

Regulating Women-Targeted Harmful Content Online: Who Bears Responsibility?

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Abstract

Traditionally, governments have been regarded as the primary subjects responsible for safeguarding the health of the public discourse on gender issues, by virtue of their ultimate duty to protect the public interest. However, as digital platforms have come to dominate the production and dissemination of information, they have in fact become deeply involved in shaping how gender is understood and perceived in the public sphere, and should therefore proactively assume corresponding governance obligations. This paper argues for digital platforms' regulatory responsibility over women-targeted harmful content, grounding its analysis in actor responsibility theory, social cost theory, and causation theory. On this basis, it further introduces product liability theory as a classical analogy, aiming to reinforce the legitimacy and institutional rationality of imposing such governance responsibilities on digital platforms from the perspectives of legal attribution and risk allocation.

Keywords: Women-Targeted Harmful Content; Public Discourse System; Content Moderation; Platform Governance