

Justice demands that we treat equals equally and unequals unequally. Theresa May wants tech companies to use automation systems to ban content that she defines as “terrorist content”. This allows company authority to act as a government entity and regulate free speech. This is unfair because company automation systems are making many mistakes by removing the wrong content and by missing extremist material. This is also unfair because company political biases will also affect the criteria of “terrorist content”. Theresa May unfairly compared tech company authority to government authority. The distribution of judgement should be by the people who will have their free speech regulated. Everyone who uses social media platforms should judge this case.

Unequals should be treated unequally. Tech company authority should be treated differently from government authority. The merit criteria, with the distribution of benefit, applies to this situation. The responsibilities and power of a company is different than that of a government. The government’s responsibility is to protect the people and to enforce the law. The government has the power to define appropriate speech. On the other hand, companies are private entities whose sole responsibility is to uphold the law, not to enforce it. If an individual posts content on a company’s social media platform, the government should bear the responsibility to determine if it is terrorist content and if it should be taken down. The company’s responsibility will then be to remove the content that the government deemed terroristic. Companies and businesses shouldn’t be given the power/responsibility to determine what content is terroristic and what content to remove. If this happens, company political biases can affect what is considered as terrorist content or extremist content. As a result, companies will be given the power to violate free speech and take down the content that they want. Company automation systems will also violate free speech by making mistakes and removing content that isn’t terroristic.

A likely counterargument is that terrorist groups are placing a greater emphasis on disseminating content at speed so that their content will spread faster than the government can remove it. In this case, the government won’t be able to keep up as there are too many social platforms to monitor. In order to protect the people and to fight terrorism, the government will need tech companies to step in and help remove terrorist content. In order to efficiently remove terrorist content, tech companies will need to monitor their social platforms for the government since the government doesn’t have the ability to monitor so many different social platforms. For example, if terrorist content is being spread on Facebook, it would be so much more convenient/efficient for a Facebook automation system to detect it and remove it automatically, than the government searching through Facebook. There are hundreds of different social media platforms and it is impossible for the government to search them all for terrorist content.

Company authority should not be treated the same as government authority, and therefore content on social media platforms shouldn’t be regulated by companies. This is ethically better because companies are not above the law and shouldn’t be allowed to shirk their responsibilities to the people. Although terrorist content on social media platforms may be a concern for the companies, it is not controlled by the companies, but by the government instead. If the government determines that certain content is terroristic, then the companies will take down such content. Company authority involvement and the implementation of automation

systems to remove terrorist content is unethical because it will end up limiting free speech with system errors and company political bias.