumental to achieving a goal, but it is not awareness to

reframing how algorithms work. These actors actively get the best of the algorithm but do not question it. At the same time, it shows us which kind of players will be more prone to debate what Musk wants to normalize about X's algorithms.

Summarizing the literature review

In literature review we saw that from platform studies, researchers approach platforms from their business models and their architectures, giving less relevance to the persuasive power the discourses that legitimize these companies. In this sense, there needs to be more information on how owners legitimize their own platforms. There is research about how owners such as Elon Musk or Jeff Bezos, Amazon's owner, legitimize their spatial explorations through discourses of despair about the earth and human exploitation to achieve their own goals (Daniel, 2023). Also, there is research on how Musk uses his X account to influence the stock market (Duan & Stretcher, 2019). However, research needs to be done on how these owners justify their companies' algorithms.

Furthermore, regarding Critical Algorithm Studies, there are contributions regarding how platforms highlight their algorithms' characteristics, such as neutrality or efficiency. Some studies help us understand algorithms as a network of human and non-human actors. Also, there are contributions regarding the power of algorithms to create new norms. However, this literature on algorithms does not analyze how platform owners dispute the meanings of algorithms or how they use social values to legitimize their technologies. This is the research gap in which my thesis can contribute to understanding algorithms.

3 Theoretical approach

In this section, I will present the theoretical framework that I will use. First, I will lay out platform theory. I will start by describing the platforms' economic framework. I will also illustrate how platforms influence our socialization and under what premises. Lastly, I will show how platform theory can help us see platforms as agents with discursive power. In the second part of this section, I will describe the characteristics of algorithms, what their secrecy means, how companies legitimize them, and how we incorporate them into our lives.

3.1 Platforms

Platforms such as X are in an ecosystem where various companies depend on data to generate revenue. According to Srnicek (2017), data, as a resource, shapes the economic model of platforms, which means the strategies these companies develop are driven by their need to get more data from users. Musk has a motivation to attract more users because they can increase X's profits. Srnicek (2017) highlights that platforms are constantly competing, so an early advantage for one platform means a disadvantage for the rest of the platforms. Therefore, Musk's tweets may reflect X's intent to gain an edge over platforms such as Meta or Google. For this to happen, Srnicek (2017) mentions three strategies: first, amplifying user activities on the platform. Second, expanding their services to take key positions, such as AI. Third, the creation of systems independent from other platforms.

Furthermore, platforms have the power to shape our interactions. The problem for van Dijck (2013) is that these interactions result from automated systems, such as algorithms, that shape our socialization to increase the platform's profits. Giving a "like" to a publication on X may seem normal to us, but it results from an automated system that shapes our interactions for the company's profits. In this context, for van Dijck (2013:5), the platform ecosystem produced new norms, which she calls the "culture of connectivity". These new automated ways of socializing are grounded in two premises: coding, which is the technique that shapes sociability and neoliberalism, which promotes, through the idea of popularity, competition between users.

However, van Dijck (2013) uses neoliberalism as a category that explains most platform dynamics. In this case, Svensson (2021) can complement our understanding of platforms' culture beyond neoliberalism. Svensson (2021: 41) defines this sector as "a culture of many cultures" where we can find premises from hippie, hacker, masculine, and young

cultures. He synthesizes this culture with the figure of "the wizard", someone who wants to help the world by using his coding skills (Svensson, 2021: 138). So, Musk not only wants to make money, as Srnicek (2017) or van Dijck (2013) point out, instead he also sees himself as a person with high qualities to "help the world".

Moreover, because this culture frames programmers as people who want to "help the world", platforms should be seen as a performative agent. At this point, van Dijck et al. (2018) argue that platforms present their private interests, like increasing profits, as public values that can help the community. In this sense, the X platform frames its interests as the interests of society. So, platforms use values to legitimize their actions (van Dijck et al., 2018). As Gillespie (2012) adds, these companies make strategic claims to position themselves to the public, significantly shaping information policy. One example is the work of Gillespie (2018), who explains that platforms perform moral values regarding their content moderation. Nevertheless, applying these values does not necessarily benefit everyone on the platform. Because of these kinds of claims, platforms have become a model of reference for people (Lovink, 2019) and a form of "cool capitalism", according to Jim McGuigan (quoted by Fuchs, 2018: 287). Nevertheless, van Dijck et al. (2018) argue that these values are in constant dispute by national or local governments because they are not universal. The values of the United States, where most platforms are from, differ from those of Europe, Asia, or Latin America.

Across the theory of platforms, we can see that there is a lack of explanation of the role of owners in consolidating their company's image towards the public. Authors like van Dijck (2013) theorize business models and ownership of platforms. However, this does not account for how a particular person justifies his platform to several audiences. If people like Bill Gates and Elon Musk have the power to gather followers (Svensson, 2021), shouldn't we ask about their persuasive power as part of platforms? Still, the contribution of Gillespie (2018) and van Dijck et al. (2018) helps me understand the discourses of platforms as performative. To complete this point of view, I will explain the contribution of algorithms critical studies.

3.2 Critical Algorithm Studies

Here, I present three arguments from the theory of Critical Algorithm Studies. First, the algorithms of platforms such as X are more than math, as we saw in the literature review. They are also the result of human intervention. Researchers argue that algorithms are part of broader sociotechnical assemblages that involve technology and people (Airoldi, 2021;

Kitchin, 2017; Beer, 2017; Bucher, 2018). Moreover, algorithms result from a planetary network driven by extracting natural resources, data and labor (Crawford, 2021). As Crawford (2021) argues, each one of these networks, such as labor exploitation, has its dynamics and history.

Second, although we can analyze these networks, the algorithms themselves are secret; this implies challenges in this research, and simultaneously, it shows the power of this technology. For Pasquale (2015), companies do not reveal their algorithms' code since this gives them a competitive advantage. Furthermore, this author adds that a legal system protects companies from revealing how this technology works (Pasquale, 2015). The issue is that we do not have a clear idea about how X's algorithms make decisions. Also, because algorithms can give a competitive advantage and have negative consequences on people (O'Neil, 2018), companies make strategic claims about their algorithms' complexity to cover how they work and to avoid accountability (Bucher, 2018).

Third, because X algorithms are secret, Musk has an advantage in defining what algorithms do. As I mentioned above, the concept of the "notion of algorithms" from Beer (2017:7) is relevant to understanding these claims. There are three ideas from this contribution that can enrich this thesis. First, when media platforms define algorithms and their capabilities, they are legitimizing the companies' practices (Beer, 2017), such as moderation of problematic content (Gillespie, 2018), personalization of information for users and reputation management (van Dijck et al., 2018). Second, Beer (2017) argues that when platforms evoke algorithms, they promote specific values. So, there is a relationship between how the X platform highlights its values and their algorithms. Third, when companies deploy the notion of algorithms, they legitimize social orders (Beer, 2017). For example, the defense of the platforms' algorithms may legitimize the extraction of users' data. The limitation of Beer's (2017) arguments is that they focus only on narrow values such as efficiency, neutrality, or objectivity. Indeed, the industries working on algorithms highlight these aspects (Broussard, 2018; Campolo & Crawford, 2020). However, as Meng (2021) shows, when platforms justify using algorithms, they also reproduce values related to creativity, entrepreneurship, or the dominant ideology.

Lastly, as I mentioned in the introduction, algorithms are used in most parts of our social lives. They influence our world, and we influence them (Gillespie, 2014). This dynamic encourages users to be "algorithmically recognizable", as Gillespie (2016: 64) states, which means people adapt their activities so the algorithms can "recognize them". In this

sense, algorithms create norms of behavior, as we saw with Hyden (2020:412). However, for these norms to work, users must believe in them. Bucher (2018:88) describes that platforms persuade users to interiorize what algorithms do, which she calls "participatory subjectivity". Users know that they may become irrelevant to the algorithm if they do not publish enough content or interact constantly. So, users disciplined themselves to follow unspoken rules from the algorithms, or as Bucher (2018:88) explains, users "become the principle of their own regulation of conduct".

The field of Critical Algorithm Studies offers valuable insights into understanding Musk's tweets, shedding light on his intentions and the reasons behind them. However, this perspective has its limitations, often overlooking the societal values that underpin algorithm legitimacy. This is where the theoretical contributions of van Dijck, et al. (2018) about platforms and public values come into play, filling this gap. These contributions help decipher Musk's discourse on algorithms and position my research as an exploration of how algorithms are legitimized rather than how they function. In the following section, I will outline the methodological foundations upon which I base my analysis of Musk's tweets.

4 Methodology and method

4.1 Methodology: Actor-network theory

As we saw in the theoretical chapter, one problem with knowing how algorithms work is that their code is secret. We do not have a clear idea about the criteria under which algorithms recommend or moderate information (Gillespie, 2014). In this context, Bucher (2018) criticizes the production of epistemologies of the unknown, which are ways technologies are obscure so we cannot discriminate how they work. As an answer, Bucher (2018) suggests not seeing directly what the algorithms have "inside" but rather the relationships that this technology has with other elements; summarizing, the author recommends a relational perspective to "see" the algorithm.

The relational perspective that I propose to understand algorithms' entanglements is actor-network theory (ANT). The main feature of this methodological approach is that it does not make a difference between objects and humans (Latour, 2007). This premise implies that there should not be a preferred treatment for humans when we want to explain where or who creates the social order. In the case of my research, I argue that not only humans (engineers, users, or Musk) and their actions can explain algorithms, but rather other kinds of objects like the platform itself and unique features such as X premium or API. In other words, algorithms are constituted by objects and by humans.

Another important point is that because objects and humans constitute algorithms, there are heterogeneous elements that configure X algorithms (Law, 2007). As mentioned, I will analyze what Musk has said about API, the platform itself, and how he understands free speech, journalism, and the media. All these different elements are part of a network that enacts algorithms. It is not that algorithms act by themselves in an isolated reality, but rather different elements, ideas and practices constitute the reality of algorithms. This argument is particularly relevant for Bucher (2018), who suggests analyzing the relationship between these elements instead of looking directly at the algorithm itself (see figure I)
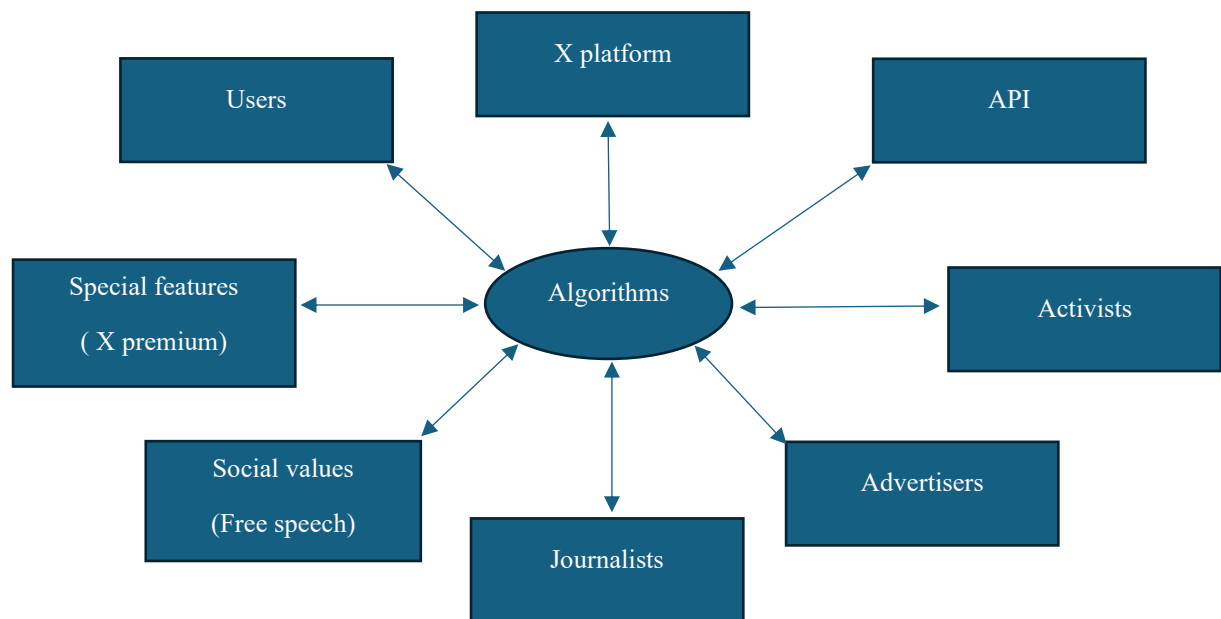
Figure I. In figure 1, I strive to illustrate a network of humans and no-humans constitutes algorithms. Some of them influence the algorithm, and the algorithm also influences them. Each element of the network forms a category in the data analysis.

Also, this methodology implies that agency, the capacity to influence reality, is not centered on one actor. As Law, quoting Latour (2007), argues, actors share scenarios with other actors that may influence reality. Bucher (2018) extends the argument by affirming that agency is distributed across the network of relationships, however, because the configuration of the networks is fluid, agency change in different situations. So we must put attention on when agency is located and who benefits by placing agency in one specific element of the network.

Lastly, another argument I consider relevant for my research is the explanation for why a specific network holds during time. Law (2007) suggests three causes: the first one is how the material elements are placed to configure the network; the second is the strategy that human actors decide to use to face the material world; and, last, and this is the most relevant explanation for my thesis, is the regime of discourses deployed to ensure the stability of the network. As Law quoting Foucault (2007) suggests, the discourses that define conditions of possibility, what is feasible to configure in the network of relationships and what is not.

This last point is where I locate my thesis since I will analyze how the owner of X legitimizes ways of using the algorithm, how different elements make sense in the context of the platform and how heterogeneous elements, like free speech or special features of the platform like X premium, normalize relationships with the algorithms. This is where "the notion of algorithms from Beer (2017) can help me describe how these network is justified. Also, there are two premises about discourses that we should keep in mind to explain the algorithmic network. The first one is that discourses normalize practices and order social life (Foucault, 2007). As Foucault (2007) sustains, it is through discourses that knowledge is normalized, by normalizing this knowledge it defines what is normal and abnormal. Second, I incorporate the assumption that discourses make a dichotomy between "they/us" or "adversary/friend". This assumption makes sense to explain when Musk talks about other actors and how he understands the platform he owns concerning other platforms or companies. As Jørgensen (2011), quoting Laclau, explains, in the context of antagonism, identities create themselves by comparing with others.

This methodology helps me justify looking beyond what Musk is saying about algorithms itself and focus on how he evokes different elements, objects, actors, or practices related to this technology. However, this methodology presents some limitations. The first one relates to the idea that a network of agents disperses the agency of what influences reality. The problem with this premise is that it equals all actors as if they have the same power (Couldry & Hepp, 2017). This assumption does not support my motivation to analyze Musk's tweets and not, let's say, any engineer who works on X. My justification for analyzing Musk's discourse is that I recognize that inside this network, he is the most powerful actor since he is the owner of X platform and the wealthiest man on earth. In this context, it would be naïve to accept that he has the same agency as all the other elements of the algorithmic network.

Another problem is that because I am analyzing what Musk have to say about values or ideas, ANT barely give an explanation about how previous forms of power enact a specific network, but rather it claims that the network enacts forms of power (van Dijck, 2013). If we consider theories of media and power (Corner, 2011), ANT needs to explain how elites' ideas crystallized through media. So, ANT doesn't facilitate how an ideas or values can enact algorithms in a specific way or how an ideology can reorder the configuration of a network to benefit particular actors.

ANT blurs the line between humans and objects, which may create confusion when distinguishing human from non-human agency. In other words, it makes it harder to determine who influences X's algorithms. I accept the value of acknowledging that humans shape technology and that technology shapes human practices. However, removing the boundaries between humans and non-humans can generate confusion about what I am analyzing about X's algorithms. As van Dijck (2013) explains, it is good to distinguish between technologies and humans for analytical purposes so we can recognize who is influencing the algorithms.

Other limitation is that because the social is constructed by networks, each element of the social have its own network. This can create an infinite constellation of networks; therefore, the practicality of this methodology will be lost because there would be too many elements to describe and too many relationships to link. However, Latour (2011) explains that the quantity of elements involve in the network depends on the researcher creativity. This argument gives me freedom to decide which elements I decide to analyze. I think this is valuable considering the limitation of time to develop my research.

4.2 Method

This research has a qualitative design. My main goal is to understand meanings from the material analyzed. As some authors explain (Hernández et al., 2014; Bruhn Jensen, 2014), the researcher should analyze meanings from the perspective of subjects in a specific context. In this case, it is through Elon Musk's ideas and visions that I want to explore; how he understands algorithms in the current ecosystem of media platforms.

My research method is thematic analysis, which helps identify patterns within the analyzed data (Braun & Clarke, 2008). I followed the contributions of Braun and Clarke (2008, p.87), who suggest rather structured phases for this sort of analysis. I also combined Braun and Clarke (2008) with one step from Kuckartz (2014), namely, case summaries. This step gives a summary of cases or topics in a descriptive way. They are useful to give an overview of the data (Kuckartz, 2014). In this research I summarized topics to draw comparisons or relations.

Number	Phase	Description
1	Familiarizing with data	Read the data and understand what is saying.
2	Generating initial codes	Each word that I search on Musk's Twitter account is translated as a code. For example, since I search for tweets with the word "algorithm," I code the tweets I find as "algorithm."
3	Creating subcodes	After having my codes, I read them and developed subcodes so I could categorize Musk's ideas. In this part, new codes emerge, such as "free speech," which I later had to read to develop its own subcodes.
4	Summarize categories and subcategories.	I summarized each category and subcategory to understand Musk's discourse. For example, I summarized what Musk said about the category "advertisers". This phase is practical, as Kuckartz (2014) says, when we want to understand the topics in our data.
5	Define themes	Find patterns within categories and between categories that answer my research questions.

6	Produce report	I select the most vivid texts that represent or explain the themes I defined.	

Table 1: The phases from Braun and Clarke (2008) are 1, 2, 5, and 6. Phases 3 and 4 are inspired by Kuckartz (2014).

There are a couple of reasons why I picked this method. First, it helps me to organize data into categories (Kuckartz, 2014). This advantage aided me in organizing hundreds of tweets. Second, it is transparent. Braun and Clarke (2008) state that thematic analysis is independent of detailed theoretical or technical knowledge. Third, this method is helpful in summarizing and finding relations or differences within the data analyzed (Braun & Clarke, 2008).

The themes that I will explore in detail in the analysis result from my active involvement with the data (Appendix II). As Braun and Clarke (2008) argue, themes are not waiting to be discovered. Finding themes is an active exercise. So, here I share an example of how I identify themes within my data:

Tweet	Code	Subcode	Theme: example
"Our algorithm automatically gives higher preference for posts which have the most cumulative user-seconds"	Algorithm	Criteria of algorithms	This is the theme of "*algonorms*". We will see it later. I identified it by comparing subcodes. For example, here are three tweets that talk about algorithms similarly. Across subcodes I noticed that there is a relation between algorithms and content. So, if algorithms influence content, and content defines a platform, then, algorithms also influence how we should communicate. Therefore, algorithms create norms. Algonorms.
"Twitter Blue Verified subscribers can now upload 2 hour videos!"	X Premium	X Premium features	
The Twitter name made sense when it was just 140 character messages going back and forth – like birds tweeting – but now you can post almost anything, including several hours of video.	Twitter	Social values	

Table 2. In this table I show how I identify the themes within Musk's tweets.

The table above illustrates how I found my themes by comparing subcategories. I also summarized subcategories to compare them (Appendix II). After having written the summaries, I understood my data better, and it was easier for me to compare subcategories.

4.3 Sampling

The total number of tweets I analyzed was 513. The sampling for this research is non-probability sampling, which means that I won't focus on generalizing from a quantitative perspective but rather conceptually, and I will examine the depth of the meanings of the text rather than its quantity (Bruh Hensen, 2012). The decision to pick each tweet was "purpose sampling", which, for Bruhn Hence (2012: 245), is selecting the sample according to specific criteria. Paraphrasing Hernández et al. (2014), I am interested in the tweets that answer my research questions. These tweets are the ones related to the X platform. The criteria for the sampling of Musk's tweets were:

1. Tweets from 25 April 2022. This date was when Twitter's board of directors accepted Musk's offer to buy all the company shares.
2. Tweets until 30 March 2024.
3. The tweets must express a complete idea, so I have coherent and meaningful information for my research goals. For example, a tweet with only a smiley face is insufficient for my analysis, but a tweet defining an algorithm aligns with my research question.
4. Tweets that respond to other user accounts as long as they express complete ideas related to my research goals.
5. Tweets that contain words related to the X platform.

To collect my data, I divided it into two blocks: one related to the platform mechanisms and the other related to social actors. I make this distinction to make a practical difference between human and non-human agents (van Dijck, 2013). Initially, I followed van Dijck et al. (2018) description of platforms, searching for words such as API, user, journalists, news, content creators, and advertisers in Musk's account. Also, by familiarizing myself with Musk's tweets, I searched for tweets with the words Twitter Blue/ X Premium, Button, Timeline/For You, Mute, Freedom of Speech, Woke and Far Right/ The Right and Far Left/The Left. The table below presents the number of tweets I found in each word search.

	Categories			
No.	Elements of the platform	Tweets	Actors and ideas related to the algorithms	Tweets
1	Twitter	35	Freedom of speech	60
2	Algorithms	38	Woke	64
3	Content moderation	10	News	59
4	Twitter Blue / X Premium	18	Journalists	20
6	API	5	Far Right / The Right	12
7	Button	13	Far Left / The Left	9
8	User	101	Advertisers	27
9	Timeline/For You	19	Content creators	18
10	Mute	6		
Total		245	Total	268
Total				513

Table 3. This table shows the total number of tweets peer code.

To see the dictionary of coding, which defines codes and subcodes, see Appendix I.

4.4 Limitations

Although thematic analysis has advantages, it presents some limitations. The first, as Kuckartz (2014) quoting Frueh describes, is that some information is inevitably lost when we create categories or subcategories. This limitation applies to my case. Additionally, when comparing or summarizing subcategories, some data from Musk's tweets was "lost". Another limitation is when themes overlap (Braun & Clarke, 2008), which can lead to a lack of rich descriptions in the analysis. To mitigate these issues, I proactively organized my themes according to my research question, ensuring they do not overlap or repeat the same ideas.

Also, this thematic analysis relies only on Musk's interpretation of algorithms. For Kitchin (2017), we should use several sources to map the sociotechnical assemblages of algorithms. Maybe the official page of X could complete what Musk is saying about algorithms. Although this is true, this research aims to know how Musk sees algorithms

and whether he gives a partial representation of algorithms. The relevancy for in this thesis is his point of view.

My sampling also has limitations. The main one is that some tweets may be too old to represent the rapid changes in X's algorithm. This limitation is a problem for platform research since these companies change continuously to improve their features (van Dijck et al., 2018). Algorithms are also subjected to changes. Kitchin (2017) adds that this technology is not a finished product. Instead, software engineers edit, erase, or improve them constantly. So, what Musk said about algorithms in 2023 may not be as accurate in 2024. Another limitation of the sampling is that tweets are too short in content. That is why I analyzed 513 tweets for this research, which is a manageable quantity, and it allows me to understand Musk's perspective on algorithms.

Regarding the frame period of the tweets I gathered, I recognize Musk may have expressed more tweets before Twitter's board of directors accepted his bid in April 2022. Furthermore, the company's acquisition was completed on October 28 of the same year. These dates may have influenced Musk's expressions on Twitter. Nevertheless, the research aims to explore his perspective about algorithms, not how specific events influence his perspectives.

4.5 Ethical considerations:

The primary ethical consideration is that Musk's tweets differ from those of a news piece produced as public text. As Helles (2021) argues, people rarely consider that their tweets may be for social research. Another point that Helles (2021) explains is that some tweets may share private information about a person. For example, an addiction that the person is unwilling to share publicly. In this context, the Association of Internet Researchers (AoIR, 2020) argues that researchers should ask users for their consent when private information is involved.

The idea from AoIR (2020) is that a researcher may cause harm by revealing sensitive information from users. As the AoIR (2020) explains, social research should consider respect for the person as an ethical guideline. However, my research deals with a public figure such as Elon Musk. His X account already has 180 million followers. As Fuchs (2018) describes, a researcher can quote tweets from a well-known public figure. Thousands of people already know Musk's tweets. So, his content is already known to the

public. Also, I am not sharing private information about Elon Musk. As Fuchs (2018: 390) develops:

> Most tweets, especially those using hashtags, aim at public visibility and therefore do not require informed consent in online research. (…) As good practice, one should not mention usernames, except for well-known public persons and institutions.

Also, informed consent may limit this research instead of enriching it. As Fuchs (2018) argues, researchers tend to gather data from controversial figures. So, if a researcher asks for informed consent, he may risk his security. In this case, there is a power difference between Elon Musk and me. If he answers me, which is doubtful, he can make a public answer that puts me in the spotlight of his 180 million followers. Fuchs (2018) would also question how realistic it is to send informed consent to someone in such a high-power position and expect a positive answer. Furthermore, sending consent information may put me in a risky position, which would go against another ethical principle: ensuring the researcher's security (AoIR, 2020).

5 Analysis

The main argument of this master thesis is that we can understand algorithms' social power through Elon Musk's tweets about his platform X. As we saw in the methodology section, I adopted the actor-network theory (ANT). This approach argues that algorithms are networks of human and non-human actors (Bucher, 2018). Following this argument, I analyze what Musk says about algorithms and special features like X Premium, buttons, advertisers, activists, and journalists (see Figure 2). Furthermore, this network is held together through discourses. As Law (2009) specifies, discourses shape the connections of this network. So, Musk's claims indicate who can influence the algorithms, under what values, and which practices (See Figure II).
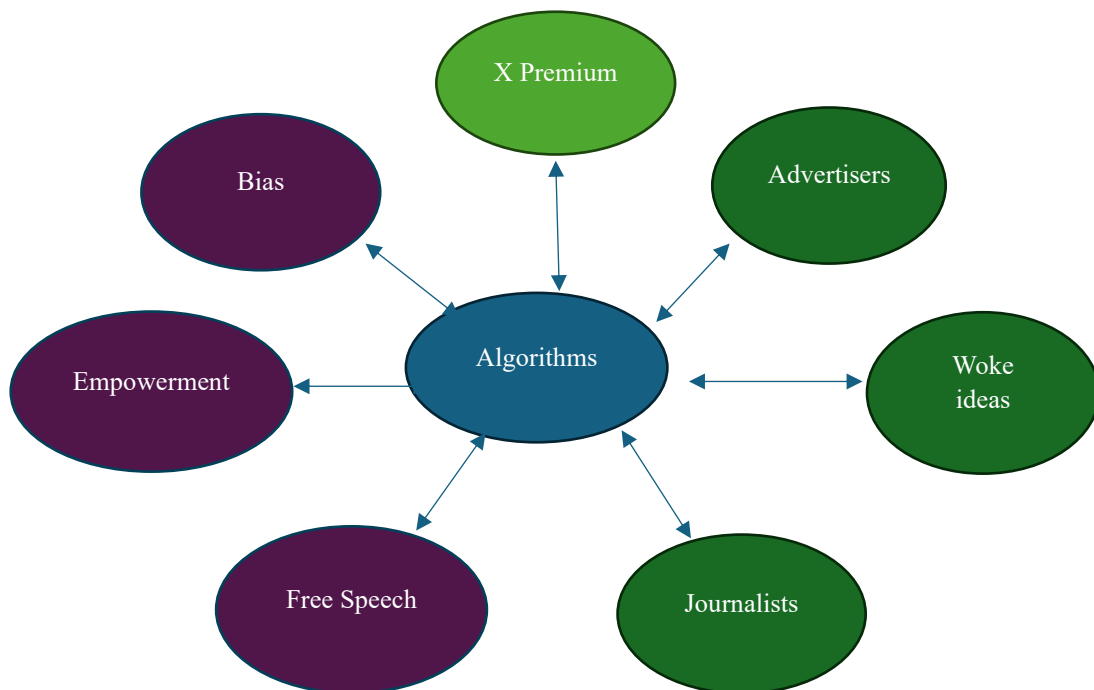
Figure II: On purple there are the values under which algorithms are legitimized. On dark green, the actors that dispute the notion of algorithms. On light green is the feature that defines new norms on X.

Before we embark on the analysis, it's also crucial to revisit some key insights from the theory of platforms and critical algorithm studies. First and foremost, algorithms are not detached from human influence. They are human creations. Thus, they mirror human values (Crawford, 2021). Secondly, algorithms are not neutral tools. They can lead to both intended and unintended outcomes (O'Neil, 2018). Thirdly, platforms strategically aim to secure public acceptance of their technologies. Platforms claim that their private

interests represent public values (van Dijck et al., 2018). Lastly, the data that algorithms process is not inconsequential. Data significantly shapes their performance (Dignum, 2019). Consequently, the quality of data determines the efficacy of algorithms.

For this analysis, I gathered 513 tweets from Musk's X account. I then conducted a thematic analysis, drawing on the recommendations of Braun and Clarke (2008) and Kuckartz (2014). This method involved several steps, including familiarizing myself with the data, generating initial codes, creating subcodes, writing summaries of categories and subcategories, defining themes, and finally, presenting the analysis. The themes I found through the detailed analysis are Musk's expectation of algorithms, which explores the conditions that activate algorithms; Musk's enchantment of algorithms, which legitimizes them; and algorithmic adversaries, where I explore how Musk discusses actors that can challenge his interpretation of algorithms.

5.1 Algonorms: expectation of algorithms

In this theme, I will explore the subresearch question: How does Musk suggest users should use X's algorithms? The concept that guides my analysis is algonorms (Hydén, 2021). This term refers to the expectations and practices that emerge from the algorithms. The platform studies also guide my analysis because I explore these algonorms concerning X's economic motivations. As Srnicek (2018) explains, the platforms' economic interests drive the changes in their algorithms.
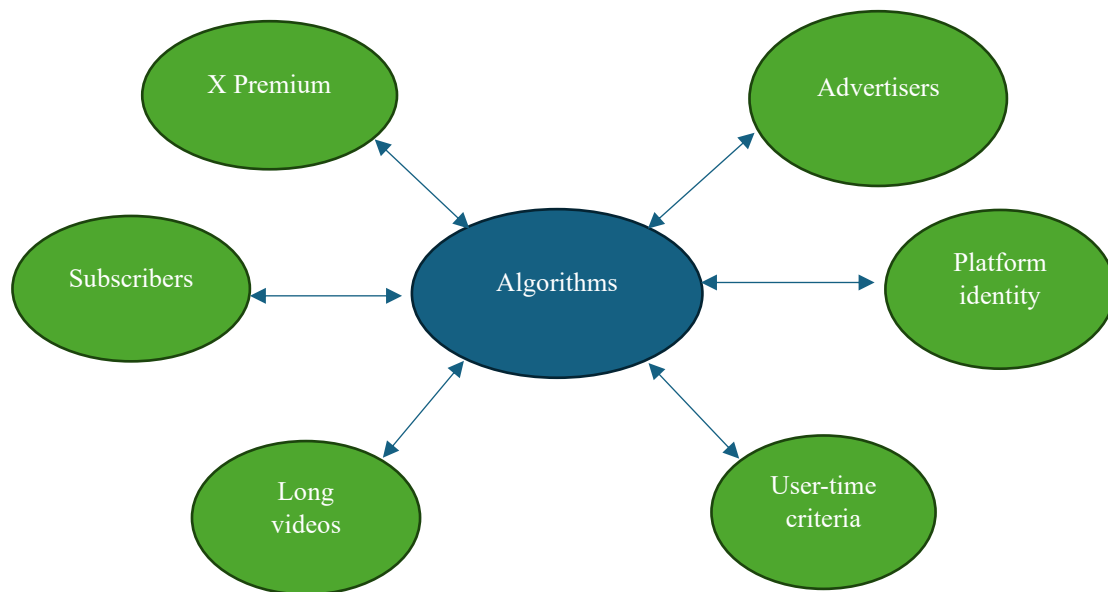

Figure III. Here I represent those features of the platform, the algorithmic criteria and the actors that give shape to the algonorms.

5.1.1 To be popular, pay here!

Algorithms need clues to know what content to recommend. In the case of X, time is the main clue that this technology uses. As Musk (2022a) claims:

> Our algorithm automatically gives higher preference for posts which have the most cumulative user-seconds so that algorithms will recommend native content much more than links outside of Twitter.

This tweet may mean the time users spend on specific content indicates whether it should be recommended to other users. Why is this relevant? Suppose a user publishes a tweet with a link referring to external pages. In this case, the algorithm may downgrade this content because an external link decreases the users' time on the platform. This algonorm punishes content that redirects users outside the platform, such as links from a newspaper. This is not new. Before Musk's acquisition Twitter already downgraded content that had an external link (Bandy & Diakopoulos, 2021).

I argue that there is a link between this criterion, user-time, and the new options to upload content. X now allows users to publish content beyond 280 characters (Musk, 2023a). Furthermore, people can now upload videos as long as movies (Musk, 2022d). These options make sense if we think the platform rewards bigger content, which requires more time from users to consume. Because algorithms are a network of relationships (Bucher, 2018), using a specific criterion (user-time) produces new practices related to what kind of content users should publish if they want to be recognizable. This algonorm relates to what Gillespie (2016:64) calls "algorithmically recognizable". This term means that people change their behavior according to how algorithms work so they can amplify their ideas (Gillespie, 2016). In this case, users can be algorithmically recognizable if they upload content in big formats.

However, achieving algorithmic recognition is not a free ride. It comes at a cost. Users must subscribe to the X Premium service, which allows them to post longer videos and text (Musk, 2022d). This subscription is a prerequisite for being algorithmically visible. It is a strategic investment that enables users to share more extensive content and gain algorithmic benefits. Musk (2022d) explains that these subscribers enjoy "priority in replies, mentions & search, which is essential to defeat spam/scam". In other words, algorithmic visibility is a commodity that can be purchased through the X Premium service.

Conversely, people who will not pay for this service may be less visible than those who do. Bucher (2018:74) explains that algorithms create "regimes of visibility". This is when users are disciplined with invisibility to participate on platforms like Facebook (now Meta) (Bucher, 2018). In this case, X Premium also commodifies the fear of invisibility. So, there is the possibility that X Premium make irrelevant users who do not subscribed.

Another benefit of X Premium is that algorithms prioritize subscribers in the "For you" timeline. This space shows tweets from accounts that the user is not necessarily following. As Musk (2023b) points out: "Starting April 15th, only verified accounts will be eligible to be in For You recommendations." When Musk announces this benefit of X Premium, he seems to describe the competitive advantages of subscribers over regular users. This new feature relates to what van Dijck (2013:20) calls "the culture of connectivity", which is how platforms normalize ways of socializing. The author adds that platforms promote ways of socialization based on neoliberal principles, such as competition. So, maybe Musk is fostering a culture of connectivity where the ones who have X Premium are "competitive users" who will be recognized by the algorithm. Even the idea of "premium" implies a higher position on the hierarchy of subscribers over users.

Furthermore, because X Premium is a paid service, Musk's visions of algorithms are linked with the capacity of users to use money. By this, I mean what Gillespie (2014: 175) calls "the evaluation of relevance", which is when algorithms use "signals" to determine which content is relevant to recommend. So, when users pay for X Premium, they signal their "relevancy" to the algorithms. These payments help X's algorithms decide the relevant tweets between thousands of options. This algonorm is a significant change from the previous Twitter. This platform didn't have a clear vision of commodifying users' interactions (van Dijck, 2013). However, now Musk seems to commodify users' competition and desire to be visible.

Another point about X Premium is that user can now earn money by uploading enough content. As Musk (2023c) describes:

> Starting today, Twitter will share ad revenue with creators for ads that appear in their reply threads.

I understand that for Musk, the users who can earn money are popular. However, the criterion for earning money is very precise. Musk (2023d) clarifies: "What matters is how many ads were shown to other verified users. Only verified users count". This tweet may signal two things. One, maybe X's algorithms influence the connections between

subscribers because it is what can generate profits. Two, the content users post through X Premium becomes commodities because they generate spaces that the platform sells to advertisers. These points align with what van Dijck et al. (2018:37) call a mechanism of "commodification", which is when platforms transform ideas into commodities. This mechanism creates an algonorm where communication between subscribers will be desirable for the platform and users who want to earn money.

Another drawback with the algonorms of X Premium is that they reinforce the exploitation of people's work. van Dijck et al. (2018:37) explain that:

> [...] the same platform mechanism of commodification involves [...] the exploitation of cultural labour, the (immaterial) labour of users, and the further precarization of on-demand-services workers.

In simple terms, X Premium may be a mechanism for exploiting cultural labour. This logic reproduces what Fuchs (2014) calls the digital labor of the prosumer. This is when platforms benefit economically from what users produce in platforms, whether content or data (Fuchs, 2014). The difference in this case is that users must pay for X Premium. So working is not free. This dynamic intensifies when platforms promote user competition (van Dijck, 2013). Therefore, algorithms influence users to work through X Premium to earn money. Simultaneously, algorithms encourage them to compete by producing more extensive content to attract other subscribers' attention.

This competition also benefits X's algorithms. Platforms can enhance their algorithms with more data from user interactions. As Gillespie (2014:172) argues, algorithms' efficiency hinges on their ability to anticipate user preferences, a process he terms "cycles of anticipation". This cycle is fueled by users who provide more information to platforms, enabling them to make better recommendations. Improving the algorithm to recommend content gives platforms an edge over their rivals (Prodnick, 2021). The algorithms of X Premium drive users to publish more content that may enhance the platform's competitive position.

It is worth noticing that when Musk imagines how users should use X Premium, he also imagines an ideal user. I claim that the subscriber may be an ideal user for this platform. A subscriber helps X economy by paying for a subscription. Also, it produces content according to the criteria of the algorithms. Furthermore, since the subscribers pay a

subscription, they are influenced to stay on the platform. This is what Bucher (2018:88) calls "participatory subjectivity", which is when a platform discipline through algorithms users subjectivity. In simple terms, it is when users interiorize the values of the platform through the algorithms. And as we saw with van Dijck (2013), platforms promote the value of competition. So, for the algorithms to work, they need subscribers who compete for money or attention. Otherwise, the X Premium algorithms may be pointless.

As we can see, algorithms may change the dynamics of socialization. So, if it changes these dynamics, it also changes how the platform sees itself. As Musk (2023a) explains:

> The Twitter name made sense when it was just 140 character messages going back and forth – like birds tweeting – but now you can post almost anything, including several hours of video.

This tweet may tell us that X Premium algonorms influence the identity of this platform. In this case, X, as a new identity, is a way of normalizing algorithmic changes. Bucher (2017) and Neyland (2019) illustrate that people who work with algorithms modify their practices to incorporate algorithms into their lives. "X" indicates that new algorithms influence how users connect. Hence, people are no longer "birds" communicating through small content. Instead, it is a place where users can publish "X" content. This makes sense if we consider, as we will see below, Musk's discourse about free speech is a disapproval to moderate content that may harm minorities.

Lastly, I recognize that the algorithms that Musk envisions may change because algorithms are constantly modified, edited, or eliminated. As Kitching (2017) illustrates, this technology is not a finished product. One example is the incorporation of the AI tool Grok. Musk (2023e) explains that "as soon as it's out of early beta, xAI's Grok system will be available to all X Premium+ subscribers" (Musk, 2023e). This tool will add new questions on how the creators of this tool think users should use their AI on X. However, it is a question outside the goal of this research, but it shows that the X's algonorms are not definitive.

5.2 Enchantment of the algorithms

People who create algorithms claim that their technologies have superhuman characteristics. This is what Campolo & Crawford (2020:12) call "enchanted determinism", claims that give platforms symbolic power in public debates. Similarly, Musk gives an aura of magic to X's algorithms because they "empower" users, are neutral, or contribute to free speech (Figure IV). As van Dijck (2013) explain, platforms celebrate their automated systems by highlighting social values. This is relevant because when Musk makes algorithms "magical", he conceals the human subjectivity that plays a role in making this technology. On the following pages, I analyze some claims related to this theme.
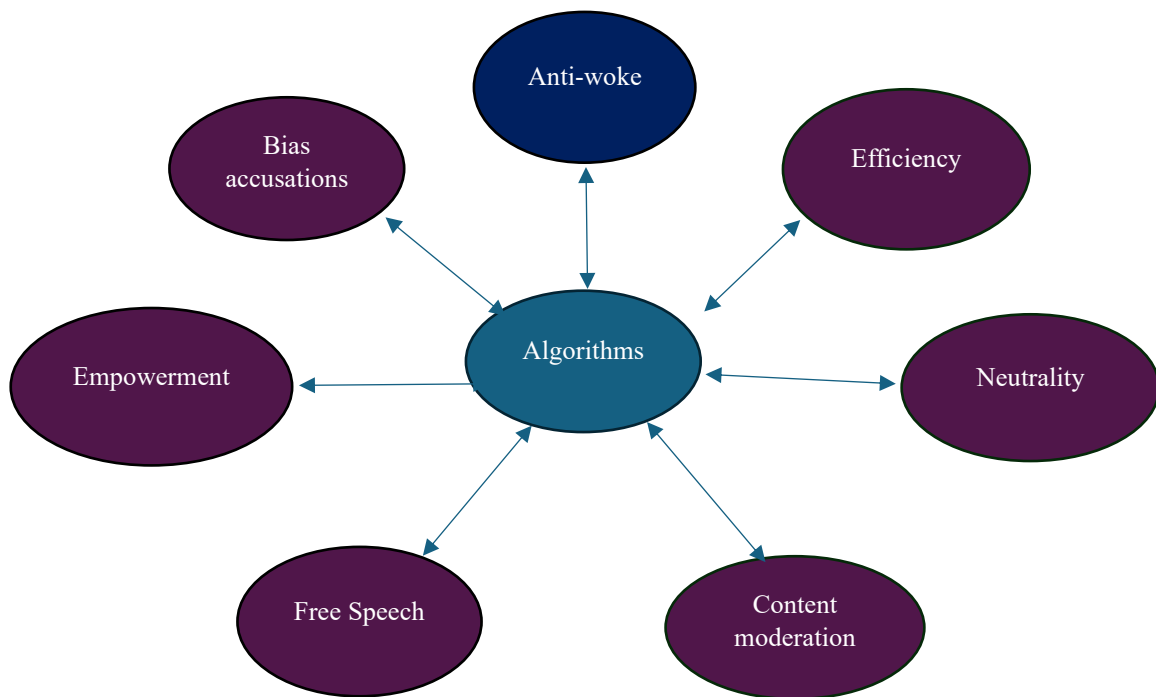
Figure IV. These are the different values, actors and practices that legitimize X's algorithms, according to Musk claims on X.

5.2.1 Empowerment: "We care about you!"

When Musk tweets that changes on buttons, timelines or new updates will increase the capabilities of users, he, between the lines, gives the appearance that users will have more power on X, as if he is empowering people over the platform. At the center of this strategy is to make look Musk's decisions about improving the user experience and *not* creating data extraction for the platform's economic growth.

I propose that efficiency and empowerment are intertwined. For instance, X features two timelines, one labelled "For you", which Musk (2023g) mentions. This timeline implies that the content is tailored to the user's interests. The content is tailored because X's algorithms are efficient; otherwise, the 'For you' label would be meaningless. Therefore, X's algorithms' efficiency satisfies the user's needs. This dynamic suggests that the algorithms can know the user's preferences. It appears to me that "For you" is more than a phrase. Instead, these timeline establish a relationship between the platform and users (Bucher & Helmond, 2018), indicating that algorithms are *designed for the user's* benefit, not for the X platform. Moreover, the user can decide how to use this timeline:

> Next Twitter update will remember whether you were on For You (ie recommended), Following or list you made & stop switching you back to recommended tweets. (Musk, 2023g).

However, the user cannot decide the criteria under which algorithms work in the "For you" timeline. Musk addresses the problem of knowing through what I term as the *value of transparency.* Saying that an algorithm is transparent empowers users enough to make decisions about the platform since the information about the algorithm is public. In one of his tweets, Musk says, "Providing code transparency will be incredibly embarrassing at first, but it should lead to rapid improvement in recommendation quality. Most importantly, we hope to earn your trust" (Musk, 2023h). So, if the code of algorithms is transparent, people can make recommendations to improve them. Nevertheless, this logic is incoherent with other of Musk's decisions, such as limiting access to the Application Programming Interface (API) to payments (Musk, 2023i), which could help researchers assess what the algorithm is doing. Also, Annany & Crawford (2018) warn that if transparency does not allow for change in power relations, then it is insufficient. So, what matters here is the claim of transparency, rather than being transparent.

Let's delve deeper into the relationship between transparency and algorithms to grasp the complexity of Musk's claims. Algorithms are often depicted as a "black box" that needs to be "unboxed" to understand how they work (Pasquale, 2015). Their secrecy gives them power. As the logic follows, we need to make them transparent to counter their power. Annany and Crawford (2018: 974) trace transparency to the Enlightenment era, when "uncovering" is associated with "knowing the truth". This is what the authors call "transparency as an ideal". This idea means that when we see inside a system, we can change it. However, this idea doesn't work for algorithms since algorithms are an assemblage of human and non-human actors (Bucher, 2018).

When Musk claims transparency for algorithms, I argue that it does not mean we can understand them. Transparency shows the coding inside the algorithms but does not describe its relations with, e.g., people and their ideas. What is relevant for authors such as Bucher (2018) and Annany and Crawford (2018) is to see the relationship between algorithms and social arrangements. For example, see the relation between Musk's ideology and algorithms. Of course, transparency can help us understand aspects of the algorithms and how platforms coded them. However, this transparency is insufficient if it doesn't link code with power if the company publishes too much information to process, or if the platform edits algorithms constantly (Annany & Crawford, 2018). As Annany & Crawford (2018:974) recommend, we should see "across algorithms", not only inside them, to understand who creates the algorithms and in what ways. Transparency can't say much about the relationship between algorithms and society because we focus on what is "inside" them, not their relations.

In another point, Musk also tries to highlight the empowerment characteristics of X Premium. We can understand this argument through Musk's (2022b) ironic presentation of this feature:

> Twitter's current lords & peasants' system for who has or doesn't have a blue checkmark is bullshit. Power to the people! Blue for $8/month.

I suggest that Musk presents a new way to engage in X as a form of empowerment. As van Dijck (2013) illustrates, platforms present their features from a social value perspective: community, friendship, and emancipation. In this case, paying for a service is framed not as a consumer decision but as a political action to be empowered. Musk even presents this subscription as a solution for misinformation. "This will destroy the bots. If a paid Blue account engages in spam/scam, that account will be suspended. Essentially, this raises the cost of crime on Twitter by several orders of magnitude" (Musk, 2022c). So, Musk's rhetorical strategy is to convince users about this feature's power to amplify ideas and help stop crimes.

Nevertheless, about X Premium, I consider that Musk's preference is to "empower" specific users. Particularly those who are willing to pay for the use of X. It seems that for Musk, these subscribers may experience empowerment when they monetize their ideas. Musk (2023j) explains that:

"People from every corner of the world post incredible content on X, but often live in tough circumstances, where even a few hundred dollars a month changes their life".

Between the lines, it seems that Musk knows what people need. Therefore, he knows how to help them. The problem with this form of empowerment is that it transforms people into what van Dijck et al. (2018:85) call "the precariat", a worker available 24/7 to produce content. Furthermore, the precariat doesn't have labor rights since platforms do not cover this aspect, leaving this responsibility to local or national governments.

Consequently, Musk's discourse portrays digital labor as a lifesaver, as if the platform is doing a favor to people. This idea aligns with expanding the quantity of content a user can upload. As Musk (2023k) states

It is a major priority to enable monetization by content creators! People need to make a living and prosper from their work. We need to make it possible to upload the content in the first place. That's getting there.

The message here is that being a subscriber of X Premium may be empowering. People can earn money by producing information. As van Dijck et al. (2018) argue, platforms present their activities as benefits to the public. Often claiming that their activities add value to society.

Musk's tweets about how algorithms empower users make X Premium look like a positive feature. Not as a business strategy to enhance the possibility of extracting users' data, money and work. This discourse is not unique. The Chinese platform Bytedance portrays algorithms as "inspiring" to increase users' participation on the platform (Meng, 2021:7). Similarly, Musk frames X Premium as stimulation for users. Musk claims that X Premium invites people to publish and create information. As we saw in the previous theme, the algorithm changes benefit those who want to publish more, connect with "compelling content," earn money, go viral, or produce inspiring content. Musk presents algorithms as a feature for the user, or, as the timeline says, they are "for you."

5.2.2 Free speech
According to Musk (2023a), he mainly bought X to ensure free speech. He implies that this principle influences how the platform is modified, so analyzing these claims can also tell us about X's algorithms. Knowing what Musk believes can guide us in how values legitimize the algorithm and how it covers the platform's interests (van Dijck et al., 2018).

I will develop this critical argument in the following analysis of Musk's view on free speech.

Musk distinguishes X as a company that works for free speech. For him, this makes the platform unique over other platforms, as he highlights, "We've pushed harder for free speech than any other Internet company, including Wokipedia" (Musk, 2023p). Furthermore, free speech is not only a value of X platform but also a value of its owner: "I am adamant about defending free speech, even if it means losing money" (Musk, 2023q). In another tweet, he expresses: "The attacks against me should be viewed through a political lens – this is their standard (despicable) playbook – but nothing will deter me from fighting for a good future and your right to free speech" (Musk, 2022h). These tweets exemplify what van Dijck (2013:11) calls "coding human connections", where platforms highlight values related to sociability, while they hide the automated systems they use to make profit from users. When Musk remarks that he is so committed to free speech that he does not mind losing money, he emphasizes the platform's human perspective while hiding the algorithms that automated sociability.

Musk's discourse on free speech is also about changing the platform's tendency to censor political groups. Musk considers that there is a risk of losing the right to free speech due to woke activism (which I will explain below), as he claims, "If we lose freedom of speech, it's never coming back. Beware of censorship lest ye censored" (Musk, 2023r). As a critical note, the category "woke" is used as an ideological campaign to delegitimize social justice movements (Davies & MacRae, 2023). So, to understand Musk's claim, we need to consider who, according to Musk, has been unfairly treated by the Twitter platform. This tweet perhaps gives us a hint: "This platform (Twitter) was previously extremely biased, amplifying the left and suppressing the right. Now both are free to speak. No voice on the left has been suppressed to the best of my knowledge" (Musk, 2024f). This tweet suggests Twitter censored people on the right spectrum of ideology and, at the same time, it was promoting left-wing content. Again, as van Dijck (2013) expresses, values of sociability are used to legitimize the X platform and its algorithms. Furthermore, there is a civic component to what Musk talks about; it is a manifestation of what Dahlgren (2009) calls civic culture, the conditions that influence political engagement. Here, free speech is a value to incentivize users to participate on the platform and is also a declaration that X is a civic space for political participation, especially for right-wing groups.

Musk's free speech discourse is presented as performative, using values that groups against woke ideas may share. Authors like Meng (2021) and Gillespie (2018) establish that platforms perform specific values to attract new users or retain old ones. In this case, it seems to be a particular kind of user Musk wishes to appeal to: the anti-woke. He invites the anti-woke to counterbalance woke ideas on X, which may be formulated as a critical question: Is more of anti-woke content on X Musk's idea of making the platform ideologically "neutral"?

Furthermore, Musk uses free speech to legitimize his vision about content moderation. According to Musk (2023ad), X ensures this right by letting people express whatever they want without any considerations besides the law. On the contrary, the woke may limit content beyond the law, as he explains:

> Twitter has had a massive drop in revenue due to activist groups pressuring advertisers, even though nothing has changed with content moderation, and we did everything we could to appease the activists. Extremely messed up! They're trying to destroy free speech in America (Musk, 2022i).

From this tweet, we can see that Musk links free speech with less content moderation. Musk claims that free speech is in crisis because of platform content moderation, which is unjust. Gillespie (2018) explains that content moderation is the distinguishing factor of platforms from other Internet spaces. The point for Gillespie (2018) is how platforms enforce their values and moral principles to regulate content. The limitations of this research do not allow me to analyze how X enforces its policy. Still, I can claim that it is through "free speech" that Musk defends his idea of less, or none, content moderation.

Elon Musk's discourse of free speech elevates algorithms as neutral since free speech is about everyone expressing their ideas without intervention. Musk makes algorithms look like they are not intervening, at least not against problematic content. As van Dijck et al. (2018) comment, platforms present their private values as public ones, as if their contribution will benefit the whole society and as if they lack private interests. In this sense, Musk considers that he is bringing public value by claiming that X's platform algorithms won't intervene in banning content. Nevertheless, by appearing neutral, this discourse hides the private values of the company. Also, there is a contradiction in Musk's claims. On one side, he supports free speech. On the other hand, X Premium gives users who pay subscriptions more visibility. As van Dijck et al (2018) warns, we should

question to whom interests benefit the values that platforms celebrate. The problem, then, is how Musk's approach to free speech on X adds value to our societies. What is the benefit of X's making more profits by having more users while increasing problematic content? These are the questions that Musk's free speech discourse avoids.

5.2.3 Bias accusations and neutrality

As I described in the methodology and the literature review, algorithms are assumed to be objective and neutral, which is a way for companies to hide human subjectivity in their technologies. So, does Elon Musk's discourse reproduce these assumptions? In a way, yes. Musk presents other companies' algorithms as biased; he even refers to X's algorithms, before the acquisition, as biased. Then, if bias is the negative quality with which Musk judges X's competition, the algorithms that Musk own are neutral.

Musk accuses other platforms like Google or Meta to establish the objectivity of X's algorithms. We must be clear that the accusations of bias against the media are not new. As I describe in the literature review, people's perceptions of traditional media are mediated by their social identity, so when they judge a newspaper contrary to their values, they accuse it of being biased. This is what Calice et al. (2023:2836) call "hostile media effect. As Calice et al. (2023) analyze, these bias accusations are translated from media to algorithms. Influenced by partisan cues, people accuse algorithms of bias when this technology doesn't benefit their views.

Musk is not an exemption from the hostile media effect since he makes accusations of bias against old Twitter: "Twitter obv (obviously) has a strong left-wing bias" (Musk, 2022e). Despite Twitter's algorithms giving an extra boost to political parties and media from the right (Huszar, 2021), Musk claims the contrary. From this tweet, I understand that the problem with bias for Musk is that it limits the expression of political groups, particularly in the United States. In another tweet, he claims, "Old Twitter crushed any voices on the right, so half the country had no voice. X simply allows both sides to voice their arguments" (Musk, 2024a).

For Musk, Twitter even had a political bias against conservative figures; one example of this was when it banned the account of former US President Donald Trump:

> Under pressure from hundreds of activist employees, Twitter deplatforms Trump, a sitting US President, even though they themselves acknowledge that he didn't violate the rules (Musk, 2022g).

Similarly, Musk also accuses Twitter of being handled by the Democratic Party of the United States (Musk, 2022a). Musk suggests that external agents will not influence X's algorithms by making this claim. However, as Airoldi (2021) mentions, algorithms learn from data produced by people. So, accusations of bias are inaccurate since human subjectivity is present inside the data. However, he neglects that algorithms are generally vulnerable to bias. Musk erases the subjective element of X's algorithms since he seems to describe bias as a unique issue of competitors.

The accusations of bias and the idea of neutrality go hand in hand; Musk uses the former to showcase imperfect technology and the latter to suggest that the X platform's functions are ideal. In the following tweet, he clarifies the neutral value of X's algorithms: "Actually, I made the algorithm open source and neutral to all parties" (Musk2024b). Here, Musk envisions X's algorithms under his ownership as neutral, and since they are neutral, their performance will be desirable. He also makes the algorithms neutral because, in the past, according to him, they were biased. The purpose of these claims is to avoid accountability; as Bilic (2016) sustains, platforms like Google use these claims to erase human intervention in making algorithms.

Understanding Musk's accusations in the context of platform wars, as described by Srnicek (2018), is crucial. The platform ecosystem is a place of constant competition for more users. Musk's accusations can be a 'strategic move to enhance the reputation of X's algorithms. He accuses Meta's algorithm of manipulating the public, leading to their reluctance to make their code open-source (Musk, 2023s). He also claims that Google AI is biased towards woke activism (Musk, 2024g). By proposing X as an alternative to a biased platform ecosystem, Musk is essentially promoting the idea that X's algorithms are neutral while the others are not.

Summarizing, bias accusations and claims of neutrality are what Cotter (2021:1227) names a "black box gaslight", which is when platforms, in this case, the owner, uses his epistemic authority to decide which elements of the algorithms can be disputable and which ones cannot. By accusing other platforms of being bias, Musk obscures the subjectivity or the human intervention behind X's algorithms. So, we "cannot" accuse X's algorithms of being biased. In contrast, we can accuse other platforms like Meta or

previous Twitter of bias. Musk then keeps his subjectivity over technology out of the spotlight.

5.3 The adversaries of algorithms

One of my research questions concerns Musk's ideas about the actors who can dispute algorithmic discourses related to the X platform. As Crawford (2016) argues, algorithms are agonistic, which means that opposite views contest their decision-making. So, actors with opposing views of Musk will try to influence how algorithms work. In the following pages, I will present how Musk presents these adversaries and, in some cases, what it tells us about how he envisions X's algorithms.
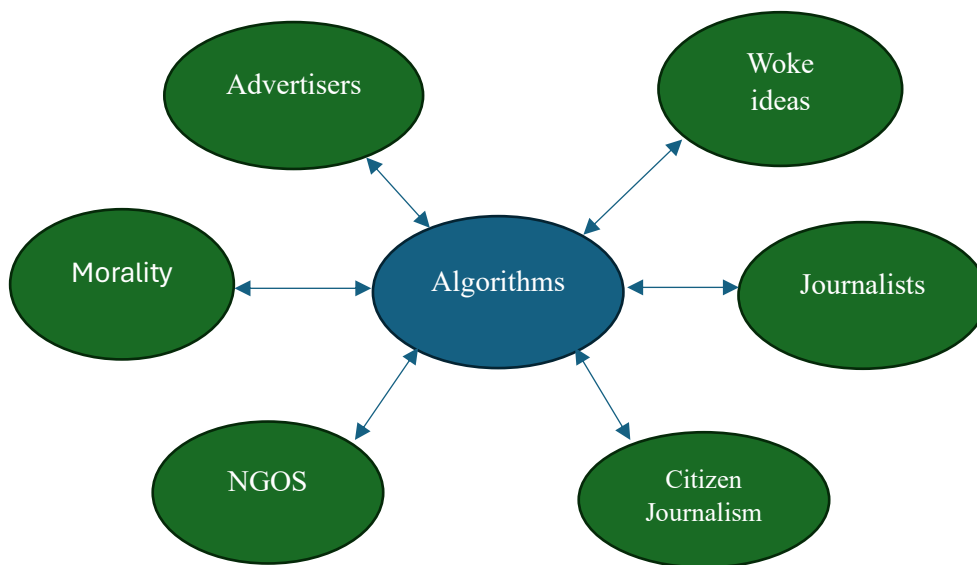
Figure V. Different actors and values are considered adversaries according to Musk claims.

5.3.1 Advertisers: Money and algorithms

At the New York Times annual DealBook Summit, Elon Musk was interviewed about the future of X. After 10 minutes of talking, the interviewer asked about the advertisers' annoyance towards an antisemitic tweet from Musk. He responded: "If someone's going to try to blackmail me with advertising, blackmail me with money, go fuck yourself" (New York Times Events, 2023). This quote represents a tension between the platform owner, who pushes for new norms of sharing information, and a group that wants to avoid promoting their image next to problematic content. This dispute relates to algorithms since they may, for example, promote harmful speech next to a Disney ad. Because of this possibility, advertisers are one actor that disputes how a platform manages its' algorithms.

The dispute between Musk and the advertisers is public and denotes their tension. For Musk (2023l), the pressure of advertisers is represented as a threat against X: "not much we can do if advertisers boycott or reduce spend on our platform". This phrase shows no agreement between what the platform will do and what advertisers desire. As several authors argue (van Dijck, 2013; Srnicek, 2018; Gillespie, 2018), platforms are where advertisers buy data or promote their content. Therefore, it is relevant for them to know what decisions Musk will make.

Against the influence of advertisers, Musk's marks two ideas. One is that, for him, the constant growth of users will force advertisers to return. Repeatedly, Musk brags about user increase on X (Musk, 2022k). The second and more relevant is that, as Musk claims, X Premium will give the platform certain autonomy from advertisers (Musk, 2022l). The new algorithmic network may change the power relations with advertisers since they will have less economic influence over how algorithms should work. As Bucher (2018) argues, the network of algorithms changes constantly, so the agency that an actor may have also changes. Commodifying users' ideas may help X's autonomy towards advertisers. However, advertisers still contribute to enacting algorithms because users may acquire X Premium to earn money. This money depends on the number of ads shown to other premium accounts. In a similar way that Zang (2021) describes a push-and-pull dynamic between users and platforms, I argue that there is a push-and-pull dynamic between advertisers and the X platform. From the platform perspective, Musk is reducing the influence of advertisers through X Premium. However, he does not eliminate this influence from the algorithmic network since advertisers still generate economic income for some users who subscribe to X Premium.

Musk criticizes that advertisers are responding to claims from NGOs and activists. One example is his constant attacks against ADL (Anti-Defamation League), an NGO which works against antisemitic discourses:

> Based on what we've heard from advertisers, ADL seems to be responsible for most of our revenue loss (Musk, 2023m).

This logic shows that algorithms are not predefined or are autonomous to power relationships. Research from Meng (2021) and Mead & Neves (2023) show that algorithms are also the result of power relationships, which companies or public institutions crystallized in coding language. So, a positive aspect of this dispute is that

even one of the wealthiest men on earth must deal with an NGO influencing the mechanism of his platform. This power relations shows that actors like NGOs or activists can influence algorithms by putting pressure on the platform directly or pressuring its advertisers. However, we must be realistic. The most influential actors, like Musk, will still have a prominent position in these clashes.

Despite the ongoing dispute, Musk's stance highlights the importance of advertisers in the algorithmic landscape. This is evident from his acknowledgement that advertisers can promote their ads wherever they choose. "They don't have a right to censor this platform, but they absolutely do have a right to say what content appears next to their ads" (Musk, 2023n). This tweet shows the limitations and reach of advertisers' power. In this case, Musk limits the power of advertisers in terms of content moderation. However, Musk reveals when advertisers can influence the algorithms—when they contribute economically.

5.3.2 The news and algorithms

There are contradictory interests in what news media and the X platform want. First, Musk creates conditions where users transform into subscribers who produce content for money (like journalists). Second, algorithms prefer longer native content over short tweets with external links (Bandy & Diakopulos, 2021). The problem is that traditional media wants to redirect users of the X platform to to their home page. At the same time, X incentivizes users to stay on the platform as long as possible. These actions are relevant since the media is one actor affected by the algorithm changes (Diaz et al. 2021). This implies that news media depend on recognizing the changes in X's algorithms to sustain their organization. But lets see how Musk constructs his claims. Starting with his idea of journalism.

For Musk, the good journalists are the "citizen journalists". This favoritism may be because these people upload their content to Musk's platform, which may create a network effect, as Srnicek (2018) formulates, which means, in simple terms, that more people will draw more people to the platform. Musk's favoritism is a way to encourage people who may be opinion leaders in their communities. By drawing them to X, more people could join the platform, which benefits the platform's economy by having more data to process through algorithms. From this perspective, Musk (2024c) highlights these users as experts since they are firsthand witnesses of news events

> Hearing news from actual experts or people on the ground is way better than having it be filtered through non-experts (media) or people who weren't actually there.

Here, Musk is interested in eyewitnesses, so we should question if there is a connection between algorithms, data, and video content. For Musk, the X platform will be the "everything app" (Milmo & Hawkins, 2023). So, to analyze "everything," this company should train its algorithms with visual content to make optimal recommendations about movies or short videos. This idea relates to what Srnicek (2018:61) calls "expansion of extraction", which is the competitive tendency of platforms to extract more data from users by creating new activities. With new data, a platform may improve its algorithms. With better algorithms a platform may have advantage over the competition (Prodnik, 2021). Perhaps Musk needs more "eyewitnesses" so people can feed the algorithm with more video content. This may make the X platform competitive against other platforms that host videos.

Moreover, as I explained earlier, algorithms are a matter of being empowered, according to Musk. Citizen journalism may suggest the value of empowering citizens to talk about what is happening in their communities. In one of Musk's (2023ab) tweets, this feeling is tangible: "News narratives should evolve from the people, rather than be decided by a handful of editors". In Musk's rhetoric, having an account where you can spread your news to more people (if you pay) is empowering. It is empowering to jump over a "handful of editors" as if they suppose a limitation of people's will. This dynamic brings us to what van Dijck et al. (2018) criticize, when platforms enables social connections, like citizen journalism, they influence some disconnections, like traditional news, in this case.

The idea of empowerment from citizen journalism explains why Musk claims that "X is the news". van Dijck (2013) mentions that Twitter is the place to host real-time news. Musk's discourse embraces this logic, but the difference is that Musk mentions this idea as a victory over news media organizations, not only as a characteristic of the X platform:

> I don't read the legacy media propaganda much anymore. It's a waste of time and a sadness generator. Just get my news from X – much more immediate, has actual world-class subject matter experts and tons of humor. Sooo much better!" (Musk, 2023t)

Musk also insists that legacy media publish their news after it appears on X. From my perspective, he indicates that supporting them is pointless because he does not consume legacy media.

With a clear intention of promoting citizen journalism through algorithms that invite users to create content, there is a conflict between news media organizations and X. This conflict is not new. As Dahlgren (2009:175) mentions, the internet already created spaces that dispute traditional media's power with the emergence of non-corporate practices like "participatory journalism". The difference here is the clarity of intentions from the owner of a vast, global social media platform. X algorithms influence users to produce more content, work, and be popular through longer texts and videos. At the same time, it downgrades external links, which directly affects traditional media. The platform itself translates the work of journalists to citizens as an empowering dynamic. Srnicek (2018) mentions that platforms are at war against each other to increase their profits. In this case, the X platform is also at war against traditional media to expand users' time on their platform. "Twitter is also a competitor to legacy media for news, so they are fundamentally conflicted" (Musk, 2023u).

We should recognize the political characteristics of algorithms in this dispute. News media is an actor that monitors, to different degrees, the algorithms of platforms. Therefore, Musk tries to trivialize news organizations criticising his decisions over X's algorithms. As Crawford (2016) explains, algorithms are disputed, meaning there are oppositive views about how this technology should work. In this case, the news media and Musk have opposing views. This conflict explains why Musk talks about news as manipulative, with a hidden agenda, bias or dependent on advertisers' will. It is a strategy to legitimize his position against the news media. Also, we must consider that Musk is one of the wealthiest men on earth, which can make him unfriendly to the media, who question his economic power.

As it works with advertisers and subscribers, Musk softens his tone about journalists when he relates them to X's mechanism of commodification:

> If you're a journalist who wants more freedom to write and a higher income, then publish directly on this platform! (Musk, 2023v).

In this tweet, Musk softens his tone at journalists. Also, he uses economic and civic incentives to influence journalists to publish on X. As Meng (2021) argues, platforms use values to incentivize users to publish. In this case, Musk appeals to freedom for journalists to publish on X. Another point is that journalists are friendly to Musk if they pay for X Premium. Which means that they may be willing to earn money under the platform's

conditions, as we saw with the tweets about "citizen journalists" (Musk, 2024c; Musk, 2023ab). So, a good journalist for Musk subscribes to the platform services and does not question the reasons behind the platform's algorithms.

5.3.3 Go woke, go broke!

Musk's discourse features an actor with antagonistic characteristics: the woke. Musk defends the neutrality of X's algorithms by creating an enemy, which justifies the practices of algorithms and, therefore, the new changes in the platform. Simultaneosly, he revelas that the woke can dispute the decision-making of algorithms. However, who are the woke? What is their relationship with Musk's visions of X's algorithms? Maybe the phrase "go woke, go broke!" tell us something. Let's see.

Musk characterizes woke as a way of thinking, a virus that has expanded across different actors. These ideas for Musk are flawed since they are based on deviated premises:

> "The fundamental axiomatic flaw of the woke mind virus is that the weaker party is always right (even if they want you to die). For most of history, the operating principle was that might makes right. As we became more civilized, we started to consider right in the absolute." (Musk, 2024h).

With this tweet, we can infer that the woke movement is interested in the weak at the expense of other people. Musk may also signal that the woke is about defending minorities. Other traits are that the woke does not accept awkward truths (Musk, 2022j) or uses morality to hide its intentions (Musk, 2024i). But who are "the woke"?

One actor who embraces the woke stance is the media; as Musk (2024d) claims in one of his tweets, "The AP has the woke mind virus growing out of its head like a giant mushroom!". Similarly, Musk refers to universities or schools as woe. He accuses them of "Soviet-level indoctrination" (Musk, 2024j). The soviet references may indicate two aspects. First, this idea may be related to the left rather than the right. Second, these ideas have an authoritarian component. However, let's remember that people who are more aware of algorithms are the ones who learn about them through media or school, as Zarouali et al. (2021) claim. So, Musk is attacking the places where algorithms are contested or questioned.

Another actor whom Musk mentions as woke are NGOs: "The ADL has done a lot of good work in prior decades, but has been overzealous in recent years & hijacked by woke mind virus" (Musk, 2023w). This organization is the same that disputes the work of this platform regarding content moderation. Because ADL debates what content algorithms

should allow, and ADL is woke, according to Musk, then I argue that woke discourses dispute the criteria algorithms should use to order information. Here, we go back to ANT theory, where a plurality of actors constitutes the actions of the algorithms (Bucher, 2018). In this sense, and according to Musk's discourse, the woke can dispute how platforms manage their algorithms.

Furthermore, because woke ideas support minorities, there is a dispute between allowing harmful content, banning it or recommending it. Therefore, algorithms are disputed between Musk and woke actors because depending on which criteria X platform uses on their algorithms, they may give more visibility to content that is against minorities: for example, promoting anti-feminist content. As van Dijck et al. (2018) explain, a network of actors around platforms question the public value these companies bring to society. In this case, there is a dispute between the private interest of X, disguised as free speech or empowerment, and the public value that activists expect from this platform.

Also, since woke ideas dispute what the platform is doing concerning algorithms, they make public the human intervention behind this technology. As Bucher (2018) mentions, we can understand where subjectivity is placed when algorithms fail. Woke discourse asks about a hypothetical malfunction: What if algorithms recommend toxic content? They put Musk's subjectivity in the spotlight since, for woke actors, it is relevant to what Musk and his team think about minorities, their rights, obligations and how they can be protected.

Another point to consider in this dispute is that Musk wants to make X's algorithms magical by claiming neutrality and efficiency. Therefore, algorithms should not make moral judgements. Contrarily, woke ideas are about morality, whether using it as a disguise or advocating for minorities. Musk rejects any incursion of morality in the algorithm:

> The intent is not for the algorithm to be some judgy moral arbiter, but rather that it does its best to inform & entertain (Musk, 2023x).

Musk defends his criteria of algorithms here, which, for Gillespie (2014), is one of the ways platforms mark political stances. Musk's political stance regarding algorithms is that they should not moderate content that people may consider immoral since he does not consider algorithms to be judges. As Law, quoting Foucault (2007), mentions,

discourses define conditions of possibility. Musk, through his claims, puts a distance between algorithms and the defense of minorities.

For Musk, applying moral criteria on algorithms seems to implies a wrong economic decision. This logic explains why he constantly repeats the phrase, "Go woke, go broke". It also suggests that it is nonstrategic to hear the criticism concerned with minorities' rights and algorithms. Hearing these criticisms may cause the X platform to be an economic disaster. In other words, using moral criteria for algorithms is not profitable. As he claims about another media industry, woke discourse is terrible for profits: "Disney has a major content problem. Almost their entire upcoming slate is unwatchable. They are the world's biggest example of go woke, go broke lol" (Musk, 2023y). Therefore, what generates profit is an amoral algorithm. Dahlgren (2009:20) frames this thinking as "uncivic economism", which prioritizes economic criteria over other values or modes of thinking. This kind of ideas puts concerns regarding fairness in a second order. As Beer (2017) adds, claims about algorithms legitimize social orders. Musk's tweets may be legitimizing abuses against minorities. Since the values that Musk claims have nothing to do with equality or fairness. Also, by appealing to "amoral" algorithms as a technical fact, Musk normalizes ways of seeing this technology. Foucault (2007) explains that practices must portray knowledge as natural and technical. It seems to me that from Musk's point of view, being anti-woke and being "technical" is similar. We can see this when he claims that woke ideas related to minorities are inherently wrong for business.

Musk even sustains that there is a reaction against woke ideas. His discourse about algorithmic neutrality or amoral algorithms is not only a correct way of doing business but also an act of resistance.

> Now is the time to fight the anti-human woke mind virus with everything! (Musk, 2023z).

This tweet suggests that Musk's decisions on X platform relate to antiwoke discourses. He highlights that many people are upset against woke ideas, legitimizing his actions on the platform. This may be a strategy to legitimize his subjectivity over the algorithms and his flexible approach to harmful content against minorities. As van Dijck et al. (2018) explain, not only platforms should be worried about adding public value to society. Instead, civil society, Governments and legacy media should also be concerned about what platforms are doing. However, Musk's claims as a reaction suggest that he only wants to add public value and not media, activists, or

NGOs. And it is through an anti-woke perspective that he considers adding public value. Time will tell how different actors dispute this stance.

6 Conclusions

This master thesis aimed to explore how Elon Musk envisions X's algorithms through his tweets. Algorithms are constituted by a network of human and nonhuman actors. For example, I analyzed not only what Musk said about algorithms but also what he said about X/Twitter, the special features of the platform, journalists, and activists. The method I used to analyze the data was thematic analysis. The results I present contribute to what Beer (2017:7) calls the "notion of the algorithm", which focuses on how algorithms are evoked and what values they promote. In the following pages, I share the conclusions by answering each research question I formulated at the beginning of this investigation.

How does Elon Musk suggest users should make use of X's algorithms?

Like other platforms, Musk wants users to spend more time on X. To achieve this, X creates the option to publish content in bigger formats, like long-duration videos or longer texts. I must add to this logic that X recommends native content over short tweets that direct users to external pages. According to Musk, the algorithm will recommend extensive content to keep users engaged on the platform. This implies that users who want to amplify their ideas will have to make an extra effort by publishing content in long format, this kind of actions is what Gillespie (2016:64) frames as "algorithmically recognizable", which is when users adapt their behavior to the norms of algorithms so they can make their content visible. Conversely, it implies that users who do not want to be visible will consume content in bigger formats. This dynamic aims to keep users inside the platform and "not let them go" to other digital sites. As Srnicek (2018) explains, platforms tend to "enclose" users inside their systems so they can have more data to profit from or improve their own algorithms. Therefore, when Musk's announces that users can now publish more content, it is not a decision for the benefit of users only; instead, it is a decision to improve the platform's economy.

For Musk, if users want to be algorithmically recognizable, they not only have to publish more but must also pay for it. As we saw in the analysis section, users must subscribe to X Premium if they want to publish more content. So, the users who pay at least three dollars for a monthly subscription can enact X Premium algorithms. Let's stop here and think about what it means to pay three dollars. Let's imagine what this money implies in countries outside the United States. For example, in the country where I am from, three dollars means a lunch on the street. The medium tier of this subscription is eight dollars

monthly. With this money, you can pay for the bus ticket of a whole month. And the "Premium +" version costs sixteen dollars per month. With this, you can eat at a fancy restaurant. Of course, in Western countries, not everyone can pay X Premium. Still, my point is that X is a global platform, so people from countries with a bad economy will have a hard time paying for this subscription, so only the ones who have money will amplify their ideas through the algorithm. This is relevant since X is a platform allows people to engage politically. So, some forms of participate may be overshadow by this algonorms.

X Premium may create unequal relations regarding political engagement that should be studied in the future. For authors like Dahlgren (2009), the Internet will be a space to equalize political participation. However, algorithms reproduce uneven relations between people on X. As O'Neal (2016) and Eubanks (20117) warn, inequality is being automated as more algorithms are used in different spheres of social life, where the poorest sectors are punished, and the richest ones are rewarded. In this sense, we should ask how Musk's visions impact public debate in countries with high levels of inequality, such as countries from Latin America. Or even the United States.

Another point is that Musk's discourse envisions algorithms to commodify users' ideas, which van Dijck (2018) calls the commodification mechanism of platforms. From this perspective, Musk explains that X Premium offers the possibility of earning money. Algorithms persuade people to produce more content in longer formats because this is how they can generate profits. Fuchs (2014) recognizes this as digital labor since people work to create content and data for the platforms' benefit. X benefits from people producing more content because this will keep more people engaged on the platform and deliver insights about what kind of content keeps them for a longer time. Therefore, algorithms are the mechanism through which people are influenced to work. It motivates users that if they produce enough content, they may make money.

Another point is that when Musk evokes how the algorithms should perform, he also imagines how the ideal user should be. Bucher (2018:17) explains that platforms create "regimes of visibility" when they order how we should communicate or access information. Inspired by Foucault, Bucher (2018) argues that the threat of invisibility disciplines users to act according to the norms of algorithms, so the useful users for platforms will be the ones who are constantly participating to be visible. For the case of X, because not all users want to be invisible, some will pay to be subscribers. Being a

subscriber implies more resources for participating in X. However, being a subscriber also suggests being in a higher position in the hierarchy of X. It seems to me that Musk subtly suggests with X Premium that subscribers will have a competitive advantage over others, whether to amplify their ideas or to make money. As van Dijck (2013) argues, platforms base their culture on neoliberal competition premises. So, the norms that algorithms promote are about competing for more attention, money, or reputation. Bucher (2018) argues that platforms frame certain forms of participation through their algorithms as obvious. Through features such as X Premium, Musk may consider it obvious that everyone wants more attention or money and that this is the standard way to socialize on the web.

How does Musk use values to justify X's algorithms?

Musk's strategy for making magical X's algorithms is to create enthusiasm through the values of neutrality, empowerment, and free speech. A figure that explains his discourse is "the wizard" that Svensson (2021:138) theorizes from analyzing tech culture. The wizard for Svensson (2021) is skilled in programming, and it is through programming that this person can and wants to help the world. Musk's discourses suggest that he wants to help; he wants to empower people to make "extra money", defend free speech from censorship or provide a neutral service through objective algorithms. From this perspective, Musk only wants to help since he is a skilled computer guy who knows how social problems should be solved. However, the wizard hides the non-fantastic idea of companies making money at the expense of user's data.

The figure of the wizard is prominent when Musk implies that X's algorithms will help users engage on the platform. For example, explaining that each twitch to the algorithm aims to give the user "compelling content" as if this is a favor for people and not an economic decision to improve the profits of X. Also, Musk tries to show honesty in his decisions by claiming the transparency of his algorithms. However, as we saw in the previous section, transparency is not enough to hold accountable the role of human subjectivity when it creates algorithms; in other words, it is insufficient to counter the power of algorithms. From this empowerment perspective, algorithms are about helping the user connect with good content, making them feel happy with X through the timeline "For You". As Bucher & Helmond (2018) explain, platforms establish relationships between them and the user. In this case, Musk is establishing an innocent and uninteresting relationship with users.

Also, the wizard uses what Broussard (2018) calls "technochauvinism", which is the belief that technology can solve any problem. I recognize that X is a global platform, making it relevant to solve issues like free speech. However, not by twitching some aspects of X's algorithms will the problems related to free speech disappear. By creating X Premium, users will not be more empowered, nor will their economic situation improve. The problem is to think that X's technology can solve social problems by itself. For example, despite Musk's enthusiasm for free speech on X, research points out that since his acquisition, hate speech has increased (Hickey et al. 2023) or that activists do not feel this space is safe anymore (Chang et al. 2023). So, being a wizard in coding is not the same as being able to solve social problems.

Another strategy that Musk uses to enchant X's algorithms is to obscure the role of human subjectivity in his platform. At the same time, he highlights the subjectivity of other platforms. This problem is explicit when Musk accuses other platforms of bias, especially to the left spectrum of ideology. This bias accusation is what we saw in the previous chapter as a "hostile media effect (Calice et al. 2023:2836). These accusations depend on what political group the person belongs to. When Musk claims that previous Twitter or other platforms are biased to the left, he seems to suggest that he is on the right part of the ideological spectrum. However, he accuses other platforms of being biased not to appear as a right-wing individual but as a neutral one. This discourse makes look his decisions about the algorithms as neutral, which is what Campolo & Crawford (2020:12) call "enchantment determinism" when the creators of technology like algorithms give them superhuman characteristics, like neutrality.

Claims of neutrality are a way to avoid accountability, as several authors have explained (Bilic, 2016; Cotter, 2021; Neyland, 2016; O'Neil, 2016). The limitation of this literature is that it is focused only on the characteristics of the algorithms themselves rather than on what values outside this technology legitimize them. In this case, I found that free speech, although it is not a principle of algorithms, legitimizes the platform and Musk's decisions. Therefore, companies legitimize algorithms beyond technical values such as neutrality, efficiency or objectivity.

Musk uses free speech as a strategy to highlight the human value of the platform and its civic compromise. This should be seen as a performative act since it seems to me hi is talking about a specific form of free speech, mainly an approach related to the First Amendment of the United States. He uses this value to invite to the platform people who

feel that there is censorship from "leftist bias" platforms. It appears that he mentions free speech to signal a flexible understanding of content moderation, which, as Gillespie (2018) remembers, can be done through algorithms. So, Musk celebrates free speech as a reaction against a supposed bias in content moderation.

What these findings imply is that the legitimacy of this technology extends to current debates, such as the case of free speech. This may be significant in the context of new AI tools. We must consider, how do AI companies or owners of these companies envision their role in society in relation to current debates? And more importantly, how are global trends, ideological disputes, reflected in these discourses? Are Musk's discourses part of a global reaction against specific democratic values. As we can observe with Musk, he is conscious of the disputes over free speech, and he also perceives woke activists as adversaries. Therefore, he is a participant in international debates in Western industrialized countries about free speech and minorities, and his perspective on algorithms also provides insights into the current debates in these countries. As Corner (2011) explains, there is a systemic power that is reproduced through media. Recognizing that larger expressions of power are at play in X or that Musk is part of larger networks can enhance our understanding of this media.

How are actors that dispute X's algorithms represented by Musk's?

As the literature about algorithms shows, they are a contested concept by a plurality of actors. To understand these disputes, I analyze what Musk says about actors who can contradict his views. In other words, can we learn something about algorithms by examining the disputes about them? The answer is yes.

The most relevant finding in this aspect is Musk's anti-woke discourse. As we saw with Bucher (2018), algorithms are constituted by a network of relationships. But not all relationships are possible. Law (2009) argues that through discourses, some relationships are made possible, and some are not. In the case of woke activists, Musk tries to disable the relationship between X's algorithms and woke activists. In other words, Musk limits the influence of woke discourses on X's algorithms. His strategy is to claim that algorithms shouldn't be moral. At the same time, he accuses woke ideas of being a "moral cloak" or that they defend irrationally minority rights. So, he is closing the doors to specific discourses that criticize giving space or recommending problematic content. Musk is also opening the door to anti-woke groups to be part of X as users. The literature

doesn't answer how disputes about algorithms enable the influence of some groups while it limits the influence of others. The question then is, what specific actors will form part of the network of X algorithms? In what moments can they influence the decision-making of algorithms?

In the case of advertisers, Musk's strategy is to limit their power regarding what content should or shouldn't be allowed. Furthermore, Musk blames advertisers for "destroying free speech". So, he uses a universal value to blame advertisers for sabotaging X platform without taking responsibility for how his subjectivity influences the platform. However, there is a contradiction in Musk's discourse about advertisers and X Premium. He claims that this feature can give the platform autonomy from advertisers. At the same time, X Premium users depend on brands that advertise next to their content. In this aspect, Musk accepts advertisers' influence over where brands want to place their ads. So, when advertisers pay, they can influence the decision-making of algorithms because they can decide where to put their content. The condition is similar when a user pays to be algorithmically recognized. According to Musk's discourse, commodification determines whether or not an actor can influence algorithms.

Musk also tries to close the door to news media and journalists, who can inform people how algorithms work. I understand that Musk's strategy is to delegitimize news so they are not seen by the public as a legitimate voice in terms of algorithms or platform architectures. Furthermore, Musk's decisions on X conflict with news media interests. He openly claims that the media is a competitor of his platform. We can see this competition when Musk celebrates "citizen journalism" through X to contest the power of traditional news. Or when he claims X's superiority over journalism regarding who is the fastest to publish news. Also, we must remember that X's algorithms downgrade tweets with external links. So, news media that rely on generating revenue from their web pages may be affected by this decision. As Dahlgren (2009) describes, this tension is not new; the Internet has already offered spaces to dispute the power of traditional media. What changes here is that the owner of a platform recognizes news media as competition. As he does with advertisers, Musk accepts the value of journalists when they publish their content from X, specifically when they become subscribers. He sees journalists as friendly when they publish accept the norms of X. So, the future question is how news media and journalists can influence X platform? And let's extend this question beyond

journalists and ask; what other forms of political engagement are disputing the power of Elon Musk over his algorithms?

Lastly, this research presented some limitations that I would like to share. First, this research gives an idea of what Musk is expressing about X's algorithms but does not acknowledge what algorithms do. Instead, I focused on how the owner claims about algorithms. I did not audit what algorithms do on X. This approach is relevant to understanding how algorithms work.

Second, I focused only on Musk's tweets and didn't examine how the platform, through its official web page, justified its algorithms. Using more sources could have helped me understand how algorithms are legitimized. The third limitation is that by the time I finish this thesis, X may edit, change, modify, or eliminate certain aspects of the algorithms. As Kitchin (2017) recognizes, the main characteristic of algorithms is that they are never finished since their makers constantly change them.

Furthermore, to understand algorithms under Musk ownership my thesis would have benefitted from a comparison with previous Twitter, which could give me a better understanding of how X algorithms are changing. Also, the thesis requires a deeper comprehension of free speech; this is a complex and crucial aspect since it is the primary value that Musk uses to celebrate his platform. More context about what he is discussing would have given me a better perspective about X

However, this master's thesis contributes to our knowledge of algorithms. Musk's claims show that he promotes user competition. X Premium is a crucial component regarding the creation of new practices and expectations about algorithms. Also, Musk celebrates X's algorithms by claiming values of empowerment, neutrality and free speech. These values signal that he highlights human values while hiding his subjectivity and the platform's need for data. But there are positive news. Musk tweets that several actors, such as the woke, news or even advertisers, contest his private interests. These actors may try to drive the platform's actions for the common good. So, not only do platforms influence our way of socializing, but we can also influence, to some degree, how platforms add value to society. Maybe the next step is to ask how we can influence the platform's culture of connectivity. We should not be so pessimistic. In the end, platforms are constantly in flux. Their architectures are only for a while. Everything can be different.

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8 Appendix

Appendix I. Coding dictionary

Here, I share the definitions of the codes and subcodes I used for my qualitative text analysis. The codes emerged from my word search over Musk's X account. I created the subcodes after I familiarized myself with the data.

Some codes do not have subcategories because there were few tweets, and the ideas inside the codes were similar.

Elements of the platform:

Here are the codes related to the platform mechanism. This aspect is the non-human part of the algorithmic network. It is true that the "user" is not entirely non-human, but it is not an agent outside of the platform. This is why I included it in this section.

Code: Twitter

Here are the tweets where Musk mentions "Twitter".

Subcode	Definition	Number of tweets
Recommendations	Tweets where Musk recommends users how to use Twitter	1
Empowerment	Tweets where Musk suggests Twitter benefits for users	7
Criteria of algorithms	Tweets where Musk defines the criterion that X's/Twitter algorithms use	4
Adversaries	Tweets where Musk refers to adversaries of Twitter	5
Social values	Tweets where Musk suggest to social values while he mentions Twitter	3
Information about Twitter	Tweets where Musk gives information of changes on Twitter	4
Previous Twitter	Tweets where Musk refers to the previous Twitter management	11

Code: Algorithms

Here are the codes where Musk mentions "algorithms".

Subcode	Definition	Number of tweets
Definition	Tweets where Musk defines algorithms	3

Other's algorithms	Tweets where Musk talks about other's companies algorithms	5
Modification	Tweets where Musk talks about the modifications on X's algorithms	4
Empowerment	Tweets where Musk suggests how algorithms will help users	8
Criterion of algorithms	Tweets where Musk suggests the criterion algorithms use to process content	14
Public value	Tweets where Musk suggest how algorithms will add public value to public debate.	4

Code: Content moderation

Here are the tweets where Musk mentions "content moderation".

Code	Definition	Number of tweets
Content moderation	Tweets where Musk talks about content moderation.	10

Code: X Premium / Twitter Blue

Here are the tweets where Musk mentions "X Premium" or "Twitter Blue".

Subcode	Definition	Number of tweets
Solution	Tweets where Musk mentions X Premium / Twitter Blue as a solution to a problem.	3
Empowerment	Tweets where Musk suggest how X Premium / Twitter Blue will help users.	4
Features	Tweets where Musk describes the features of X Premium / Twitter Blue.	11

Code: API

Where are the tweets where Musk mentions "API".

Code	Definition	Number of tweets
API	Tweets were Musk mentions API.	6

Code: Buttons

Here are the tweets where Musk mentions "buttons".

Subcode	Definition	Number of tweets
Bookmark	Tweets where Musk mentions Bookmark buttons.	5
Norms	Tweets where Musk defines how users should use buttons.	5
Aesthetics	Tweets where Musk expresses the aesthetic value of buttons.	2

Code: Users

Here are the tweets where Musk mentions "user".

Subcode	Definition	Number of tweets
Increase of users	Tweets where Musk describes the increasing of users on X	14
Monetization	Tweets where Musk suggests how users can make money	14
Norms	Tweets where Musk recommends how users should engage on the platform	22
Rivals	Tweets where Musk talks about how other platform treat their users	9
Empowerment	Tweets where Musk explains how the platform is helping users	22
Measurement	Tweets where Musk explains how he measures users using X.	19

Code: For you / Timeline

Here are the tweets where Musk mentions "for you" or "timeline".

Subcode	Definition	Number of tweets
Fixing	Tweets where Musk clarifies that he is fixing the timeline	4

Criteria of algorithms	Tweets where Musk suggests what criterion does the timeline use to recommend content	6
Empowerment	Tweets where Musk suggest how the timeline will help users.	5
Norm	Tweets where Musk recommends how to interact with the timeline.	4

Code: Mute

Here are the tweets where Musk mentions "mute".

Subcode	Definition	Number of tweets
Conditions	Tweets where Musk explains what conditions mute users	4
Norm	Tweets where Musk recommends how to use the mute options	2

Actors and ideas related to algorithms:

This section is about codes related to the human aspect of algorithms and, also, values that Musk used to explain his perspectives.

Code: Freedom of speech

Here are the tweets where Musk mentions "freedom of speech".

Subcode	Definition	Number of tweets
Definitions	Tweets where Musk defines free speech.	21
Adversaries	Tweets where Musk points out the actors against free speech	22
Personalization	Tweets where Musk declares his advocacy for free speech.	6
Supporters	Tweets where Musk defines who support free speech.	5
Platform	Tweets where Musk relates the platform position with free speech.	6

Code: Woke

Here are the tweets where Musk mentions "woke".

Subcode	Definitions	Number of tweets
Who	Tweets where Musk defines who is part of the woke movement.	14
Consequences	Tweets where Musk explain the consequences of woke movement.	11
Characteristics	Tweets where Musk clarifies the characteristics of the woke movement.	15
Reaction	Tweets where Musk celebrates a reaction against the woke movement	11
Tech sector	Tweets where Musk he accuses platforms of benefiting woke movement	12

Code: News

Here are the code where Musk mentions "news".

Subcode	Definitions	Number of tweets
Bad Media	Tweets where Musk defines which kind of news are bad.	34
Good Media	Tweets where Musk defines which kind of news are good.	4
X is the news	Tweets where Musk celebrates X platform as a news platform.	13
Definitions of news	Tweets where Musk defines what are news.	8

Code: Journalists

Here are the tweets where Musk mentions "journalists".

Subcodes	Definition	Number of tweets
Citizen Journalism	Tweets where Musk celebrates citizen journalism	4

Bad Journalism	Tweets where Musk defines what is bad journalism	16

Code: Far right/Right

Here are the tweets where Musk mentions "the right" or "far right". There are no subcodes because there are not so many tweets and the ideas of the tweets are similar.

Code	Definition	Number of tweets
Far right/ Right	Tweets where Musk talks about the right/far right	12

Code: Far left/Left

Here are the tweets where Musk mentions "far left" or "the left". There are no subcodes because there are not so many tweets and the ideas of the tweets are similar

Code	Definition	Number of tweets
Far left/ Left	Tweets where Musk talks about the left/far left	9

Code: Advertisers

Here are the tweets where Musk mentions "advertisers".

Subcode	Definition	Number of tweets
Needs	Tweets where Musk describes what are the need from advertisers.	5
Empowerment	Tweets where Musk explains how advertisers may help users.	6
Community notes	Tweets where Musk explains how community notes are applied to advertisers.	5
Disputes	Tweets where Musk shares his disagreements with advertisers.	11

Code: Content creators

Here are the tweets where Musk mentions "content creators".

Subcodes	Definition	Number of tweets
Monetization	Tweets where Musk describes how the platform will help people to make money.	8

Public value	Tweets where Musk describes how the platform helps content creators.	5	
Technical criteria	Tweets where Musk explains the conditions to make money.	5	

Appendix II. Example of analysis

As Kuckartz (2014) recommends, the first step for my data analysis was to familiarize myself with the data. In the table below (Table 4), I share how my database looked. Each column represents one category. For example, the first column represents the category of "Twitter," which is Musk's tweets that mention Twitter. The second one represents the tweets where he mentions "algorithms."

No.	V.	Twitter	Algorithms
1	1	We are working on having this information will show up on your profile, so you know exactly what applies to your account. Not as easy as it sounds, because there are many different systems at Twitter that affect accounts, especially in "Trust and Safety" software layer.	There will be multiple algorithms, including no algorithm (ie just tweets from those you follow in chronological order)
2	1	I recommend doing Twitter Spaces simultaneously and interacting with users dynamically while recording your podcast	Avoiding dystopian outcomes is not easy. The intent is not for the algorithm to be some judgy moral arbiter, but rather that it do its best to inform & entertain. Trying to maximize unregretted user-minutes seems like the right objective.

No	V	Freedom of speech	Woke
3	1	We're updating the system tomorrow so that those who follow @realDailyWire will see this in their feed, but it won't be recommended to non-followers (nor will any advertising be associated with it)	The algorithm needs & will get major upgrades. We will still publish it later this month, but please expect to see many bugs & silly logic! What matters is showing users compelling content. We're doing better than before (I think). User-minutes are up >10% from last year.

Table 4. An example of how I organize my data. Each colum is a category.

This analysis is the same for human and non-human actors (Table 5).

No	V	Freedom of speech	Woke
1	1	Freedom of speech means freedom of speech	I'm not surprised at all. That was to inoculate the public. As a prominent vaccine advocate, you should understand that. Yale is the epicenter of the woke mind virus attempting to destroy civilization.
2	1	New Twitter policy is freedom of speech, but not freedom of reach. Negative/hate tweets will be max deboosted & demonetized, so no ads or other revenue to Twitter. You won't find the tweet unless you specifically seek it out, which is no different from rest of Internet.	Unless it is stopped, the woke mind virus will destroy civilization and humanity will never reached Mars
3	1	(R)But freedom of speech is the bedrock of a strong democracy and must take precedence. My preference for the 2024 presidency is someone sensible and centrist. I had hoped that would the case for the Biden administration, but have been disappointed so far.	The reason you're not that funny is because you're woke. Humor relies on an intuitive & often awkward truth being recognized by the audience, but wokism is a lie, which is why nobody laughs.

Table 5. This is another example about how I organized my data.

After I familiarized myself with the data I gathered, I created subcodes. Each color on the colum represents a different subcode. For example, we can see two colours in the "free speech" column in the table above. So, there are two subcodes in that code.

To analyze each subcode, I used color filters in Excel. In the next image, there is only one color in Twitter's column, which means I am analyzing one subcode from this code. After analyzing each subcode, I wrote a summary of the most relevant ideas I found. After that summary, I compared codes to find patterns within the data.

No.	V.	Twitter
3	1	We're updating the system tomorrow so that those who follow @realDailyWire will see this in their feed, but it won't be recommended to non-followers (nor will any advertising be associated with it)
4	1	Commenting & deliberate sharing will be allowed. Sensitive content just won't be pushed to people unless they ask for it or a friend sends it to them.
5	1	That said, it simply counts if you saw the post on the X/Twitter app or via web browser, not how long you watched

Table 6. Each cell has a color that represents a subcode. To analyze subcodes I had to filter the columns by color.

In the next table I show, as an example, two summaries of my subcodes. The summaries were bigger, but for me to explain better I shorten them so I can explain myself better. I did this after applying color filter to my data base on Excel.

Code: Free speech Subcode: Adversaries	Code: Woke Subcode: Who	Theme: Adversaries Subtheme: Go woke go broke!
There are specific references to actors who dispute Musk's perspective about free speech, which are, the press, activist, European countries, and other platforms. He portraits the dispute as an existential threat "If we lose freedom of speech it's never coming back" as he mentioned in reference to activists	The same actors that can dispute Musk practices related to algorithm are the ones frame as woke. Universities, college students, activists, news agency, mass media, technological magazines and even the Irish Government, are consider by Musk as adversaries.	Across summaries I could verify patterns in the data. In this case, there is a pattern between Musk constantly talking about free speech adversaries and him accusing "the woke" as adversary. Therefore, the woke is an adversary that contests his values.

Table 7. I compared summaries of different subcodes to find themes.

Appendix III. Pilot

At the beginning of my coding analysis, I did a pilot. Initially, I coded my data as Freedom of speech, woke, news, and journalists. However, later, I included ideologies, such as "the left/ far left" and "the right/ far right." Also, I added advertisers. After this, I created subcodes for each code. The image below shows an example of how my coding looked initially.

It was the same logic with non-human codes. I did not have subcodes. But after I familiarized myself with the data, I added the codes mute, timeline/for you, buttons, users, and, as well as subcodes for each code. The image below shows an example of how my database looked initially.

After the pilot I realized that the codes were not enough to explain how Musk envisions X's algorithms. In the next image is an example of how my final data base looked like.