

# Misinformation and the Social Construction of Truth on Social Media

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On my honor as a University Student, I have neither given nor received  
unauthorized aid on this assignment as defined by the Honor Guidelines  
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## STS Thesis

### Introduction

As humans increasingly exist in technological settings, outsourcing physical encounters to pixelated interfaces, social media has grown to encompass an outsize share of daily life. This fundamental societal change has occurred on a massive scale only recently, spurred by the invention of personal computers and, more recently, smartphones. As social media has seeped into modern life, it has become a platform for every type of interaction and has empowered anyone with internet access to disseminate any content they please. Providing most every member of the populace with the ability to propagate their views to a large audience has yielded unexpected and unwelcome side effects, resulting in the platform being abused by some. Specifically, one worrisome trend that has erupted over the last few years is the rise of misinformation spread on social media platforms. Misinformation has a vast capability to influence diverse aspects of life, most notably concerning politics and public health, and especially relating to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. There are ample instances of misinformation around COVID-19, but a brief example that is prevalent online is that the COVID vaccines alter an individual's DNA. As these topics will arise later, it is important to mention and differentiate the terms of misinformation, facts, and truth as they will be used throughout this paper, as they may differ from traditional definitions. Misinformation refers to any piece of information that is factually untrue and intentionally or unintentionally misleads the reader. Facts are defined as the collection of information and data that is used to demonstrate the nature of our surroundings. Truth, as used in this paper, is the accumulation of facts that is then fused with prior belief, resulting in a more subjective view of the world. An example of truth could be an individual's belief in God, say, as this belief is a mixture of observable facts and

previous belief of faith in God's existence. I am focused on researching the effects that social media have on our psychology, why social media use makes one more likely to spread misinformation, and what role social media companies and governments have taken in intervening when misinformation spreads online.

### **Research Questions**

The questions I've chosen to guide my research are the following: How are facts and truth socially constructed and how are they presented on social media? How has the individual's formation of truth changed since the advent of social media and what molds a social media user's understanding of truth? What role do social media companies have in moderating content on their platforms, and in what context, if any, should governments become involved in regulating social media companies?

### **Literature Review**

Before attempting to discuss the broader, more tangible issues at play regarding the spread of misinformation on social media, it is necessary to understand the psychological aspects that lead users to engage with social media in unintentionally detrimental ways. As Fischer (2019) argues, the creation of a post-truth society, in which truth is ignored in favor of appeals to emotion, is not the result of postmodernism but rather social constructivism. While these are similar views, the postmodernist theory posits that reality is not reflected in human understanding; instead, reality is constructed by the individual and is subject to alteration. Working within this theoretical framework, social constructivism asserts that each individual's reality and understanding of their environment is formulated by their interactions with others. Schrader (2015) elaborates on the fusion of psychology and technology, demonstrating that established psychological tendencies are maintained through a technological medium. She writes that "knowledge occurs through

shared activity...students learn to both think and explore within and outside of their own perspective or mindset. They also learn to take perspectives of others in important ways that influence social-emotional learning.”

Johnson (2018) adapts this perspective to the realm of social media, applying Latour’s Actor-Network theory (ANT) as a framework for viewing radicalization through internet media. She postulates that each user on a social media platform is considered an actor, but that the advanced algorithms that social media companies apply curate content in such a way that polarizes the network, so that those with differing opinions hardly interact. For example, if a user tends towards liberal politics, her Facebook feed may eventually only display liberal-leaning news sources. Harkening back to Schrader’s research, if one derives their understanding of truth from a narrow network of like-minded actants, they will be much more likely to believe misinformation that spreads within this network. Marwick (2018) takes a similar socio-technical approach, and arrives at the same conclusion, that “whether people are likely to trust a story has less to do with who published it than who shared it.” She expounds another occurrence of social understanding through social media: that misinformation typically pushes narratives about race, class, and gender that helps reinforce collective identity, a pull factor for some in an increasingly diverse world.

Apart from social constructivism, there are separate psychological aspects that can be studied regarding social media use, and how users interact with news that they engage with on these platforms. Madden, Lenhart & Fontaine (2017) showed in focus groups that most young people demonstrate low levels of trust in news media. Many participants acknowledged that it can be difficult to discern what information they see online is accurate, and many cited consulting multiple sources to verify the stories they had encountered. They also tended,

intriguingly, to believe a news source more credible if its biases were known. As Wang et al. (2019) point out, social media is a poor environment for factual reporting for a few reasons. Users perceive info on social media as just as credible as television and radio, even though there is no factual verification or accountability on social media. Specifically, regarding public health, they cite that humans are more likely to engage with sensationalized and provocative media than factual media, which in the context of the medical field is often esoteric and dull. This finding shows why it is easier to produce truth than facts using sensationalized media, as humans are naturally drawn to information that confirms prior beliefs and sensationalized media is likely to formulate a reader's beliefs instead of informing their understanding of facts. This leads to further spread of misinformation, and has picked up since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

So, what have social media companies done to try to curb the spread of misinformation? As Kwok and Koh (2020) discusses in his article about deepfakes, big tech companies such as Facebook, Twitter, and Google have implemented limited bans on deepfakes, and have released databases of deepfakes to help improve identification of this novel technology. As this is one of the most prominent and potentially influential forms of misinformation, there has been plenty of research into technologies that can automatically detect and assess visual media integrity, but the ability to detect and limit the spread of deepfakes has not yet caught up to the rapid advances of deepfake capabilities. Kwok approaches deepfakes with a social construction of technology perspective, showing that the technology cannot be stopped, but that as a society we can push to make it used for purely beneficial uses. Iosifidis & Nicoli (2019) conducted a qualitative analysis of Facebook's actions since Nov. 2016, when Donald Trump won the US Presidential election, to limit the spread of misinformation and identified numerous proactive (i.e.,

unprompted) and reactive changes that they've made since then. They came to the conclusion that Facebook relies too heavily on AI to detect false content, which can be easily outmaneuvered by AI-generated content or unable to pick up on nuance of language such as satire or humorous content. While Facebook also employs human, independent fact checkers to moderate content on their site, they are opaque about the interactions between them and the AI. The authors noted that while implementing third-party fact checkers may be a better solution, moderating the content of the entire platform of Facebook is impossible, as there are too many posts generated at any given time. Susan Morgan (2018), a senior program officer at Open Society Foundations, mentioned in an interview that social media companies would not have taken any steps to curb misinformation had it not been for pushback. A prominent example of how pushback has recently pushed social media companies to stop misinformation spread is the "Plandemic" video that was widely shared on Facebook in May 2020. The video, showing an interview with a discredited former researcher, was littered with falsehoods and conspiracies around COVID-19 and was quickly taken down after many prominent virologists pointed out the extent of misinformation presented. She mentions how social media companies were aware of misinformation prior to 2016 but took a "hands-off" approach, which was in their best interest to maximize ad revenue. She critiques Facebook but also Twitter, saying that they should move to ban bots, which are notorious for making certain topics trend that could benefit political parties and influence elections.

Finally, Egelhofer & Lecheler (2019) make the distinction between the fake news genre and the fake news label, and what that means for our broader discussion of media credibility. They define the fake news genre, which receives more research but less attention, as "pseudojournalistic misinformation," while the fake news label is applied to delegitimize news

media, especially broadcast news. They suggest greater research should be applied to the fake news label and its implications in altering collective perception of news, arguing that it levels the playing field between the fake news genre and respected newspapers by delegitimizing the latter.

The topic of social media misinformation is unique in that it incorporates both psychological and sociotechnical research, two disparate fields of study. Although there has been an abundance of study into either field, the complex interactions that occur between the two is lacking research. By observing social media companies' actions and how they alter the social constructivism of social media users, I feel that I can contribute to the overall knowledge of this complex system and offer suggestions to improve it. Research into social media misinformation has exploded over the last few years, and will continue to be a pressing topic for these companies for long into the future. Being able to understand and interpret this system will produce grand and increasingly necessary benefits.

The main takeaway from this literature review is the acquired knowledge of social constructivism. Fundamentally important to our nature is how humans are inherently social creatures that learn from one another, and how that universal truth has played out and been conserved even when many interactions we have currently are conducted on social media in lieu of face-to-face. Working from this understanding, this paper will be a case study about how truth and facts are each socially constructed in separate ways. Equally as important are the roles that each human and non-human play in this social constructivism, as will be discussed in upcoming sections.

## **STS Framework and Method**

Given the nature of social media, applying Bruno Latour's actor-network theory is the most logical framework to understand this intricate environment. Under ANT, each user on the platform is an actor that influences each other actor within their sphere when they interact on social media sites. ANT is an essential theory to study human and non-human interactions as well, and is salient in explaining these constructed social media networks. Nearly every social media user is a human that then engages with a non-human actant (phone, tablet, computer) in order to access social media and gain entrance into the tangled networks present within.

However, ANT is a revolutionary theory in that it asserts that non-human actants maintain just as much agency within a network as human actants. In other words, a computer that allows a human to access Facebook wields just as much sway within the network as the human that uses the same computer. This mindset is essential to understand human interaction with social media, as it is squarely in between social constructivism (the belief that society and social factors shape and contribute to the success and failure of technology) and technological determinism (the idea that technology determines a society's social and cultural values). ANT provides a perspective in which we can examine how the yearning to share our own and view others' experiences afforded us with social media initially, and how the resulting technology has since crafted social norms and cultural values. Viewing social media through the lens of ANT, the social construction of truth and facts is evident as a networking process in which the more complex the network, the more robust the sense of truth or facts will be. Misinformation then is the result of a breakdown of one of the long connections that led to the production of facts. For example, a social media user may engage with a single other user, creating a short network of user to social



media site to other user in which the sense of truth and facts will not be very robust.

Alternatively, if a user engages with a post that one of their followers commented on after one of *their* followers shared it after reading the full article and commenting on specific portions of it, the initial user's construction of facts will be strong, if slanted by the interstitial users. The sense of truth will be greater since there are many users involved along the way, subconsciously signaling that the information presented is likely true if multiple people are discussing it. This example depicts why misinformation may be so easily spread on social media, especially if it is presented from a seemingly trustworthy source, such as a friend or family member. The more robust a network is, the greater the sense of truth produced by the user, even if it is unwarranted because the information presented is false or misleading. By creating a network of like-minded users, each user continues to foster their understanding of truth based on what others in their network believe. This reinforcement may eventually be warped if users are in an information bubble, leading users to trust any information shared within their circle, even misinformation. Relating to COVID-19, one prominent example of misinformation that has been widely spread is the belief that the virus was created by the world's elites in order to profit off of a vaccine. While this assertion may seem absurd to most, a social media user that already lives in a network that is, for instance, distrustful of elites may be more inclined to reason that this questionable statement is truth without conducting proper research and without incorporation of facts that may change their opinion.

Data collection was conducted in two manners for this thesis. The first was a survey of social media users to probe their social media habits and gauge if their social media usage and psychological biases match what the existing literature has shown. Many of the survey questions deal with social constructivism and sense of truth or facts that is presented on social media, and

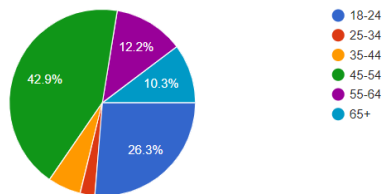
how each user responds to this system. The other source of data collection included researching the actions that social media companies have taken in regulating misinformation, and investigating how well these actions diminished the spread of misinformation, while also analyzing the reactions of users to these measures.

## Data Analysis

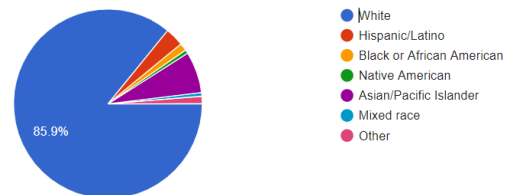
As aforementioned, the data collection completed for this thesis included the administration of a survey and document analysis of databases to record actions taken by social media companies to moderate misinformation on social media. This section will lay out the survey analysis first before moving on to the database analysis.

The majority of the questions in the survey probed aspects of social media use and habits that had been observed previously, while also incorporating questions related to the roles that social media users think that social media companies should play in moderating the content on their platforms. As my project is a researching misinformation on social media using the COVID-19 pandemic as a case study, there were also some questions that related specifically to the pandemic to gauge the belief in misinformation from the respondent base. All of the questions in the survey can be seen in Appendix 1.

What is your age?  
156 responses



What is your ethnic background?  
156 responses

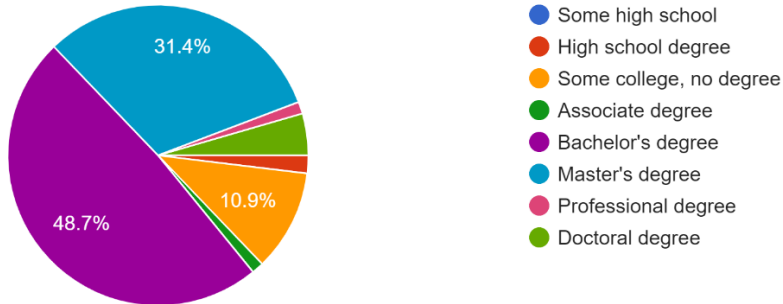


In terms of demographics, the age of respondents was rather scattered, with 45-54 being the most prominent age group with 42.9% of the 156 respondents and the pool being overwhelmingly White at 85.9% with the largest minority being Asian/Pacific Islander at

7.1%. Regarding education level, 48.7% of respondents had or were currently working towards a Bachelor's degree and another 31.4% had attained or were working towards a Master's degree.

What is your highest level of educational attainment, or the highest degree you are currently working towards?

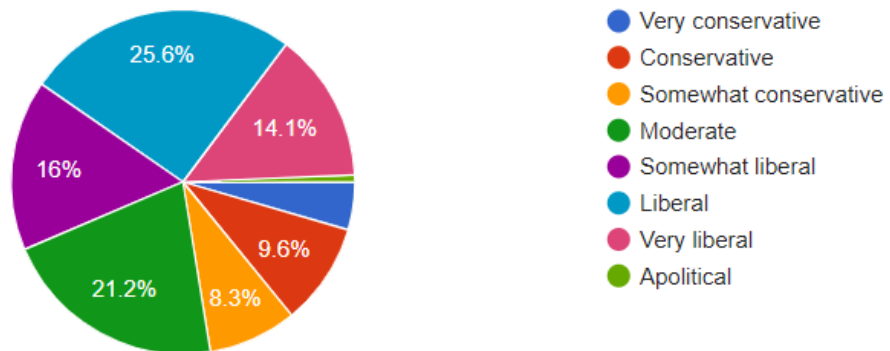
156 responses



The whole political spectrum was represented, which is critical for this study as there have been differences observed in terms of social media misinformation spread by political ideology.

When describing your politics, would you say you are:

156 responses

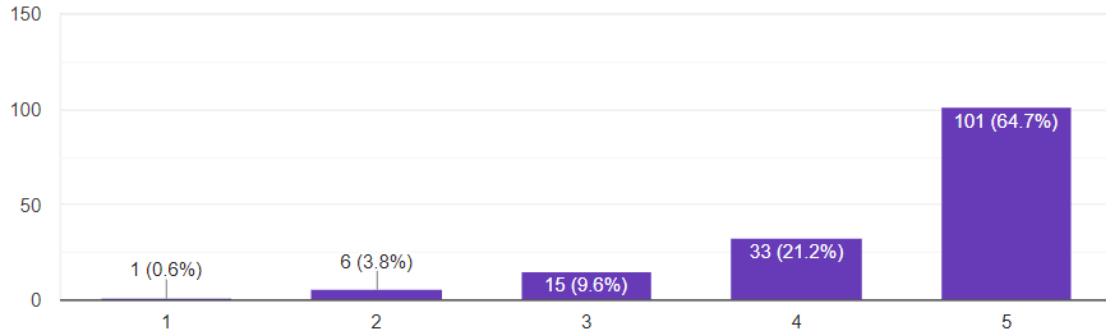


Nearly all respondents agreed that political and social polarization due to social media use was an issue, and nearly all respondents also concurred that misinformation was an issue on social

media sites. This result fits with the ANT perspective of how polarization can occur as the networks that one involves themselves with become homogeneous.

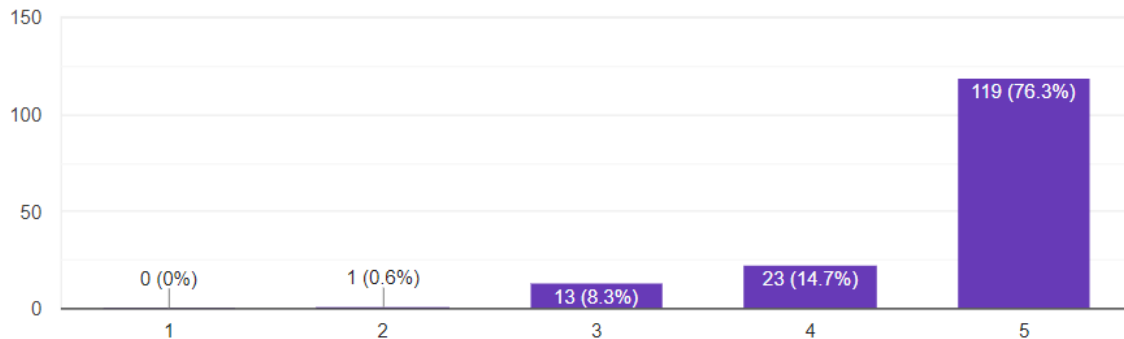
Do you think political and social polarization due to social media is an issue?

156 responses



Do you think that misinformation is an issue on social media sites?

156 responses

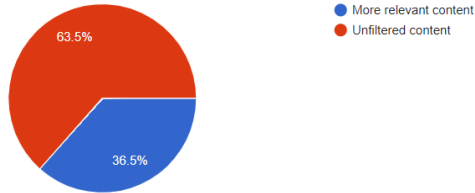


Just shy of 80% of respondents agreed that social media platforms have a responsibility to limit misinformation spread on their sites, that social media companies should be able to remove misinformation from their platforms, and would support social media platforms contracting independent fact checkers to flag false content on their platforms. Close to two-thirds of respondents said they would prefer unfiltered content as opposed to algorithmically generated content, and about the same percentage agreed that the burden was more on the user than the platform to verify authenticity of news on social media. These findings seem to suggest that

most social media users are aware of the detrimental effects it can have, especially regarding polarization as described previously via the ANT network, and would prefer to undo those characteristics of it. However, there is also conflicting data from the same user pool: a majority

Would you prefer to have social media companies use their algorithms to provide you with more relevant content, or see entirely unfiltered content, regardless of your interest in it?

156 responses



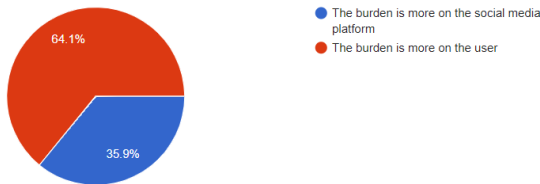
of respondents said that social media sites have a responsibility to limit misinformation, but a majority also stated that the burden is more on the user to than the platform to verify the

authenticity of news.

Interestingly, more than four-fifths of respondents noted that most news they see on social media is incidental, while a small percentage stated that they actively seek out news on social media. Being subjected to news incidentally may be a factor in how three quarters of respondents had ever encountered a news story they initially believed to be true before later

Is the burden more on the social media platform or the user to verify authenticity of news presented on social media sites?

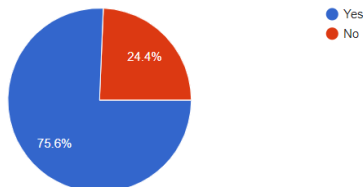
156 responses



realizing that it was not factual. Even with this data, respondents skewed towards trusting themselves to determine whether content they saw on social media was factual or not, with fewer

Have you ever encountered a news story, believed it to be true, then later realized that it was exaggerated, inaccurate or false?

156 responses



than 10% agreeing that most of the news they saw online was true. These findings seem contradictory, as the same pool of social media users admit that they'd been deceived by misinformation in the past

but still trusted themselves to identify false content on these platforms. It also cuts against the idea of social constructivism, enlightening a psychological blind spot: most social media users trust themselves to decipher what content they should believe, yet social constructivism shows us that humans may only learn through social interactions with others, and so we need to trust others in order to gain any form of knowledge.

There was a general distrust of Facebook and Twitter, with a majority of respondents stating they were concerned about the power Big Tech had in controlling the content that users see, and only seven respondents conveying that they trust Facebook and Twitter to filter out the content they see unfit for their platforms. This result shows the wicked problem of misinformation on social media: most users want a more open and freer platform, not trusting the tech companies to filter content, yet they also believe that misinformation on social media is a problem that must be addressed. Regarding the role that governments should play, 72.8% of respondents said they want governments to play some role in policing content on these platforms, with most agreeing that the government should play a minor role with infrequent intervention.

Specific to the COVID-19 pandemic, an overwhelming majority (82.4%) believed that social media sites have an obligation to protect public health by limiting the spread of misinformation, though less than a third said they received most of their information about COVID via social media. Just under a quarter of respondents had some concerns about the COVID vaccine, though upwards of 90% were likely or very likely to receive the vaccine as soon as it became available, or had already been vaccinated.

Finally, the survey asked some questions to measure the extent of misinformation around the COVID-19 pandemic. The first question, while not sourced from a simple misinformative

source, shows how social media may warp perceptions of the world around us. Most users vastly overestimated, sometimes by orders of magnitude, the mortality rate of those in their age group that contract the virus. With straightforward yes or no questions, nearly a quarter believed that the number of COVID cases or deaths were falsified or exaggerated, while 12.8% did not believe that any of the COVID vaccines currently available conferred immunity to the recipient. Careening towards the more implausible, 6.1% believed that the COVID vaccine increased the likelihood of serious illness or death, and 5.4% believed that the vaccine causes infertility.

This type of data collection was a way to snapshot the beliefs of many social media users, though the sample is not as representative as I had hoped. The sample I received, while larger than expected, is whiter, more highly educated, and more liberal than a representative sample of social media users, perhaps reflecting the broader effects of polarization as the people I tend to interact with are of the same generic demographic groups (White and Asian, college educated, young, liberal).

The other section of my data collection was conducted through document analysis of changes that Facebook and Twitter have made in their policies regarding misinformation, including since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Generally, as these platforms have grown in scope and power, the restrictions around misinformation have tightened as the consequences of widely disseminated misinformation have become more catastrophic and dangerous, especially regarding public health throughout the pandemic. An important inflection point was the 2016 election, during which both Facebook and Twitter, with previously lax policies on misinformation, endured loads of criticism for allowing misinformation to spread so widely without impedance or consequence. The previous accusations that these sites catered to liberal

policies and viewpoints had begun to be drowned out by the hordes of more liberal voters that were convinced misinformation had altered the electoral outcome and expressed their anger accordingly.

Since then, Facebook has ramped up its policies to hinder false content from spreading as easily on Newsfeed (the main page that most associate with Facebook itself) by de-prioritizing flagged content and providing similar articles with factual information attached to a news story with incorrect information. As the rollout of the various vaccines has begun and will likely last for many more months, if not years, they've also changed their policies surrounding COVID-19 misinformation. They've implemented a so-called "strikes" policy so that repeat offenders that furnish misinformation about the pandemic will receive escalating punishment, up to a permanent ban. Respective to vaccines, they've begun removing, as opposed to flagging, all misinformation about the COVID-19 vaccines and all misinformation about vaccines in general, which has consistently been one of the most widespread hoaxes that has festered and circulated freely on the platform, often by mainstream pundits.

Twitter has taken a similar approach, with more frequent intervention since the company's inception and especially following the 2016 election and the onset of the COVID-19 epidemic. However, they tended to be more reluctant about removing any content, instead opting to add labels indicating that the content of a tweet or image was misleading. This strategy rose to prominence leading up to and following the 2020 US presidential election during which many of former President Trump's tweets were labeled as misleading but were not outright removed. This tactic was employed by Twitter until January 6th, when rioters, believing misinformation about election fraud that likely spread on Twitter and Facebook, stormed the US Capitol building and Twitter removed all of President Trump's tweets, banning his account. This



was not the first time that Twitter had removed misinformation, but it was the most drastic and noteworthy. Since the dawn of the new year, Twitter has also changed its policies to push for more removal of COVID-19 misinformation in lieu of labels that still allow for the existence of such information online. Following Facebook's standard, they have a five-strike policy for users that spread misinformation, with the fifth strike earning the user a permanent ban. It appears as though Twitter is more focused on combating COVID-19 misinformation than other types of misinformation, as they've been more willing to remove and/or label misinformation surrounding COVID-19 than other types of misinformation. The US federal government has not made any specific actions to suppress content on social media, as opposed to countries like China that explicitly ban certain content on the social media sites used in their country. Instead, the US government has created guidelines, mostly outlined in Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act of 1996, that offer protections for social media companies so that they can remove swaths of unfit content ("obscene, lewd, lascivious, filthy, excessively violent, harassing, or otherwise objectionable, whether or not such material is constitutionally protected") so long as they act "in good faith" in removing it. This law demonstrates that the government doesn't feel that restricting content on social media violates the constitutional right of free speech. The survey responses mentioned above suggest that most social media users are satisfied with this mostly hands-off approach, with infrequent intervention and specific content preferences delegated to each platform.

## **Discussion**

Social media has become an essential part of our lives and identities since its primitive forms debuted in the mid-aughts. In fact, the average internet user will spend more than two hours on social media daily, and projections estimate that the average adult will spend nearly seven years

of their lives on social media. As one would expect, this amount of time spent surfing will have significant impacts, including some unfortunate and unintended ones. One of these is the spread of misinformation, which has ballooned as a consequence of social network polarization and appears poised to only grow in the future.

Viewing the issue of social media misinformation through the actor-network theory is the most fitting STS perspective to adopt, as the networks present on social media are extensive, diverse and intricate. This field is also a unique one to study, as it combines elements of human psychology, social and emotional learning and construction of truth, and the interface with the technology that facilitates these interactions.

To best answer the research questions and consider the consequences and potential solutions, I felt that a survey given to social media users paired with database research of previous actions would yield the best results. The main aim of the survey was to observe if the collected results matched what existing literature had shown, while the database research was performed in order to examine the ethical implications of content moderation by social media companies and governments within the sociotechnical system of social media.

For the most part, the survey results did match what literature had shown, as I was expecting when I was formulating and disseminating the form. There were a few questions that didn't quite match existing studies, though I feel that a limitation may be psychological tendencies that portend response bias, ultimately skewing results. The database analysis provided sound data collection and a well-rounded view of the state of current policies among social media companies and the US government.

The amalgamation of research conducted has far-reaching implications for the future. Specifically, social interactions have been overhauled and outsourced to technology instead of

being conducted face-to-face, which has altered the social construction of truth and facts in ways that polarize us as individuals and result in environments in which it's near impossible to decipher whether what we are seeing is real or not. Regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, knowledge surrounding the pandemic is extremely individualistic, being influenced by the amount of regulation of speech (or lack thereof) and the social network that each person has created for themselves. While not within the scope of this research project, future research may involve examining the broader cultural values, applying them to understand societal differences with respect to social construction of truth. American citizens, known for their individualistic tendencies, may be less inclined to social construction of truth until more reliable or trustworthy social networks are more established. Americans also tend to be less trusting of government or big corporations as, say, China, where speech is frequently restricted by the government, perhaps as a result of a more cooperative society that affects its citizens to trust authority in governing their speech.

## **Conclusion**

How should the wicked problem of social media misinformation be tackled? The landscape of misinformation on social media has changed significantly over the last decade, first prompted by the gradual growth in misinformation that culminated with former President Trump's election in 2016 and soon after a crackdown on misinformation following user complaints. More recently, the trend has been stricter content policing and flagging and/or removal of misinformation, with momentum towards further restrictive action in the future. The uniqueness of the user and cultural differences are also essential to understanding social construction of truth, and thus similar studies conducted in a country such as China may help to unpack this difficult interface while removing the more individualistic cultural aspect of Americans.

Personally, I feel that the current equilibrium in the US is a good framework for how to deal with social media misinformation, both currently and moving forward. The government gives protections to companies and gives discretion to them to remove content, regardless of constitutionality. Social media companies, so far, have not abused this power and have opted to flag most misleading or false content as opposed to straight removal. Most of the content that they have removed has been with public health in mind, opting to remove misinformation about COVID-19, and most of the accounts that they have banned have been from foreign sources, including many bots whose sole mission is to produce false content and delegitimize more credible news sources. Some may argue that social media companies have overstepped their bounds, but most don't realize how narrow the policies surrounding misinformation are applied—consider for a second whether anyone you personally know or follow on social media has ever had their own content flagged or removed or if they've been outright banned from any social media platform.

I've also been convinced, having learned about human and technological relationships through literature and data collection, that social media companies must change their algorithms to promote a more humane environment. The ANT has shown that the current algorithms, which promote maximum user engagement in order to increase ad revenue, leads down a slippery slope to homogeneous networks, where near everyone within a network will have similar views and beliefs. These sorts of echo chambers lead to greater radicalization and exploit human's natural tendencies of social learning so that our worldview is shifted in deleterious ways that it wouldn't otherwise. The content producers within these polarized networks may not be aware of the sway that they have in formulating shared beliefs, but if they are not diligent, they are capable of

producing misinformation and spreading it widely to an audience that may believe a nondescript, anonymous account on the internet more than established, credible news agencies.

So where do we go from here? As aforementioned, momentum appears on the side of broader and more frequently applied policies from social media companies, and perhaps the US government as well, to restrict misinformation on these platforms. Social media companies seem unlikely to change their algorithms as they would lose out on profit, but if enough users support algorithmic changes (as appears to be the case), who's to say that they won't cater to the masses, as they did with misinformation policies just a few years ago. I remain hopeful that the informal power-sharing agreement between social media companies, the federal government and the user base will push and pull to produce a well-regulated platform where information sharing is equitable, non-polarizing, and factual. Until then, I plan to limit my daily social media use so that I may gain social understanding from in-person interactions as much as possible. While social media certainly has its benefits, one can't underestimate the importance of human touch.