



THE TRANSFER OF INTERNATIONAL CASES OF ALGORITHMIC INJUSTICE TO TURKISH DIGITAL MEDIA: A DISCURSIVE REPRESENTATION ANALYSIS

ULUSLARARASI ALGORİTMİK ADALETSİZLİK VAKALARININ TÜRKİYE DİJİTAL MEDYASINA AKTARIMI: SÖYLEMSEL BİR TEMSİL ANALİZİ

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Abstract

This study examines how internationally reported cases of bias and injustice related to artificial intelligence and algorithmic decision systems are translated and discursively reframed within Turkish digital media. It analyzes how global cases circulate through translation and external sourcing, shaping public understandings of algorithmic injustice. Drawing on critical algorithm studies, the research conceptualizes algorithmic bias not as a technical malfunction but as an expression of power relations embedded in data capitalism, racial inequality, and labor regimes. The analysis is based on 19 Turkish-language media texts selected through purposive sampling and examined using reflexive thematic analysis. Findings show that algorithmic injustice is predominantly framed as a technical error or an external issue associated with foreign institutions and global technology companies, while structural dimensions such as data capitalism and socio-economic inequality remain less visible. The study also suggests that reliance on internationally sourced news and translation-based reporting practices contributes to the technocentric and depoliticized language through which algorithmic harm is represented. By situating media discourse within the circulation of global narratives, the study demonstrates how algorithmic injustice is localized through media transfer processes and shaped by the dynamics of translation journalism and transnational information flows.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence Bias, Algorithmic Injustice, Critical Algorithm Studies, Thematic Analysis, Data Capitalism.

Öz

Bu çalışma, yapay zekâ ve algoritmik karar sistemlerine ilişkin uluslararası düzeyde raporlanan yanlışlık ve adaletsizlik vakalarının Türk dijital medyasında nasıl çevrildiğini ve söylemsel olarak yeniden çerçeveslendiğini incelemektedir. Küresel vakaların çeviri ve dış kaynaklı haber üretimi yoluyla nasıl dolaşıma girdiğini ve bu süreçlerin algoritmik adaletsizliğe ilişkin kamusal anlayışı nasıl şekillendirdiğini analiz etmektedir. Eleştirel algoritma çalışmaları literatüründen hareketle, algoritmik yanlışlık teknik bir arıza olarak değil, veri kapitalizmi, ırksal eşitsizlik ve emek rejimlerine gömülü güç ilişkilerinin bir ifadesi olarak kavramsallaştırılmaktadır. Analiz, amaçlı örnekleme yöntemiyle seçilen 19 Türkçe medya metnine dayanmaktadır ve bu metinler refleksif tematik analiz yöntemiyle incelenmiştir. Bulgular, algoritmik adaletsizliğin çoğunlukla teknik bir hata ya da yabancı kurumlar ve küresel teknoloji şirketleriyle ilişkilendirilen dışsal bir sorun olarak çerçeveslendiğini; buna karşılık veri kapitalizmi ve sosyo-ekonomik eşitsizlik gibi yapısal boyutların daha az görünür kaldığını göstermektedir. Çalışma ayrıca, uluslararası kaynaklı haberlere dayalı içerik üretiminin ve çeviri temelli gazetecilik pratiklerinin, algoritmik zararların temsilinde görülen tekno merkezci ve depolitize edici dili şekillendirdiğini ortaya koymaktadır. Medya söylemini küresel anlatıların dolaşımı bağlamında ele alan bu çalışma, algoritmik adaletsizliğin medya aktarım süreçleri yoluyla yerleştiğini ve bu temsil biçimlerinin çeviri gazeteciliği ile ulusötesi bilgi akışlarının dinamikleri tarafından biçimlendirildiğini göstermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yapay Zeka Yanlılığı, Algoritmik Adaletsizlik, Eleştirel Algoritma Çalışmaları, Tematik Analiz, Veri Kapitalizmi.



INTRODUCTION

In the last decade, artificial intelligence and algorithmic decision systems have risen to a decisive position in many critical areas, ranging from credit scoring to recruitment processes, and from social assistance programs to the justice system. These systems are legitimized by the claim that they offer "objective" solutions that are free from human biases and based on data. However, critical literature reveals that this acceptance of technological neutrality is problematic and that algorithms, far from eliminating social inequalities, reproduce and deepen them. Today, these increasingly intensifying discussions focus particularly on the systematic discrimination created by algorithmic outputs along the axes of gender and race. These debates demonstrate that algorithms are not merely composed of lines of code, but should be treated as tools that reflect and reinforce social power relations.

Striking manifestations of this problem include cases where facial recognition technologies cause wrongful arrests, particularly of Black individuals, and instances where algorithms in social assistance mechanisms—such as unemployment benefits or child health insurance—unjustifiably label beneficiaries with a suspicion of "fraud." These cases, caused by automation that has become widespread in public administration for the sake of efficiency, are analyzed in critical literature not merely as technical "glitches" but as historical inequalities along the axes of race, class, and gender encoded into digital infrastructures.

Within this framework, the study is structured around the circulation of global algorithmic injustice narratives within Turkish digital media. Rather than examining locally occurring algorithmic systems in Türkiye, it analyzes how internationally reported cases—such as wrongful arrests linked to facial recognition, automated welfare fraud detection errors, or biased recruitment algorithms—are translated, transmitted, and discursively reframed in Turkish-language media. By approaching algorithmic injustice through processes of media transfer, the study shifts attention from the direct operation of domestic algorithms to the mediated construction of public understanding. In doing so, it examines how translation practices, external sourcing, and framing choices shape the representation of algorithmic injustice, particularly in terms of responsibility attribution, depoliticization, and the externalization of risk. This perspective enables a critical analysis not of domestic algorithmic systems themselves, but of how global debates on algorithmic justice are localized and recontextualized within the Turkish digital public sphere.

For this purpose, the fundamental research questions of the study are formulated as follows:

- RQ1: How are internationally reported cases of algorithmic injustice discursively constructed in Turkish digital media?
- RQ2: Across which policy areas, types of harm, and social actors are these cases represented in Turkish media discourse?
- RQ3: Does the news discourse frame algorithmic injustice primarily as a technical malfunction or as a socio-economic issue linked to data capitalism and structural inequalities?

Within this framework, the study examines 19 Turkish-language media texts reporting on internationally recognized cases of injustice related to artificial intelligence and algorithmic decision systems using reflexive thematic analysis. These texts were selected to capture both popular media representations and more institutional or expert-level discussions of algorithmic bias.

ALGORITHMIC BIAS LITERATURE: CRITIQUE OF THE CLAIM OF OBJECTIVITY

O’Neil conceptualizes big data algorithms as “weapons of math destruction.” According to O’Neil, since these algorithms are trained on datasets containing historical discriminatory practices, they structurally encode social biases and perpetuate existing inequalities. The lack of transparency in algorithmic processes and the 'black box' secrecy surrounding decision-making mechanisms pave the way for the deepening of social injustices and the erosion of democratic processes (O’Neil, 2016, pp. 3-12,21). O’Neil’s critique intersects with a broader literature emphasizing that algorithms are not merely technical tools but political apparatuses that reproduce power relations.

A group of studies in the literature on algorithmic bias relates the problem primarily to the lack of representation in the technology field. Kura speaks of diversifying the field of artificial intelligence (developers, managers, researchers) in terms of gender and racial identity against social gender and racial biases in algorithms. According to Kura, the more heterogeneous the teams developing artificial intelligence algorithms are, the higher the likelihood of detecting and balancing biases in data selection, labeling, and programming will be. Similarly, the political diversity of these teams is important for controlling algorithmic biases (Kura, 2023, p. 15). Photopoulos, in his study addressing racial and sexist biases in artificial intelligence and machine learning algorithms, emphasizes that these biases mean the reflection and exacerbation of existing inequalities. Contrary to the general opinion that machines make smarter, better, and more objective decisions, algorithmic bias refutes the idea of machine neutrality and causes the repetition of social inequalities. Photopoulos, similar to Kura, emphasizes gender and racial diversity in the groups creating algorithms as a solution. According to the author, considering the dominance of women in the computing industry in the UK and USA between 1940 and 1960, current gender biases are quite surprising. There is a strong link between algorithmic biases and the replacement of women by white men in both academia and IT companies since the 1980s, along with the growing lack of representation in the communities forming algorithmic technologies (Photopoulos, 2021). Williams also argues that a lack of demographic representation in the technology sector lies at the root of algorithmic bias. According to the author, the fact that the AI ecosystem is predominantly composed of white males causes the exclusion of the value judgments and needs of minority groups and women during the design and training phases of the system. This situation results in the final product producing biased outcomes that overlook social realities and disadvantage certain groups (Williams, 2023, pp. 7, 90-91).

In addition to these discussions focusing on representation and lack of diversity, some authors underline that the assertion of algorithmic objectivity is not neutral but a distinctly political construction. Moss emphasizes that the perception of objectivity attributed to algorithms is a “carefully constructed fiction” that hides human subjectivity in their creation, application, and distribution. According to Moss, it should first be remembered that AI developers and corporate managers are not apolitical. Moss, like O’Neil, states that the lack of transparency in algorithms constitutes an additional barrier to examining their effects. Unlike other forms of media, we cannot observe the algorithms themselves, only their results. However, unlike O’Neil, Moss (2022) believes that even if companies shared their algorithms with the public, it is unlikely that ordinary users would understand the purposes, effects, and biases of these algorithms.

Another line of algorithmic bias discussions focuses on power and control relations in the context of the commodification of data and platform capitalism. Milner and Traub relate algorithmic bias to fundamental issues regarding power and control, stating that the driving force beneath it is ‘data capitalism’. Data capitalism is an economic model based on the extraction and commodification of data. While this model uses algorithms as tools to consolidate power, it also deepens social inequalities based on race, gender, class, and disability. At this point, the authors underline that racial inequalities are ‘*a feature, not a bug*’ of data capitalism. Algorithms are predominantly designed by wealthy, white male programmers based on training data that reflects existing social inequalities. For this reason, algorithm-based decisions disproportionately evaluate people according to the norm of the white, male, non-disabled, middle-class, or wealthy US citizen, and this norm is presented as universal and neutral. On the other hand, this also leads to social inequalities being presented as objective and unbiased through algorithms and the “*use of the cloak of science to rationalize racism*” (Milner and Traub, 2021, pp. 2-5). This framework gains a more concrete character with the work of Saurwein and Spencer-Smith, which focuses on the negative reflections of algorithms on social media platforms on users. On social media platforms, algorithms are used to perform functions such as monitoring, scoring, recommendation, and prediction. Based on a wide collection of case studies, the authors develop a typology that distinguishes five different areas of harm from algorithms. Algorithms are (1) incomplete tools that lead to errors, (2) tools that serve manipulation, (3) technologies that amplify problematic content, (4) infrastructures that pave the way for problematic behaviors, and (5) tools of platform power (Saurwein and Spencer-Smith 2021, pp. 223-225).

Zajko argues that social inequalities are systematically reproduced in machine learning processes and algorithmic outputs. According to Zajko, the dominant trend in data science falls into the fallacy of seeing bias as a technical 'deviation' or modeling error. However, this perspective is insufficient in explaining problems that originate directly from established social injustices rather than technical flaws. As a concrete example of this, Google defends discriminatory search results with the claim that they are a reflection of user behavior and 'social reality,' and usually quietly changes search algorithms that produce racist and sexist outputs only in the face of media and public pressure (Zajko, 2022, p. 4). Zajko's analysis shows that algorithmic bias is not just a technical 'accuracy' issue, but essentially a political choice. According to the author, any solution to algorithmic problems must take social value judgments into account. Trapping data science in a neutral field as if it were outside these discussions would be a conservative approach that protects the existing status quo. Therefore, algorithmic inequalities should be evaluated not just as a statistical deviation in the data, but as reflections of social power balances reflected in technology.

These discussions show that it is not possible to think of algorithmic inequalities independently of capitalist production relations. Lohmann draws attention to the new forms of exploitation created by artificial intelligence, emphasizing that these technologies are a continuation of the capitalist labor regime. Existing algorithmic systems are positioned as the latest link in the historical process where labor exploitation is constantly reproduced and new technologies are instrumentalized in line with capital accumulation (Lohmann, 2020, pp. 50–52). Therefore, without considering the political economy and exploitation mechanisms of the industry producing these technologies, the problem of algorithmic bias cannot be evaluated holistically. This theoretical perspective is discussed in the following section through 'unjust prediction regimes' encountered in different fields such as criminal justice, social assistance, and platform economy. In this way, it is aimed to reveal more clearly how algorithmic bias is institutionalized in these areas beyond being an abstract technical error.

Algorithmic Bias and Unjust Prediction Regimes

Noble, in her work *Algorithms of Oppression*, reveals that search engines and automated decision mechanisms are not 'neutral information providers,' but parts of structural oppression regimes intertwined with historical racism and sexism. With the concept of 'algorithmic oppression', Noble discusses how digital platforms stereotype marginal groups and deprive them of socio-economic rights through digital isolation mechanisms. For example, searching for 'black girls' yielding results full of pornographic content, the systematic sexualization of young Black women and girls in search results, and the representation of Black youth in image searches with images of "crime" while white youth are represented with positive, 'all-American' images are concrete evidence that algorithms reproduce concepts such as beauty, professionalism, and guilt with 'white-supremacist' and hegemonic codes. According to Noble, the origin of this bias is not only technical errors, but the commercial logic of search engines indexed to advertising revenues and the colonial heritage carried by historical information classification systems (2018, pp. 27, 66). This discussion positions search engine algorithms not only as technical ranking systems but as a tool of information and representation power.

This 'algorithmic oppression' discussion, developed in the context of search engines, gains a new dimension with the rise of predictive analytics in the field of security and policing. O'Shea evaluates predictive policing applications as a problematic manifestation of the ideology of 'technological solutionism'. According to the author, the crime data these systems rely on reflects not objective crime rates, but where law enforcement has historically focused (poor and minority neighborhoods). This situation leads to the encoding of racist and classist biases into the system through feedback loops. The algorithm again declares areas that are already over-monitored as 'high risk,' increasing police pressure and thus constantly reproducing its own biased data set. Consequently, O'Shea argues that these technologies have turned into political devices that deepen and legitimize existing inequalities under a 'scientific' mask rather than ensuring social security (2021, pp. 126-130).

These deprivations of rights at the individual level also appear as a strategic parameter-setting problem at the institutional level. The report published by The Greenlining Institute documents that decisions on 'what to predict' and which variables to use—the most political stage of algorithmic design—are

actually shaped by subjective value judgments under the mask of efficiency. The practical results of this situation are quite striking: For example, in the PredPol case, arrest data containing historical racial biases were used as parameters, leading to minority neighborhoods being systematically declared 'risky areas'. Similarly, Amazon's recruitment software automatically excluded female candidates by copying past gender inequality from its data set. In a similar vein, in examples of automation used in medical diagnosis or social assistance eligibility assessments, lack of representation and unsupervised operation produce results against low-income and marginal groups. Therefore, algorithmic bias is not a technical error, but the perpetuation of social inequalities by taking on a digital architecture under the mask of 'technical rationality'. In this process, algorithms appear as infrastructures that legitimize the cost-oriented policies of administrations (The Greenlining Institute, 2021).

Forrest's analysis of AI-based risk assessment tools used in the criminal justice system strikingly reveals how algorithmic bias is produced and legitimized. Especially in the widely used COMPAS (an algorithm used in the US criminal justice system to score the risk of defendants re-offending) example, the likelihood of individuals re-offending is predicted through a series of indicators such as past criminal record, education level, housing stability, financial difficulties, and 'antisocial attitudes,' and these predictions shape decisions directly related to freedom, such as bail, detention, and sentence duration. Forrest emphasizes that these tools are implicitly based on a "utilitarian understanding of justice" and, while trying to maximize the "general good of society" by looking at a specific historical data set, systematically push principles such as individual justice and the presumption of innocence into the background. This prediction logic based on historical patterns at the group level automates the possibility of 'high risk' especially when Blacks, the poor, or those living in certain neighborhoods are concerned, thus becoming a mechanism that continues to carry discriminatory practices of the past into the future. The author states that algorithmic bias is embodied in this context in three basic design dimensions: (i) which variables are selected as inputs, (ii) which weights are assigned to these variables, and (iii) on which historical data sets the model is trained. On the other hand, the lack of transparency in processes regarding which variables will be used, how these variables will be weighted, and which period will be accepted as the 'norm' turns these tools into 'black boxes' and contradicts the principle of a fair trial. Forrest's conclusion is that such systems are not "neutral machines that spiral out of control on their own," but tools designed with specific ethical and political choices that encode structural inequalities (2021, pp. 71-74, 88-92). Therefore, Forrest positions algorithmic risk assessment tools not as neutral statistical models, but as political technologies that encode specific understandings of justice and punishment regimes.

Crawford carries the phenomenon of 'injustice by design,' which Forrest identified in the justice system, to a much broader politico-economic plane. According to the author, artificial intelligence is not a simple miscoding problem but a global power regime based on resource extraction and mass data theft. In this context, the 'feedback loops' emphasized by Forrest and O'Shea should be read as concrete manifestations of the process Crawford defines as 'the politics of classification'. Crawford (2021, pp. 118-120) draws attention to the fact that these systems are trained not with neutral data sets, but with data sets like historically stigmatized criminal records; she characterizes this process as a digital continuation of the racist physiognomy studies of the 19th century associated with names like Francis Galton and Alphonse Bertillon. Therefore, algorithmic prediction regimes carry punitive practices of the past to the present through 'risk scores,' they function as a political infrastructure that turns social inequalities into a mathematical fate. Ultimately, these applications in the field of criminal justice turn into systematic power tools that automate the state's surveillance capacity and reduce the individual to merely manageable 'data points'.

Parshley reveals with striking cases how AI-supported algorithms have turned into a liquidation mechanism in social welfare systems under the name of 'efficiency'. Especially through examples presented from US-based cases, Parshley emphasizes that the non-transparent operation of algorithms makes it difficult for citizens to understand the decisions made about them and to object to these decisions. These systems, trained with biased data sets reflecting historical discrimination, deepen existing inequalities and, because they are developed by private companies, can largely evade effective supervision by public institutions. Parshley states that approximately half of the federal agencies in the

US use or prepare to use AI systems, but these systems remain largely outside public supervision. Indeed, in the automated verification system developed by Deloitte in Texas, which decides whether children of low-income families can benefit from the health system, repetitive and comprehensive errors have been detected. In 2023, approximately 68% of the 1.8 million children excluded from the state's insurance coverage in Texas were excluded not because they did not actually meet the insurance requirements, but because they 'failed' this automated eligibility verification system. It is possible to read this case as a concrete example of the 'classification violence' defined by Crawford. Similarly, the 30% sudden cut in home care services in Arkansas proves that the 'utilitarian justice' understanding pointed out by Forrest sacrifices individual needs to the cold calculations of 'black box' algorithms.

Another striking example reported by Parshley is the AI system used in Florida to predict which students are likely to commit crimes in the future. This system uses variables such as children having been abused, having been a victim of a crime before, parents being divorced, or a family member having a criminal record as risk indicators. Parshley (2023), emphasizes that this approach practically turns family relations into a 'criminal element' and that children are marked as potential perpetrators due to familial conditions they cannot control. Indeed, the 'high risk' list of 18,000 students prepared by the system has led to these children being subjected to systematic police surveillance and intrusive monitoring. Consequently, this technology, presented with the claim of child protection, has constructed a new regime of surveillance and criminalization over vulnerable groups.

The political character of artificial intelligence carries the risk of hiding the normative choices of designers and institutions under the mask of 'technical activities'. Which error margins will be tolerated in algorithmic systems are not technical details but fundamental political decisions that determine the sphere of rights for millions of people (Gözükeleş, 2023). The infiltration of these choices into the algorithmic structure finds its counterpart in the literature with the concept of the 'Coded Gaze'. Buolamwini's (2018) tests on iconic Black female figures (Oprah Winfrey, Serena Williams, Michelle Obama) revealed that commercial AI systems exhibit error margins of up to 35% for dark-skinned women, while this rate remains below 1% for light-skinned men. The author demonstrates that these allegedly objective systems embed developers' limited perspectives and priorities into the system's fundamental way of seeing, and conceptualizes the datasets used to train the models as biased 'mirrors'. In this process, the subjective choices of the developers are encoded as absolute standards by the system; thus, historical biases are transformed into indisputable digital realities under technology's promise of neutrality.

Buolamwini and Gebru's (2018) "Gender Shades" study shows how this "coded gaze" is embodied in commercial facial recognition systems. The authors, using an "intersectional error analysis" approach, evaluate the facial analysis algorithms of companies such as IBM, Microsoft, and Face++ not only through singular categories like just gender or just race, but through subgroups where race and gender intersect. According to the study's findings, these systems work with an error margin of less than 1% for light-skinned men, while the error rate for dark-skinned women varies between 20.8% and 34.7% (Buolamwini & Gebru, 2018, p. 84). These striking differences reveal that reporting algorithmic performance only through the 'general accuracy' rate masks systematic failures on minority groups. Furthermore, training datasets, predominantly composed of white and male faces, transform racial and sexist hierarchies into a structural form of discrimination with a technical appearance.

Pasquinelli defines machine learning as a 'sociomorphic' tool that makes social relations and collective intelligence controllable, rather than a 'biomorphic' structure that mimics natural intelligence. According to the author, current AI systems are actually automated versions of traditional statistical methods developed to measure cognitive and social skills. This technological architecture inherits the discriminatory logic rooted in historically controversial areas such as psychometry and reproduces class, race, and gender hierarchies on a digital plane (2025, pp. 34–35, 239). This sociomorphic structure pointed out by Pasquinelli also finds its counterpart in the social production processes of data. In light of this sociomorphic framework, algorithmic bias is an inevitable consequence of data itself being laden with class and social biases, rather than isolated technical 'errors' in specific models. Filizler (2025) emphasizes that social data is an output of institutional practices that contain existing race, gender, and

class inequalities. In this context, machine learning models internalize these historical injustices as unquestioned ‘raw data’ or absolute reality; and build future projections on this distorted ground. The ‘parameterization of society’ experienced in this process reduces multi-layered social relations to a limited number of measurable variables. Indexing decision-making mechanisms to these limited variables transforms algorithms into a systematic instrument of deprivation of rights operating against marginalized groups in a wide range of areas, from social assistance to predictive policing.

These theoretical discussions form the framework of the media analysis carried out in the next part of the study. In the following section, how the 19 selected news texts reproduce algorithmic bias discussions through policy areas, types of victimization, and discourses of responsibility will be examined using the reflexive thematic analysis method.

Purpose and Method

This study aims to analyze how cases of bias and injustice caused by artificial intelligence and algorithmic systems are represented in the digital public discourse in Türkiye (news portals, expert blogs, and analytical platforms) and around which discursive themes they are constructed. In line with this objective, the research is designed on a qualitative research design that allows for the revealing of deep meaning patterns in the data.

In the study, thematic analysis, one of the qualitative analysis methods, was adopted to determine the scope of algorithmic bias discussions through news texts. Thematic analysis is a fundamental method used to systematically identify, analyze, and report patterns of meaning (themes) within qualitative datasets (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This approach offers the researcher a deep and explanatory insight into the whole of the data by organizing complex qualitative data under specific conceptual categories.

The analysis process followed the six-stage framework proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006): (i) becoming familiar with the data through repeated reading, (ii) generating initial codes, (iii) searching for potential themes, (iv) reviewing themes in relation to the dataset, (v) defining and naming themes, and (vi) reporting the findings. In order to increase the credibility and academic rigor of the findings in qualitative research, every step in the analysis process has been documented as transparently as possible. Thus, the discussions on algorithmic bias in media texts were not limited to a frequency-based content count, and latent meaning structures in the data were sought to be revealed with theoretical depth.

Data Set and Sample

A significant share of Turkish digital news about algorithmic bias circulates through translation-based and wire-dependent production routines (e.g., international news agencies, syndicated content, and quotation-based reporting). This study therefore treats “translation/transfer” not as a secondary editorial choice but as a structural condition shaping how algorithmic harm becomes speakable in Turkish media. In such texts, framing devices and evaluative expressions (e.g., “technical glitch,” “algorithmic error,” or “computer misunderstanding”) may enter Turkish-language reporting as direct translations of the lexicon already established in upstream English-language coverage. Consequently, depoliticized or technocentric formulations observed in the dataset should be interpreted not only as a deliberate local editorial preference but also as an outcome of source dependence and the standardized language of international tech-policy reporting. This methodological note is crucial for evaluating responsibility attribution, externalization of risk, and the limits of local contextualization in the analyzed corpus.

The data set in this study consists of 19 Turkish media texts selected through purposive sampling. The data set includes news reports and feature stories published in national and online outlets, as well as columns, analytical articles, and interviews. Therefore, the unit of analysis is not only news texts in a narrow sense, but different types of media discourses that carry the artificial intelligence-based algorithmic bias discussion. This choice aims to capture how algorithmic bias is interpreted through interpretive and normative frameworks as well as at the level of fact reporting, in accordance with the purpose of the study. During the analysis process, the type of text (news vs. column/analysis) was also coded, and this distinction was taken into account in the interpretation of the findings when necessary. The sample of the research was determined using the ‘purposive sampling’ method. In order to fully

comprehend the technical, legal, and social layers of the algorithmic bias issue, the data set was not limited to news portals but was expanded to include think tanks, non-governmental organizations, expert platforms, and professional blogs that produce qualified discourse on the subject. This diversity allowed for the validation of the findings across different discursive layers (popular, institutional, professional) through 'data triangulation'.

The 19 analyzed contents were divided into two main categories: contents coded with N (News) represent case-oriented texts where algorithmic errors are directly reported; contents coded with Q (Qualified Writing/Analysis) represent columns, reports, and interviews that discuss these cases on theoretical, ethical, and political levels. This distinction enabled the monitoring of the discursive difference between the presentation of algorithmic injustice as an 'event' (N) and its interpretation as a 'structural problem' (Q).

In the data collection process, Turkish-language online content was systematically scanned using the GDELT database and search engine queries. Keywords such as “artificial intelligence,” “algorithm,” “facial recognition,” and “automated decision system” were combined with terms such as “injustice,” “wrongful arrest,” “discrimination,” “social assistance,” “recruitment,” and “insurance.” From the wide pool obtained, contents in which algorithmic systems were the subject of a concrete loss of rights, a claim of injustice, or a controversial practice, and where the text predominantly discussed this case, were selected.

As a result of this preliminary selection, 11 events and 19 media texts shaped around these events, which report on internationally recognized cases of injustice related to artificial intelligence and algorithmic decision systems across different policy areas (such as criminal justice, social assistance, and employment), were included in the scope of the study. The selected texts were diversified to include both mainstream national news sites and online outlets with a more critical/analytical editorial line, thus making it possible to comparatively examine how different media types construct the algorithmic bias discourse.

From the pool obtained, news reports that met the following criteria were selected:

- Having an automated decision system / algorithm at the focus of the news,
- There being a concrete and unfair outcome caused by this system (wrongful arrest, deprivation of aid, not being hired, etc.),
- The news report at least partially mentioning how the algorithm works, by whom it is used, or the debates it caused.

With these criteria, 19 contents published in Turkish, mostly reporting international cases, were clustered and collected under 11 different events (for example, news from different media organizations about the same event were evaluated as a single case).

Table 1. Algorithmic Injustice Events Analyzed in the Study

Event Code	Field	Country	Summary
E1	Criminal justice, facial recognition	USA	Wrongful arrest of a Black man due to facial recognition system
E2	Criminal justice, facial recognition	USA	Second wrongful arrest case occurring with a similar facial recognition error
E3	Social assistance / unemployment	USA	The algorithm for fraud detection in unemployment benefits wrongly accusing thousands
E4	Child health insurance	USA	Automated eligibility system leading to children being unfairly removed from public health insurance
E5	Recruitment / HR algorithm	Private Company	Resume scanning algorithm systematically disadvantaging female candidates
E6	Social assistance / immigration etc.	EU	Discrimination due to automated risk score in social assistance/taxation field
E7	Credit / financial score	USA and EU	Discriminatory outcomes of the credit scoring algorithm based on income and race
E8	Social media content moderation	Global platform	Certain groups becoming disadvantaged through content removal or visibility restrictions
E9	Health field algorithm	USA	Clinical decision support system providing incorrect/incomplete diagnosis for minority groups
E10	Public investments / city planning	USA	System conducting municipal investments or risk assessment producing inequality
E11	Other (e.g., education, insurance)	Various	Algorithmic risk scores producing discrimination in fields such as education, insurance, etc.

The 19 selected contents were read through several rounds, and the flow of events, actors, concepts used, and types of victimization highlighted were noted. For each news report, initial codes were extracted in dimensions such as:

- Policy area (criminal justice, social assistance, employment, platform economy, etc.),
- Affected group (racial minorities, women, low-income households, immigrants, etc.),
- Type of harm emerging (wrongful arrest, loss of income, deprivation of social rights, stigmatization, etc.),
- Attribution of responsibility (algorithm, technology companies, state institutions, individual users),
- Framework of solution / policy proposal (technical fix, more data, transparency, regulation, structural critique).

These codes were compared across different news reports, grouped around common patterns and lines of tension, and preliminary themes were rearranged in light of both the content of the news reports and discussions in the theoretical framework (data capitalism, algorithmic racism, social policy regimes, labor exploitation, etc.). Care was taken to ensure that each theme reflected components of the field, type of harm, and discursive framework.

As a result of this process, five main theme codes were defined to capture the discursive framework of the news reports: T1 – Framing AI as a neutral technical solution, T2 – Structural bias and security discourse in the field of criminal justice, T3 – Algorithmic classification in social policy and welfare regimes, T4 – Platform capitalism and visibility/inequality regimes, and T5 – Technical problem–political problem dichotomy and responsibility discourse. In the coding process, each news report could

receive more than one theme code; thus, it was possible to track how the same event was framed in terms of both structural racism in the field of criminal justice (T2) and the presentation of the algorithm as a “neutral” tool (T1, T5).

In accordance with the reflexive thematic analysis approach, the analysis process focused on re-interpreting the data in a theoretically sensitive and interpretive framework rather than numerical frequencies.

FINDINGS

The findings are concentrated particularly around the themes of criminal justice, social assistance, the labor market, state algorithms, and resistance, showing that in each of these areas, artificial intelligence is framed both as a ‘neutral technical solution’ and as a classification regime that reinforces structural inequalities. As a result of the analysis, the news reports are gathered around five main themes. These themes have been structured as more readable counterparts of the T1–T5 codes used in the coding process; under each theme, dominant codes are also specified.

1. **Criminal justice and racial profiling:** Dominant codes: T2 – Structural bias and security discourse in the field of criminal justice; partially T5 – Technical problem–political problem dichotomy and responsibility discourse.
2. **Automatic discrimination in social assistance and social rights:** Dominant codes: T3 – Algorithmic classification in social policy and welfare regimes; partially T5 – Technical problem–political problem dichotomy and responsibility discourse.
3. **State algorithms, cost discourse, and the diffusion of responsibility:** Dominant codes: T1 – Framing AI as a neutral technical solution; T5 – Technical problem–political problem dichotomy and responsibility discourse.
4. **Gender bias in the labor market and recruitment algorithms:** Dominant codes: T3 – Algorithmic classification in social policy and welfare regimes; partially T1 – Framing AI as a neutral technical solution.
5. **Resistance, legal struggle, and demands for alternative justice:** Dominant codes: T2 – Structural bias and security discourse in the field of criminal justice; T3 – Algorithmic classification in social policy and welfare regimes; T5 – Technical problem–political problem dichotomy and responsibility discourse.

These five headings allow for a comparative discussion across different policy areas of whether algorithmic bias is represented in news reports only as a technical error or as a structural problem intertwined with the crises of data capitalism, racial capitalism, and welfare regimes.

Criminal justice and racial profiling

Cases of wrongful arrest (e.g., the Robert Williams case) occurring due to facial recognition technologies misidentifying Black individuals are often narrated in news reports with expressions such as ‘the first time technology has made such an error’ or ‘computer misunderstanding.’ Such frameworks push both the historical context of racial profiling and the systematic discriminatory practices of police departments into the background.

However, some news reports also convey the victim's testimony in Congress, the involvement of civil society organizations in the lawsuit, and campaigns aimed at banning facial recognition technology, thereby placing algorithmic bias within a broader struggle for racial justice and civil rights. At this point, a direct link can be established between the news discourse and Milner and Traub’s discussion of data capitalism and algorithmic racism: Algorithms function not merely as ‘wrongly working codes,’ but as an infrastructure that systematically maintains racial inequalities.

At the same time, because many of these reports are based on internationally circulated cases, algorithmic injustice often appears in the corpus as an issue unfolding in foreign institutional and legal contexts. In this sense, the impression of algorithmic injustice as an “external” or “elsewhere” problem should be understood not as a generalizable claim about Türkiye, but as a discursive effect of transnational news circulation patterns that shape the dataset.

Automatic discrimination in social assistance and social rights

Automated eligibility systems used in social assistance, unemployment insurance, or child health insurance programs constitute a significant portion of the news reports in the analysis. Two fundamental patterns emerge here:

- First, the system accusing tens of thousands of people of fraud or removing them from assistance,
- Second, the victims' inability to seek their rights in complex and non-transparent appeal processes and often not even understanding what they are accused of.

These narratives are consistent with Parshley’s findings discussing transparency and accountability problems of algorithmic decisions in social assistance systems. As emphasized in The Greenlining Institute's report, when the adoption of algorithmic systems by public institutions occurs without adequate oversight and social participation mechanisms, “automatic discrimination” becomes inevitable.

Gender bias in the labor market and recruitment algorithms

Bias in recruitment algorithms, as in the Amazon case, is often presented in news reports with dramatic headlines such as “the tech giant's ethical retreat.” However, when news texts are carefully examined, the discourse that the source of the problem is a “poorly trained model” prevails; this situation prevents the critique of the historical data (the male-dominated past) from which the system is fed.

This finding is directly related to Pasquinelli and Lohmann’s view of artificial intelligence as a “machine mimicking capitalist production relations.” While the media often blames the algorithm, it continues to protect the historical gender regime and capital's efficiency-oriented normative choices behind it under the mask of “technical rationality.”

State algorithms, cost discourse, and the diffusion of responsibility

In many news reports, lowering costs, reducing bureaucracy, and increasing efficiency are put forward as the rationale for public institutions to deploy algorithms. When errors emerge, responsibility is most often attributed to the ‘technical error of the software company,’ the ‘wrong calibration of the algorithm,’ or ‘insufficient testing.’

This discourse, as emphasized by Moss, supports the idea that the perception of objectivity and neutrality attributed to algorithms is a “carefully constructed fiction” that makes the human subjectivity and institutional/political choices behind them invisible. At the same time, in a way compatible with the ‘conservative artificial intelligence’ approach discussed by Zajko, it produces a technological conservatism that protects and does not question the existing order.

Resistance, legal struggle, and demands for alternative justice

A portion of the news reports makes visible not only the victimizations caused by algorithmic systems but also the legal and political reactions developed against these victimizations. Individual lawsuits, collective complaint processes, campaigns carried out by civil society organizations, and calls for regulation by lawmakers appear as elements placed at the center of the flow of events in some news reports and in the background in others. In some texts, local-level initiatives aimed at limiting or banning applications such as facial recognition and predictive policing are also mentioned; thus, algorithmic bias is framed not merely as a technical malfunction but as a subject of public debate and political struggle.

CONCLUSION

This study set out not to document locally occurring algorithmic injustices in Türkiye, but to analyze how globally circulating cases of algorithmic bias are mediated within Turkish digital media. The findings demonstrate that algorithmic injustice reaches Turkish audiences primarily through the translation and transfer of international incidents, which are then recontextualized within local media routines. In this sense, the study contributes to critical algorithm literature by shifting attention from the operation of algorithmic systems themselves to the media infrastructures through which knowledge about these systems travels across borders.

The analysis shows that when algorithmic harm enters Turkish media discourse via global news flows, it is frequently framed as a technical malfunction or an external problem associated with foreign institutions and global technology companies. Structural dimensions—such as data capitalism, racialized governance, or class-based inequality—tend to be backgrounded, while responsibility is often diffused across abstract technological systems. Importantly, this pattern should not be interpreted solely as a uniquely local editorial choice, but also as an effect of translation-based journalism and source dependency. Depoliticized formulations thus emerge at the intersection of global news language and local media practices.

Theoretical literature defines algorithmic bias not as isolated technical errors, but as a problem intrinsic to data collection processes, classification regimes, and capitalist production relations. The relationship between this theoretical framework and media discourse forms the main axis of discussion in the study. In the analyzed content, cases in the field of criminal justice and security (especially wrongful arrests and predictive policing) are often narrated along the axis of technical error and individual victimization; the link between algorithms and historical racism and class politics is made visible only to a limited extent. Content regarding social assistance and welfare regimes is intertwined with the discourse of public cost and ‘abuse’; erroneous social assistance cuts or exclusions sometimes appear as ‘unfortunate exceptions’ and are sometimes normalized as inevitable side effects of automation. A small number of texts focusing on the labor market and recruitment processes discuss algorithmic gender bias but generally reduce the solution to micro-level technical interventions such as increasing data diversity and diversifying developer teams.

In news reports shaped around public algorithms and cost discourse, the potential of automation to ‘lighten the burden’ on the public budget is frequently highlighted; systematic exclusions arising in rights areas such as social assistance applications, access to health services, or child welfare are positioned as a secondary problem. This framework is consistent with the logic of data capitalism, as pointed out by Milner and Traub, which internalizes “racial inequalities as a functional feature, not an error.” However, in some news reports and columns, the lack of transparency in algorithmic decision systems, the weakness of accountability, and the devastating effects of unregulated automation on low-income communities are clearly discussed; these texts offer a more critical discourse that transcends the technocentrist approach.

The findings of the study show that in a significant part of the media discourse, algorithmic bias is still largely framed as a technical risk, an exceptional error, or a ‘misadjusted system’ problem. It is observed that problems such as how and from whom datasets are produced, and which social groups are represented under which categories remain in the background in most news reports. In contrast, especially in some texts in the field of criminal justice and social assistance, there is also a discursive line that points to the structural dimension of the effects of algorithmic decisions on the working classes, the poor, immigrants, and minorities, and tries to make visible the relations of data capitalism and inequality.

This study is designed as an analysis of media transfer: it examines how international cases of algorithmic injustice travel into Turkish digital media through translation and external sourcing. Accordingly, the dataset does not include locally occurring algorithmic injustice cases or domestic algorithmic decision systems in Türkiye. This choice sets a clear boundary on the scope of inference: the findings should not be read as a comprehensive account of algorithmic injustice in Türkiye, but

rather as an account of how global incidents are selectively transmitted, framed, and domesticated in Turkish-language media discourse.

A related limitation concerns the structural characteristics of the corpus. Because many items are translation-based or quotation-driven, some recurrent framings (e.g., technocentric language, “glitch” narratives, or responsibility diffusion) may partly reflect upstream journalistic conventions rather than uniquely local editorial strategies. While the study treats this feature as analytically meaningful for understanding externalization and depoliticization, it also constrains claims about Turkey-specific journalistic intent.

Beyond these scope-related constraints, several additional limitations should be noted. The analysis is based on 19 media texts and therefore prioritizes interpretive depth over representativeness. Since the study focuses exclusively on online written media, other formats such as television news and social media content are excluded. In line with the reflexive thematic analysis approach, coding was conducted within a framework of specific theoretical sensitivities (algorithmic justice, data capitalism, and labor relations); alternative theoretical perspectives might lead to different thematic constructions. Future research could expand the empirical base through larger samples, cross-media comparisons, and audience reception studies.

Despite all these limitations, the study contributes to the media discourse around artificial intelligence and algorithmic decision systems in Türkiye in two ways. First, by re-reading concepts in critical algorithm literature (algorithmic oppression, unjust prediction regimes, data capitalism, coded gaze) through concrete news texts, it builds a bridge between this literature and local media practices. Second, it proposes an alternative reading that makes visible the position of these systems within labor, race, class, and gender relations, as opposed to the approach that legitimizes AI solely with discourses of efficiency, cost reduction, and technical innovation.

In conclusion, confining algorithmic justice debates only within the framework of technical standards and ethical principles carries the risk of making invisible the power relations in data production processes and the representation of these relations in media discourse. Whether news texts present artificial intelligence systems as ‘neutral machines that reduce human bias’ or as a component of unjust prediction regimes that systematically disadvantage certain groups is a critical question for democratic oversight and accountability. In this context, the study aims to open for discussion the hierarchy of values and social priorities according to which these systems are institutionalized as much as the technical design parameters of algorithms, for both media producers and policymakers.

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