Should government regulate online media?

Government regulations have become an underlying issue in today's society. In the wake of social media crises all over the world, some people argue that the government is not adequately equipped in curbing the surge of social media and its implications on communication and safety. Social media has raised a lot of concerns such as people's loss of privacy and terrorism. This essay will consider the argument that online platforms should be regulated and then put forward reasons for why the government should not regulate online platforms.

There are debates whether there is a thin line between freedom of speech and misuse of speech. It can be said that with the advent of social media, people now use their right to freedom of expression to incite violence, spread hate and infringe on the privacy of others. An example of how social media can be used to incite violence is that of India. Facebook has been a driving force in the Rohingya genocide. (Wong, 2019) On the contrary, if social media was regulated there would be less discourse on issues in our society and this would limit the progress of our society. Social media is an arena where issues that are relevant are discussed in an open forum and instigates progress. Michael Chertoff, former U. S. Secretary of Homeland Security writes that " Free expression is one of the foundational elements of the internet'' (Abutaleb, 2016). As well as for example, in the UK there is Article 8 is incorporated in the Human rights Act that states that " Everyone has the right to freedom of expression…without interference by public authority". Therefore, it can be argued that government regulating social media would be a backward step in our fight for democracy and expression of individuality.

Unfortunately, social media provides great convenience for terrorists to gather people and gain their financial support in order to grow their organisations. On the other hand, if used correctly it can help facilitate the reduction of terrorist activities. For example, the Turkish government has recently cracked down on 200 accounts affiliated with terrorist activities (Arnold, 2018). However, the government simply does not understand how the world of social media works so regulating the problem away with significant fines and sanctions may not be as effective as a regulatory framework for online platform regulation. As evident in the Christchurch attack in New Zealand over 1. 5 million copies of the mosque attack were deleted, however only 1. 2 million of them were blocked while they were being uploaded, meaning as a result 300, 000 were still available to view online. (BBC, 2018) As politicians like the US senator Elizabeth Warren have suggested we break them up into smaller categories. Since Facebook, Apple and Amazon and other major companies are too big to regulate (Afoko, 2019). Instead, social media networks could develop and implement algorithms for identifying and removing harsh news by marshalling the same engines that spread the news in the first place. For example, YouTube is adding additional human review staff and expanding algorithms to more categories. (Coustick, 2018) These algorithms would not be administered by the government; rather, Facebook and other social media sites would be responsible.

In conclusion, even though governments are a safeguard for countries as

they provide proper law and order, they should not be used to regulate social

media as those are platforms in which society thrives on. A multitude of benefits such as the freedom of expression allows an individual to become who they really are without being confined by a state. Social media platforms have shown that they are prepared to take more responsibility as examples set by YouTube. Even though social media platforms can become a breeding ground for violence, it is not as if violence has only become relevant in the 21 [st] century. People have been inciting violence for centuries and centuries so the only thing we can do is to try and reduce its damage.

Reference list

- Abutaleb, Y. (2016). *Proposals to curb online speech viewed as threat to open internet* . [online] U. S. Available at: https://www. reuters. com/article/us-cyber-laws-censorship/proposals-to-curb-online-speech-viewed-as-threat-to-open-internet-idUSKCN0Z713L
- Arnold, A. (2018). *Do We Really Need To Start Regulating Social Media?* . [online] Forbes. com. Available at: https://www. forbes. com/sites/andrewarnold/2018/07/30/do-we-really-need-to-start-regulating-social-media/#346a0d7d193d
- Afoko, C. (2019). *Government can't regulate Facebook – it's up to all of us | Carys Afoko* . [online] the Guardian. Available at: https://www. theguardian. com/commentisfree/2019/apr/01/government-regulate-facebook-mark-zuckerberg-social-media
- BBC News. (2012). *China censors ' hit social media'* . [online] Available at: https://www. bbc. co. uk/news/technology-17313793
- Coustick, R. (2018). *Following the Logan Paul controversy, should social media be regulated like journalism?* . [online] The Independent.

Available at: https://www. independent. co. uk/news/long_reads/social-media-logan-paul-regulation-laws-legal-protection-youtuber-facebook-twitter-blogger-vlogger-a8191346. html [Accessed 8 Jul. 2019].

- Griffiin, A. (2018). *Here's what it's like to use the internet in China* . [online] The Independent. Available at: https://www. independent. co. uk/life-style/gadgets-and-tech/news/google-china-app-search-engine-great-firewall-peppa-pig-letter-n-latest-explained-a8474866. html

- Wong, J. (2019). *' Overreacting to failure': Facebook's new Myanmar strategy baffles local activists* . [online] the Guardian. Available at: https://www. theguardian. com/technology/2019/feb/07/facebook-myanmar-genocide-violence-hate-speech