Do social media and Other Platforms Require Greater Regulation?

Haoyang Wu *

Nanjing University of Posts and Telecommunications Jiangsu China

* Corresponding Author Email: 2913670083@qq.com

Abstract. Social media and other platforms play a crucial role in modern society, influencing information dissemination, shaping public opinion, driving economic activities, and affecting political elections. However, with the rise and development of these platforms, a series of issues have emerged, including privacy concerns regarding users' personal information, platform data storage, platform monopolistic behavior, and abuse of media regulation by both the public and the platforms themselves. This paper aims to discuss the role of social media in the development of media from traditional to digital forms, the existing means of regulating social media platforms, and analyze the monopolistic behavior of leading companies in the platform capitalism context and explore the necessary forms of regulation for social media and other platforms.

Keywords: social media; platform monopolistic behavior; media regulation; forms of regulation.

1. Introduction

The emergence of social media has fundamentally changed the way we communicate and access information in the 21st century. As society and media have evolved, the ways in which people obtain information and interact with each other have dramatically transformed. Space and time are no longer barriers to communication, and we are living in a "global village" where people are becoming more "tribal." Social media and other platforms have become important channels for information dissemination and social change. As such a critical channel, platforms need to establish regulation to support communication between users and the public interest, while decision-makers need to regulate the behavior and communication among technology giants under the digital media landscape. Nowadays, more and more experts and scholars argue that leading social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Snap chat, and Instagram have many drawbacks. They have become a source of income for many individuals and provided a voice for those normally overlooked by traditional sources, but they have also led to increased citizen involvement in political issues. In addition, social media has brought about many dangers, including user privacy breaches, information misuse, the spread of misinformation, and the manipulation of public opinion. Therefore, it can be argued that social media and other platforms require greater regulation.

2. Body parts

2.1. Why is regulation needed for social media platforms?

The regulation of social media encompasses not only user and public supervision but also the regulation of social media platforms themselves.

In fact, the means of governing the public have evolved from ancient cruel public executions to the modern society with a well-established legal system, and the punishment measures and regulatory measures for the public have become increasingly precise. In the era of social media, we have developed a habit of actively sharing our lives, and some scholars argue that social media constitutes a form of mutual supervision among peers. Not only do regulatory institutions review content, but the public also actively report content that violates public order and moral standards. However, the ability of the public to complain is often abused, with some fans attacking authors or video bloggers and even lodging complaints to shut down entire video platforms if they come across articles about

their idols that do not meet their aesthetic standards. In addition to mutual supervision among the public, social media posts are also subject to official review.

On the other hand, social media and other platforms bring dangers that can threaten our social structure. They are used to disseminate misinformation or "fake news," hate speech, and user-generated data is used for politically and commercially targeted advertising based on individual profiles. One systemic factor of digital platforms is that social media companies monetize our attention. They encourage content creators to provide sensational information to attract attention and encourage users to "click" on a story, generating advertising revenue. Furthermore, social media platforms use advanced algorithms to show users what they like, which benefits the platforms but also brings great dangers. Although in some places, targeted digital advertising based on factors such as age, gender, or geographical location is currently legal.For example, the UK has legislation, in the form of Communication Act 2003, regulating political speech on traditional broadcast media, but this does not extend to political advertisements distributed digitally.

Consequently, the issue of regulating social media cannot be avoided.

2.2. Current Status of Social Media Regulation

Governments around the world have implemented some form of regulation. In a global context, countries such as the United States, Germany, Brazil, China, India, Switzerland, and others have proposed some form of oversight. Likewise, at least 17 countries located in Europe, the Middle East, South America, Asia, and other regions have passed or proposed relevant laws to combat fake news and other problematic digital content. While some countries and regions have responded promptly, they have still overlooked the fundamental issue that social media companies have the ability to insert crucial features in the development stage of their platforms without any regulatory supervision. The practices of some countries, such as Germany's response, involve limited regulation, where social media organizations have the responsibility to report their obligations to German authorities. This approach to handling fake news and hate speech is problematic. We should not obstruct freedom of speech but rather reduce the sources where fake news or hate speech originate. In other words, the existence of misinformation and hate speech has become a common phenomenon. As studies indicate, any "comprehensive restrictions on communication will lead to limitations on citizen freedoms or concerns that the state is abolishing communication rights." Therefore, for severe hate speech that poses a threat to national security, most countries with relevant laws and regulations can pursue legal actions, but mandatory measures that interfere with citizens' freedom of speech should be minimized. In addition, it is possible to address the root causes of hate speech on social media to reduce its occurrence.

2.3. Approaches to Regulating Social Media Platforms

In order to address the issues of fake information and hate speech, among others, we need to start from the roots of media platforms. By controlling and altering the existing business models of media companies, such as platforms like Facebook, they would target their audience based on users' age, gender, interests, geographic location, and daily searches on mobile phones or other software and information on mobile devices. Through this information and functionality, platforms create personalized content for users. During this process, if there is misinformation that needs to be spread, the audience of the information will become more targeted. Regarding the use of such algorithmic features, if regulatory bodies cannot completely ban these companies, they should control the company's database to ensure that the information in the database is collected for the purpose of the platform and not specifically targeted to deliver false or controversial statements. Furthermore, the development and enforcement of robust laws and regulations are fundamental to regulate social media and platforms. These regulations will be used to oversee the resolution of data privacy, market monopoly, and ensure the lawful operation of social media and platforms. The respective regulatory bodies should have the power and capability to enforce regulations.

3. Conclusion

In summary, regulation of social media and platforms is necessary due to the challenges brought by their widespread use and influence. Effective regulation is needed to address issues related to the dissemination of false information, hate speech, data privacy, and platform monopolistic behaviors. Striking a balance between regulation and freedom of speech and adapting to constantly evolving technology is an important task. By addressing these challenges and implementing appropriate regulatory measures, we can better manage social media platforms and citizens, thus achieving a more harmonious, responsible, and user-centered social media environment.

References

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