Jewish voices of dissent among liberal American Jewry. Their assembled stories call for peace, justice, and human rights for all.

The underlying factor behind the assembled personal stories is the loss of faith in Zionism and its implications. Many of the writers had started out being keen Zionists and supporters of Israel, but their consciousness of the injustices Israel is committing against Palestinians arose after visiting Israel/Palestine and learning about the Occupation. For example, Rabbi Michael Davis explains how his doubts about the connection between politics and power, a career in Shin Bet, questions about the after-life, and witnessing the mistreatment of Ethiopian Jews by Ashkenazi Jews alerted him to the pitfalls of the militarization of Israeli life. He became disillusioned by the connections between Orthodox Zionism, the military, and the settler movement. Currently a member of Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP), he hopes to aid in the fight against Islamophobia. Similarly, young Jewish students write of their search for identity, which may have plunged them into supporting Israel early on, but on witnessing Israel’s mistreatment of Palestinians in the occupied territories they have had a change of heart. These liberal American Jews now insist that “Zionism is not Judaism.” They affirm their solidarity with Palestinian human rights.

Given the confusing conflation of anti-Israel criticism with anti-Semitism in many official circles, public opinion, and the media, this is a commended publication at this historical juncture. *Reclaiming Judaism from Zionism* is a must read for all Jews, and non-Jews, who have been coopted by Zionist propaganda that Israel is the representative of all Jews across the world.

**Napoli, Philip M. Social Media and the Public Interest: Media Regulation in the Disinformation Age.**


With news about the Russian and/or Ukraine’s role in the dissemination of false news during the 2016 American Presidential elections and the ongoing democratic primaries for the 2020 elections, Philip M. Napoli’s well-researched study couldn’t have been published at a more auspicious time. Although the book is focused on the US media market, the subject of false news and disinformation is relevant to the world at large, and *Social Media and the Public Interest* is recommended to readers of *Arab Studies Quarterly*.

Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, among others, have had unpredictable outcomes vis-à-vis news and the information ecosystem. Most notably, digital media systems have evolved to be the major sources of the creation, dissemination, and consumption of (dis)information. According to Napoli,
a few questions have arisen in this regard. How should policymakers address problems and controversies that have emerged from this technical revolution? In what ways can these digital companies be regulated as “media” companies, rather than technological venues? In the current technological world, what is the short- and long-term impact on democracy and an informed citizenry? And ultimately, how will the media companies self-regulate to protect the public interest? These questions and a few others Social Media and the Public Interest seeks to answer.

The book is comprised of six chapters, with an introduction, a conclusion, and helpful notes regarding the sources consulted. The first two chapters survey the rise of the communication systems, including the internet and algorithmic systems. The latter, Napoli asserts, have not only sidelined traditional journalism, but have also supplemented or replaced human decision-making at every stage of news-making. As far as traditional journalism is concerned, the veracity of news information was regulated by checking the sources, the gatekeepers of news being the reporter, the news agency, or the newspaper. Counter-speech then functioned well to offset false news. With the internet and algorithm systems, gatekeeping was channeled through various intermediaries and counter-speech was rendered futile, especially when social media targets personalized news. “Facebook’s News Feed values,” Napoli states, “emphasize personal significance, whereas traditional news organization values emphasize social significance” (63; emphasis in the original). The spread of fake news on social media has been a thorny issue for both policymakers and social media technocrats. The author suggests that more research is needed in this complex gatekeeping process.

Evaluating news in relation to the First Amendment and counter-speech is the subject of chapter 3. The complex interpretations of the First Amendment, which are presumed to safeguard the free flow of information, speech, and counter-speech—the hallmark of American democracy—have been so challenged that legitimate news has been curbed because digital news favors “false news over legitimate news” (19). Napoli does not analyze the reasons as to why this is the case. But he does explore possible answers regarding the legal frameworks that can be adopted to counteract false news of social media systems. Traditional regulations need to be reexamined, and the US government needs to take a more proactive role in regulating the effective functions of the democratic process to nourish an informed citizenry. In chapter 4, Napoli extends the economic term of “the market” to coin the term “the marketplace-of-ideas” (107), probing the effective functioning of ideas in the context of social media. He takes the 2016 Presidential elections as a case study of the failure of the marketplace-of-ideas. The cause of the failure in his estimation is attributed to third parties that exploit the social media platforms for their political platforms, given the diminishment of economic profitability of journalism.
Chapters 5 and 6 delve into the guarding of public interest in the age of social media. Offered are several insightful strategies that range from self-regulation to direct regulatory interventions by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). Given the inadequacy of the existing rationales and laws by the FCC, Napoli affirms that policymakers have yet to institute a “more robust public interest framework” that would countervail the commercialization and sensationalism of news by the media ecosystem (160).

*Social Media and the Public Interest* is a comprehensive contribution to understanding the digital ecosystem despite its overtly technical terminology. It is a timely study that would benefit students in the social sciences and communication. Policymakers would find the work helpful in regulating social media to curb disinformation, protect public interest, and safeguard democracy.