

Importance of Censorship in Free Speech

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Censorship is the supervision and control of information circulated amongst people in a society. Censorship may be direct or indirect (soft censorship). While direct may not be recommended legally, both are meant to protect vulnerable groups such as religious, racial or restrict political views. For free speech to be effective, it must not interfere with their rights of others to express themselves, worship or defame or undermine their race or religion (Bezanson, 2012).

The internet has been heralded as the novel medium of communication for exchanging ideas to advance in combating bias and prejudice. However, the same tool of communication seems to carry other content that are pervasive and threaten our society's existence. Radicalization of unemployed youth into joining terrorist organization such as ISIS and young children accessing obscene content isn't the way to nurture the future generation (Bezanson, 2012). Hence it is necessary for the censorship of content posted by people or organizations that to the eyes of an average man is bound to alter their thinking on good/moral behaviors.

One reason for promoting free speech is that freedom of expression typically promotes the discovery of, and the respect for, the truth. The knowledge gained matters because in its own right leads to better decisions and quality of life (Bezanson 2012). Though it is necessary to find out the truth, some content are way over the line and their capacity to incite, lead to violence, discriminate and defame is almost definitive. Freedom of expression is not absolute right and it can be restricted to protect the rights of others. Censorship filters such content though are truthful in nature their ability to create better and informed decisions is unlikely (Feng & Guo 2012).

Most western nation democracies have enforced laws that prohibit the restriction or control of the media or free speech such as the US where under no circumstance shall congress create laws that undermine free speech. The absence of state intervention is no guarantee of a rich media environment. The industry is left to self-regulate itself and the only governing laws are the journalism codes of conduct such as obligation to truth, loyalty to citizen, editorial independence and verification. Such essential professional codes are voluntarily adopted by journalist and are easily breached hence they are not effective in regulating the media content. (Huff, et al., 2012).

One of the major justifications for regulation of free speech on the media is the harm principle (Feng & Guo 2012). The state has not only the power but also the responsibility to prevent harm to the members of the society. Unlike the US, Canada and the EU have taken a hard stance on hate speech. For example; the EU obligates its member's states to take appropriate measures not limited to adopt such a legislation but other measures may be necessary to establish criminal offence under their domestic laws. Such regulations help the society to determine proper limits of free expression to avoid harming others and causing nuisance to other members of the society (Bezanson 2012).

Moreover, why should haters or promoters of hate speech be held high in the society by recklessly exposing others to unwarranted risk? The victims of hate speech desire more support and help than the freedom of expression by perpetrators of hate speech. The freedom of expression implies that is should be possible to scrutinize, openly debate, and even harshly and unreasonably beliefs or opinions as long as they don't amount to hate speech. It is necessary to censure such approaches to free speech as the potential danger and risk they possess is magnanimous (Huff, et al., 2012).

In conclusion, censorship is necessary in curbing out areas where the internet/press has suppressed freedom of expression. While there is an emphasis on keeping regulation to the minimum in order to promote free speech, some dire situations call for the regulators to control the industry before harm is done as in the case of Charlie Hebdo, pornographic access to our youngsters, defamation and indecent speech (Huff, et al., 2012).

## References

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