



Digital Capitalism and Platform Dependency in Indonesia: Media, Power, and Political Economy

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Abstract

This article examines Indonesia's digital transformation through a political economy of media perspective, focusing on platform dependency, digital labor, and governance relations. The study employs a qualitative analysis of secondary data, including national statistics, policy documents, industry reports, and recent academic studies related to Indonesia's digital economy and media systems. Drawing on sources such as APJII (2023), BPS (2023), and regional digital economy reports, the analysis captures large-scale patterns of platform adoption, labor dynamics, and governance structures. The findings indicate that Indonesia's digital ecosystem is characterized by structural asymmetries in infrastructural control, value extraction, and regulatory capacity. Rather than reflecting technological progress alone, digital transformation involves a reconfiguration of media power and platform-mediated participation. This article contributes to media and communication scholarship by offering an integrated political economy framework to understand how digital capitalism reshapes communication environments in emerging digital societies.

Keywords: *Digital capitalism; Platform dependency; Political economy of media; Digital platforms*

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INTRODUCTION

The rapid expansion of digital platforms has fundamentally transformed media systems, communication practices, and economic relations across contemporary societies. In Indonesia, accelerated internet penetration, widespread smartphone adoption, and the dominance of global digital platforms have restructured how information circulates, how visibility is organized, and how social interaction is mediated. Platforms increasingly operate not only as communication technologies but also as infrastructures that govern media distribution, data extraction, and digital labor. Leading digital newsrooms in Indonesia face significant institutional hurdles, including fragmented system integration and a shortage of specialized analytical talent, in navigating the rapid expansion of digital platforms (Widodo and Kristiyono 2025).

Indonesia's digital transformation is frequently framed by policymakers as a narrative of innovation and economic opportunity, which often obscures the structural power relations embedded within platform-mediated environments. These platforms function as powerful institutional actors that reshape economic relations by centralizing control over data and labor processes (Vallas and Schor 2020). Government initiatives promoting digital entrepreneurship, e-commerce, fintech, and start-up ecosystems position digitalization as a key driver of national competitiveness and development. While these narratives highlight growth and technological adoption, they often obscure the structural power relations embedded within platform-mediated environments, particularly the concentration of infrastructural control in transnational technology corporations.

Existing studies of Indonesia's digital economy have examined issues such as platformisation, digital labor, disinformation, and regulatory change. However, much of this scholarship remains analytically fragmented, often separating questions of media power, platform dependency, governance, and political economy. As a result, there remains limited conceptual integration regarding how digital capitalism operates simultaneously as an economic, technological, and communicative formation within Indonesia's media ecology—a system that fundamentally networks the global market to prioritize corporate interests over social needs (Schiller 1999) while generating specific forms of alienation and challenges to worker judgment (Siciliano 2023).

This article addresses this gap by examining Indonesia's digital transformation through a political economy of media perspective. The study focuses on how platform dependency, data commodification, and state developmental agendas interact to shape Indonesia's digital

media environment. Rather than treating platforms merely as technological tools, this article conceptualizes them as structures of power that reorganized communication processes, value extraction, and governance arrangements. Recent studies in Indonesian contexts have shown how digital media increasingly shapes democratic processes and public communication (Ahdarrijal and Rahmawati 2024).

The central objective of this article is to analyze the dynamics of digital capitalism in Indonesia by identifying the structural relationships between global platforms, state policies, and media practices. Specifically, this study asks: How does platform dependency influence the configuration of digital capitalism and media power in Indonesia? By situating Indonesia's digital ecosystem within broader debates on platform capitalism and political economy, this article contributes to critical media scholarship by clarifying how digital transformation reconfigures communication infrastructures, power relations, and governance mechanisms.

This study extends existing scholarship by conceptualizing platform dependency not merely as technological reliance but as a structural condition shaping digital capitalism in Indonesia. Unlike prior studies that examine platforms, labor, or governance separately, this article integrates these dimensions within a unified political economy framework.

Despite the growing body of research on digital platforms, labor, and governance in Indonesia, existing studies tend to examine these dimensions separately or focus on specific sectors such as social media, gig work, or digital policy. This fragmentation limits a comprehensive understanding of how digital capitalism operates as an integrated system. This study extends existing scholarship by conceptualizing platform dependency not merely as technological reliance, but as a structural condition that connects platform infrastructures, labor processes, and governance arrangements. In this context, social media platforms function as an ecosystem of "connectivity" where social activities are technically coded and transformed into data for monetization (Van Dijck 2013). By integrating these dimensions within a single political economy framework, the article provides a more systematic analysis of how digital capitalism reshapes media systems and communication practices in Indonesia, particularly as these practices become embedded in a broader national strategy for digital economic growth (Arifin and Nugroho 2022).

Digital Capitalism and Platform Power

The expansion of digital platforms has become a defining feature of contemporary media and communication systems. Early accounts of Southeast Asia's digital transformation

largely emphasized market growth, technological diffusion, and investment opportunities (Google, Temasek, and Bain 2023). While these narratives highlight rapid digital adoption, critical scholarship increasingly foregrounds the structural power of global platforms and their dominance over digital infrastructures.

In Indonesia, studies have demonstrated how transnational platform corporations such as Google, Meta, ByteDance, and Sea Group exert significant influence over digital markets, advertising ecosystems, and media visibility. Tapsell (2020) and Lim (2020) argue that Indonesia's digital environment is characterized by ownership concentration and infrastructural dependency, which constrain national regulatory capacity and reshape media practices. Platform logics increasingly govern information circulation, audience visibility, and content distribution, positioning platforms as central actors in the communication ecology.

State Developmentalism and Digital Governance

Alongside platform expansion, Southeast Asian states actively promote digitalisation as a strategy for economic modernisation. National digital roadmaps, infrastructure investment, and start-up promotion frame digital technologies as drivers of competitiveness and development (ERIA 2022). This orientation reflects enduring developmental state traditions in the region, where state intervention historically played a key role in economic transformation.

However, recent scholarship highlights tensions between developmental ambitions and platform dependency. Governments often facilitate digital market growth while relying on foreign-owned infrastructures for communication, cloud services, and digital ecosystems. Regulatory frameworks remain fragmented, and state authority frequently operates within constraints imposed by global technology corporations.

Digital Labor and Platform Economies

Platform expansion has generated new forms of work, particularly in ride-hailing, delivery services, and digital content production. These developments are often framed as opportunities for flexible employment and entrepreneurship. Yet critical studies reveal persistent precarity, including income instability, long working hours, and limited social protection among platform workers (Katadata Insight Center 2023).

Scholars also emphasize the commodification of unpaid digital labor. Social media participation generates data, attention, and content that platforms monetize through advertising

and analytics systems (Fuchs 2014). Influencer economies and platform-mediated creative work further blur the boundaries between labor and leisure, embedding value extraction within everyday digital practices.

Data Governance, Surveillance, and Digital Sovereignty

Digital transformation is closely linked to datafication and the expansion of surveillance infrastructures. Governments deploy digital identity systems and e-government platforms, while platforms extract behavioral data at scale. These processes raise concerns regarding privacy, accountability, and governance capacity (Zuboff 2019).

In Indonesia, debates surrounding digital sovereignty increasingly center on control over data, platform regulation, and governance structures. Despite regulatory developments, enforcement capacity remains uneven, highlighting the structural asymmetries embedded within platform-dominated environments.

Positioning the Indonesian Case

Within this regional landscape, Indonesia represents a particularly significant case. As Southeast Asia's largest economy and most populous country, Indonesia occupies a central position in regional digital markets. Its vast user base, rapidly expanding e-commerce sector, and growing start-up ecosystem make it a key site for platform investment and experimentation.

At the same time, Indonesia exemplifies many of the structural tensions identified in the Southeast Asian literature. The state actively promotes digital development through national roadmaps, infrastructure projects, and support for digital entrepreneurship, while remaining deeply dependent on foreign-owned platforms and cloud services. Digital labor is expanding rapidly, yet labor protections remain weak. Data governance frameworks are evolving, but enforcement capacity is limited.

Indonesia represents a critical site for examining digital capitalism due to its scale, rapid platform adoption, and expanding digital markets. Existing studies identify structural tensions between platform dominance, labor precarity, and governance challenges. However, integrated political economy analyses of Indonesia's digital media ecosystem remain limited, particularly regarding platform dependency as a systemic condition.

Theoretical Framework

This article adopts a political economy of media perspective to analyze Indonesia's digital transformation, focusing on the structural relationships between platforms, labor, and governance. Rather than treating digital platforms as neutral technologies, this approach conceptualizes them as infrastructures of economic extraction and communication control that shape how value, visibility, and participation are organized within digital environments (Mosco, 2009; Fuchs 2014).

Within this framework, digital capitalism is understood as a system in which platforms operate as central intermediaries that coordinate markets, mediate communication, and extract value from data and user activity. Platforms reorganize production, consumption, and interaction through algorithmic systems, enabling new forms of accumulation while reinforcing structural inequalities in ownership and control. These dynamics are unevenly distributed across global contexts and are shaped by national political economies, regulatory conditions, and positions within global digital infrastructures.

Platform Dependency

Platform dependency refers to the structural reliance of national media and communication systems on foreign-owned digital infrastructures, including social media platforms, app ecosystems, cloud services, and digital advertising networks. These infrastructures function as gatekeeping architectures that regulate access to markets, audiences, and information flows.

In emerging digital economies such as Indonesia, platform dependency produces asymmetries in value capture and governance capacity. While local users and markets generate large volumes of data and economic activity, ownership and control remain concentrated in transnational corporations. As a result, digital expansion occurs alongside limited infrastructural sovereignty and constrained regulatory leverage. This condition positions Indonesia within a structurally dependent role in global platform capitalism.

Digital Labor and Commodification

Digital capitalism transforms labor relations by integrating work into platform-mediated systems, utilizing algorithmic management to control a precarious workforce (Vallas

and Schor 2020). These architectures, often producing structural harm and discontent, reshape cultural production through a "platformization" process (Stanfill 2024).

At the same time, value extraction extends beyond formal employment to include unpaid digital labor. User participation, interaction, and content creation generate data and attention that are monetized by platforms. This blurs the boundaries between labor, consumption, and communication, embedding commodification within everyday digital practices. From a political economy perspective, these dynamics reflect an expansion of capitalist accumulation into social and communicative domains.

Governance and Power Relations

Digital transformation is also shaped by the interaction between platform power and state governance. Governments promote digitalization through policy frameworks, infrastructure development, and regulatory initiatives, while simultaneously relying on platform infrastructures for communication, data management, and service delivery.

This interaction produces hybrid governance configurations in which state authority and platform power coexist. Rather than operating independently, platforms and states become interdependent actors within shared digital environments. Datafication plays a central role in this process, as both corporate and state actors collect, process, and utilize data for economic and administrative purposes. These dynamics reshape governance structures and redefine the relationship between citizens, markets, and institutions.

Analytical Framework

Building on these concepts, this study analyses Indonesia's digital ecosystem through three interrelated dimensions:

1. Platform Dependency – the reliance on global digital infrastructures and its implications for sovereignty and value capture
2. Digital Labor and Commodification – the transformation of labour relations and expansion of value extraction
3. Governance and Power Relations – the interaction between platform logics and state policies in shaping digital environments

These dimensions function as analytical lenses to examine how digital capitalism restructures Indonesia's media system, communication practices, and power relations. Digital

communication is also embedded within broader structures of power and discourse shaped by institutional and technological forces (Rohimah 2024).

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative research design grounded in the political economy of media. The analysis is interpretive in nature, focusing on structural relationships between digital platforms, labor dynamics, and governance arrangements in Indonesia's digital communication environment.

The research is based on secondary data derived from multiple sources, including national statistical reports, policy and regulatory documents, industry analyses, and peer-reviewed academic studies. Data sources were selected based on three criteria: (1) relevance to digital platforms, labor, or governance in Indonesia; (2) empirical or analytical contribution to understanding platform-based economies; and (3) credibility, prioritizing peer-reviewed publications, official statistics, and institutional reports published within the last ten years.

Data Collection

Data collection followed a document-based strategy using systematic searches across academic databases, institutional repositories, and government publications. Keywords such as digital platforms, digital labor, platform economy, and digital governance in Indonesia were used to identify relevant materials. Selected sources were reviewed and organized to ensure coverage of the three analytical dimensions.

Selection criteria prioritized materials that provide empirical evidence or conceptual insights into platform dependency, digital labor, and governance structures. Data sources were selected based on three criteria: (1) relevance to digital platforms, labor, or governance in Indonesia, (2) empirical or analytical contribution to understanding platform-based economies, and (3) publication credibility, prioritizing peer-reviewed journal articles, official statistics, and institutional reports published within the last ten years.

This approach enables a structured synthesis of existing knowledge while situating Indonesia's digital transformation within broader theoretical debates.

Analytical Procedure

The analysis was conducted through a qualitative interpretive approach using thematic categorization. Data were coded into three core analytical dimensions derived from the

theoretical framework: (1) platform dependency, (2) digital labor and commodification, and (3) governance and power relations. Each source was examined to identify recurring patterns related to infrastructural control, value extraction, labor conditions, and regulatory dynamics.

The analytical procedure involved three stages. First, relevant data were extracted and grouped according to the three dimensions. Second, patterns and relationships across sources were identified through comparative reading. Third, these patterns were interpreted using a political economy perspective, focusing on how platforms organize power, reshape communication processes, and influence governance structures.

Table 1.

Data Source	Type of Material	Analytical Relevance
APJII (2023)	National internet usage statistics	Digital penetration & platform environment
BPS (2023)	Official economic & digital economy data	Market structure & digital transactions
Google, Temasek & Bain (2023)	Industry report	Regional platform economy trends
Katadata Insight Center (2023)	Industry & labour reports	Digital labour dynamics
Government policy documents	Regulatory & governance frameworks	State intervention & platform governance
Academic studies	Peer-reviewed literature	Theoretical & empirical grounding

Key Data Sources Informing the Analysis

The study integrates multiple categories of secondary materials to capture the structural dimensions of Indonesia's digital transformation. These sources (Table 1) provide complementary perspectives on platform adoption, market concentration, labor arrangements, and governance frameworks. Rather than treating datasets as standalone evidence, the analysis interprets them through a political economy lens to identify recurring patterns of platform dependency, value extraction, and regulatory dynamics.

Validation

To ensure analytical reliability, the study applied source triangulation by comparing findings across different types of data, including statistical reports, policy documents, and academic literature. Cross-referencing was conducted to identify consistent patterns and minimize bias from single-source interpretations.

This methodological approach enables a structured analysis of Indonesia's digital transformation by linking empirical evidence with theoretical interpretation, ensuring consistency between data sources, analytical procedures, and the political economy framework.

While the use of secondary data enables a broad structural analysis, it also presents limitations related to data consistency and potential bias across sources. Differences in data collection methods and institutional perspectives may influence interpretations. To mitigate this, the study relies on cross-referencing multiple sources and prioritizes widely cited and methodologically robust publications.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the empirical findings based on national statistical data, industry reports, and secondary empirical studies to examine the structural dynamics of Indonesia's digital capitalism. The analysis focuses on five interrelated dimensions: (1) the growth and scale of the digital economy, (2) platform dependency and infrastructural reliance, (3) gig work and labor precarity, (4) data extraction and surveillance practices, and (5) the platformisation of state-linked public communication. The final dimension draws illustratively on ANTARA, Indonesia's state-owned news agency, to demonstrate how state institutions adapt to platform logics within digital governance frameworks.

Indonesia's digital ecosystem is marked by large-scale platform adoption, with over 215 million internet users (APJII 2023) and e-commerce transactions reaching IDR 476 trillion (BPS 2023).

Platform Concentration and Digital Infrastructures

Indonesia's digital transformation is marked by the centralization of communicative and economic functions within a limited number of global platforms. Digital platforms increasingly operate as infrastructural intermediaries that organize access to information,

audiences, and markets. Rather than simply facilitating interaction, platforms function as gatekeeping architectures that structure visibility, distribution, and participation across Indonesia's digital media environment.

Indonesia's digital transformation is defined by the centralization of economic and communicative functions within a few global platforms acting as gatekeeping infrastructures, which structure visibility and participation (Syah and Ariyanto 2022). These dominant ecosystems, acting as intermediaries, often dictate the economic viability of local creative actors navigating the digital media environment (Syah and Ariyanto 2022).

This infrastructural dominance is supported by large-scale digital adoption. As of 2023, Indonesia has over 215 million internet users, representing approximately 78 percent of the population (APJII 2023). Social media and mobile platforms constitute the primary channels of communication, reinforcing the role of platform-based ecosystems as central infrastructures of digital life. Beyond content distribution, platform control extends to app ecosystems, cloud services, and digital advertising networks, consolidating power at the level of technological standards and access mechanisms. This consolidation reflects a broader "communicative materialism" where capitalist logic permeates all social interaction (Fuchs 2020), effectively colonizing the public sphere (Fuchs 2021) within a "progressive neoliberal" framework that aligns technological innovation with corporate market interests (Fraser 2017).

Indonesia's digital transformation is marked by the centralization of communicative and economic functions within a limited number of global platforms. Digital platforms increasingly operate as infrastructural intermediaries that organize access to information, audiences, and markets, acting as gatekeeping architectures that structure visibility and participation (David, Ong, and Legara 2021).

Digital capitalism transforms labor relations by integrating work into platform-mediated and algorithmically governed systems. Gig work, platform-based entrepreneurship, and content production are coordinated through digital infrastructures that determine access to opportunities, pricing mechanisms, and visibility. These systems function as a form of data colonialism, where the continuous extraction of human life as data becomes a primary driver of corporate profit and dispossession (Couldry and Mejias 2021). By reorganizing social activities into data relations, platforms extend the reach of global market systems into the most intimate aspects of everyday existence.

Secondary statistical sources indicate that digital connectivity and platform usage have reached systemic levels, positioning platforms as dominant channels of communication and exchange. This infrastructural dominance extends beyond content distribution to encompass app ecosystems, cloud services, and digital advertising networks. Such concentration reflects the consolidation of platform power at the level of digital infrastructures, where control over technical standards and ecosystems shapes the conditions of participation for users, media institutions, and businesses.

Platform Dependency and Structural Asymmetries

The concentration of digital infrastructures in transnational corporations produces structural dependencies that characterize Indonesia's digital ecosystem. Platform dependency is evident in the reliance of domestic markets, media systems, and digital services on foreign-owned technological architectures, including app stores, cloud infrastructures, and algorithmic systems.

Economic indicators further illustrate this dependency. Indonesia's digital economy reached an estimated value of USD 82 billion in 2023 and is projected to exceed USD 100 billion by 2025 (Google, Temasek, and Bain 2023). While this growth reflects strong market expansion, ownership and control over core infrastructures remain largely external. As a result, value creation occurs domestically, but value capture is disproportionately concentrated in global platform corporations.

This asymmetry limits regulatory leverage and infrastructural sovereignty. Policy interventions, such as platform registration and data governance regulations, often operate within constraints imposed by dominant platform actors, highlighting the structural imbalance between national governance frameworks and global digital power. Platform-based communication practices, including live streaming and influencer-driven interaction, further illustrate how digital platforms restructure communication strategies (Abadi 2024).

The concentration of digital infrastructures in transnational corporations produces structural dependencies that characterize Indonesia's digital ecosystem. Platform dependency is observable in the reliance of domestic markets, media systems, and digital services on foreign-owned technological architectures. App stores, algorithmic systems, and cloud infrastructures collectively mediate economic transactions and information flows, embedding local actors within externally governed environments.

This dependency generates asymmetries in value capture and governance capacity. While Indonesia provides a vast user base and expanding digital markets, ownership and control over core infrastructures remain externalized. Consequently, digital economic expansion coexists with limitations in regulatory leverage and infrastructural sovereignty. Regulatory interventions often operate within constraints imposed by platform dominance, highlighting the structural imbalance between national governance frameworks and global platform power.

Digital Labor and Value Extraction

Platform expansion has reconfigured labor relations by integrating work into algorithmically mediated systems. In Indonesia, more than five million workers are engaged in platform-based labor, including ride-hailing, delivery services, and online commerce (Katadata Insight Center 2023). These forms of work are characterized by flexible arrangements but also by income instability, performance-based incentives, and limited social protection.

At the same time, value extraction extends beyond formal employment to include unpaid digital labor. User participation in social media platforms generates data, attention, and content that are monetized through advertising and algorithmic targeting systems. This blurs the boundaries between labor, consumption, and communication, embedding economic extraction within everyday digital practices. These patterns indicate that digital capitalism operates through expanded circuits of commodification, where both formal labor and routine digital interaction contribute to platform-based accumulation.

Algorithms that distribute work, determine prices, and evaluate performance are essential in day-to-day operations. At the same time, user ratings are leveraged against drivers and couriers in general, the history of work experience is taken into account for future employment possibilities, and random suspensions can happen at any given moment. This algorithmic control erodes workers' autonomy and produces imbalanced power relations between platforms and their laborers, raising urgent questions regarding data justice and the fairness of automated systems (Hintz, Dencik, and Wahl-Jorgensen 2022). Workers often have to deal with processes that are obscure and cannot be challenged. Profits fluctuate a lot as well. Demand, platform incentives, and operating costs like fuel can all affect revenue on a daily basis. When things are so uncertain, it is difficult to make plans for the future or stabilize the economy.

Platform expansion has reconfigured labor relations by integrating work into algorithmically mediated systems, a shift driven by the broader convergence of media and communication infrastructures in networked societies (Kristiyono 2022). Ride-hailing, delivery services, and platform-mediated entrepreneurial activities illustrate how labor processes are increasingly organized through digital infrastructures. Secondary empirical studies, often synthesized through systematic techniques to identify recurring structural patterns (Jesson, Matheson, and Lacey 2011), consistently document income instability, performance-based incentives, and limited social protections among platform workers. Beyond formal gig labor, value extraction mechanisms extend to everyday digital practices. User activity, engagement, and content production function as sources of economic value within platform ecosystems. Data generation and attention dynamics become integral to accumulation processes, blurring distinctions between labor, consumption, and participation. This tension is further complicated by the gap between formal digital education and the actual, often precarious, everyday citizenship practices of users (Johns 2021).

These patterns indicate that digital capitalism operates through expanded circuits of commodification, encompassing both paid and unpaid communicative activities, necessitating new approaches to transform institutional conflicts into collaborative resolutions (Hidayat and Kristiyono 2025).

Datafication and Governance Dynamics

Datafication constitutes a central mechanism through which digital capitalism is institutionalized. Platforms collect and process large-scale behavioral data, while state institutions increasingly deploy digital systems for administration, identification, and service delivery.

In Indonesia, digital governance initiatives, including national identification systems and e-government platforms, have expanded significantly in recent years. These systems rely on data integration and platform-compatible infrastructures, reinforcing the centrality of data in both economic and administrative processes.

The convergence of corporate data extraction and state-led digital governance produces hybrid configurations of power. Citizens are positioned simultaneously as users, workers, consumers, and data subjects within interconnected digital systems. Despite the introduction

of regulatory frameworks, including data protection policies, enforcement remains uneven, reflecting ongoing tensions between governance ambitions and platform dependency.

The digitization in Indonesia is known for a specific characteristic, which is the commodification of data. Companies use data generated by users for algorithm-driven personalization and behavior analytics, as well as for targeted advertising. While these activities generate huge profits for multinational corporations, users are often unaware of how their data is collected and used.

Datafication constitutes a central mechanism through which digital capitalism is institutionalized. Platforms extract, process, and monetize behavioral data, while state institutions increasingly deploy digital systems for administration, identification, and service delivery. Secondary policy and regulatory sources reveal a growing integration of digital governance initiatives that rely on platform-compatible infrastructures.

The convergence of platform-driven data extraction and state-led digital governance produces hybrid configurations of power. Citizens are positioned simultaneously as users, consumers, workers, and data subjects within interconnected digital systems. Despite the expansion of regulatory frameworks addressing data protection and digital governance, enforcement capacity and institutional oversight remain uneven. These dynamics underscore the political-economic significance of data as both an economic resource and a governance instrument.

The findings highlight that Indonesia's digital transformation cannot be adequately understood through technological or market-centric explanations alone. Rather, the expansion of digital platforms reflects a deeper reorganization of media power, economic extraction, and governance structures. From a political economy of media perspective, platforms operate not merely as communication tools but as infrastructures that restructure the conditions of visibility, participation, and value creation.

Platform concentration and infrastructural dominance indicate a shift in the locus of control within Indonesia's media ecology. Traditional media institutions, audiences, and market actors increasingly operate within platform-governed environments where algorithmic systems regulate information flows and communicative priorities. This transformation suggests that power is embedded not only in content production but also in the architectures that organize circulation and access. Platforms thus function as meta-mediators whose influence extends across economic, cultural, and communicative domains.

Platform dependency further reveals the structural asymmetries underpinning Indonesia's digital ecosystem. Dependency does not simply denote technological reliance but signifies the externalization of infrastructural control and value capture. While domestic markets generate extensive data, labor, and user activity, ownership of core digital infrastructures remains concentrated in transnational corporations. This configuration reflects broader patterns of unequal integration within global digital capitalism, where emerging digital economies participate intensively yet retain limited regulatory leverage.

The dynamics of digital labor illustrate how platform capitalism expands mechanisms of commodification. Labor processes are reorganized through algorithmic management systems that fragment employment relations and redistribute economic risk. Simultaneously, everyday digital practices become sources of economic value, embedding accumulation within routine communication activities. These developments underscore how digital capitalism extends beyond formal employment structures, incorporating attention, interaction, and data production into circuits of value extraction.

Datafication processes reveal the convergence of economic and governance logics. Platforms monetize behavioral data, while state institutions increasingly depend on digital infrastructures to administer services and regulate populations. This intersection produces hybrid governance arrangements in which state authority and platform power coexist. Rather than functioning as separate domains, economic accumulation and digital governance become mutually reinforcing, reshaping how citizens engage with communication systems and institutional structures.

The Indonesian case also illustrates how legacy media institutions adapt to platform-dominated environments. Media organizations increasingly align communicative practices with platform logics that privilege engagement metrics, algorithmic visibility, and format optimization. This adaptation reflects broader structural pressures rather than isolated editorial choices. Platforms impose infrastructural and aesthetic constraints that redefine journalistic communication, reinforcing their role as dominant intermediaries within contemporary media systems.

Taken together, these dynamics suggest that Indonesia's digital transformation represents a reconfiguration of power relations within a platform-mediated communication order. Digital capitalism operates through interconnected processes of infrastructural control, labor commodification, and data extraction that extend across economic and communicative

spheres. Understanding these transformations requires moving beyond celebratory narratives of innovation to examine the structural conditions shaping participation, governance, and value distribution.

Table 2.

Structural Dimension	Structural Dimension	Structural Dimension
Platform Dependency	Reliance on global platforms and infrastructures	Limited sovereignty and value capture
Digital Labor	Expansion of gig and platform-mediated work	Precarity and asymmetric risk distribution
Datafication	Commodification of user data and behavior	Intensified extraction and governance challenges
State Intervention	Developmental policies and regulatory frameworks	Hybrid governance and platform alignment

Structural Features of Indonesia's Digital Platform Ecosystem

The structural patterns identified across the analysis can be synthesized into several interrelated dimensions that characterize Indonesia's digital platform ecosystem. Table 2 summarizes these dimensions by highlighting how platform dependency, digital labor arrangements, datafication processes, and state interventions collectively shape the political-economic configuration of Indonesia's platform-mediated environment.

Taken together, these dynamics suggest that Indonesia's digital transformation reflects not merely technological change but a structural reorganization of media power, economic extraction, and governance relations. Digital capitalism, as observed in Indonesia's platform-dominated environment, operates through interconnected mechanisms of infrastructural control, labor commodification, and data-driven accumulation that redefine the conditions of communication and participation in contemporary digital society.

Platformization of Public Communication

The structural dynamics of platform dependency and datafication are also reflected in the transformation of public communication practices. State-linked media institutions

increasingly operate within platform-mediated environments that shape how information is produced, formatted, and circulated.

ANTARA provides an illustrative example of this transformation. As Indonesia's national news agency, ANTARA has expanded its presence on platforms such as TikTok and Instagram, adopting short-form video formats, visual storytelling techniques, and hashtag-based distribution strategies. These practices indicate an alignment with platform logics that prioritize visibility, engagement, and algorithmic circulation.

From a political economy perspective, this shift reflects how communication practices are increasingly embedded within platform infrastructures that are externally controlled and commercially driven. Public communication is no longer distributed solely through institutional channels but is mediated through systems governed by platform metrics and algorithmic visibility.

This condition highlights a broader structural implication: the convergence of state communication and platform economies. By relying on global platforms to reach audiences, public institutions become integrated into transnational infrastructures that shape the terms of communication. This raises critical questions about informational autonomy, media independence, and the capacity of states to maintain control over public communication within platform-dominated environments.

CONCLUSION

This article has examined Indonesia's digital transformation through a political economy of media perspective, highlighting the structural dynamics of platform dependency, digital labor, and governance relations. The analysis demonstrates that Indonesia's platform-dominated environment cannot be adequately understood through narratives of technological progress or market expansion alone. Instead, digital transformation reflects a reconfiguration of media power and value extraction embedded within platform-based infrastructures.

The findings show that digital platforms increasingly function as infrastructural actors that reorganize communication processes, visibility regimes, and economic relations. Platform dependency operates not merely as a condition of technological reliance, but as a structural configuration that shapes how value is produced, distributed, and controlled. At the same time,

digital labor and datafication extend commodification into everyday communication practices, while governance arrangements reflect growing interdependence between state institutions and platform systems.

This study contributes to media and communication scholarship by offering an integrated analytical framework that connects platform dependency, labor commodification, and governance dynamics within a single political economy perspective. In doing so, it advances existing research that often treats these dimensions separately, and provides a more systematic understanding of how digital capitalism operates in the Indonesian context.

More broadly, the Indonesian case illustrates how digital transformation in emerging economies is shaped by structural asymmetries in infrastructural control, labor conditions, and data governance. These dynamics underscore the importance of examining digital capitalism as a configuration of power that extends across economic, communicative, and institutional domains. Understanding these processes is essential for critically assessing the implications of platform expansion for media systems and the organization of digital social life. Future research may extend this analysis by incorporating primary empirical investigations to further examine platform practices and user experiences in Indonesia.

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