

Policy Overview

Digitization and Domestic Work: The Policy Environment in the Philippines

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1. Introduction

As an archipelago of more than 7100 islands, the Philippines relies on Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) for a significant part of its socio-economic development. In March 1994, the Philippines formally connected to the internet (Department of Information and Communications Technology, 2015). Twenty-four years later and with more than half of the country's 100 million plus population being connected, the internet still remains largely unregulated. While there have been roadmaps and plans aimed at maximizing the socio-economic potential of ICTs in the Philippines, most of these remain on paper as the state has limited capacity and resources.

A liberalized telecommunications and internet environment has been a major factor in increasing access to communication technology for a large segment of the Philippine population. However, data from the Philippine Statistics Authority shows that this is concentrated in the National Capital Region and in the main urban centers of the country (Astrologo et.al, 2016). A largely private sector-led market environment coupled with weak regulatory institutions has resulted in the dominance of large corporations, leading to serious gaps in protecting consumers and defending the rights of the general public to access communications. Like the rest of the Philippine economy, the ICT industry is also influenced and controlled by a web of political dynasties that have ruled the country for many years (Foundation for Media Alternatives, 2017). In particular, the ICT sector is dominated by two telecommunications giants, Smart-PLDT and Globe. This duopoly is currently being challenged by efforts to open the market for the entry of a third major telco player (Rappler.com, 2018). In the 17th Congress, a proposal to develop the country's telecommunications landscape by strengthening the powers of the National Telecommunications Commission, the country's telecommunications regulator, was passed on final reading at the House of Representatives but is still pending in the Senate.

A liberalized telecommunications and internet environment has been a major factor in increasing access to communication technology for a large segment of the Philippine population

Various ICT indices indicate that the Philippines ranks below global averages in the general state/use of ICT infrastructure. In the 2014 Web Index report, which measures universal access, freedom and openness, relevant content and use, and empowerment, the country ranked 41 of 86 countries studied. While the country performed better in the 2016 Global Information Technology report, it still ranked 77 of 139 economies in terms of networked readiness, which pertains to the ability of an economy to use ICT to boost its competitiveness and well-being. The Networked Readiness Index (NRI) is a composite indicator that comprises 53 individual indicators that are further grouped into 10 subcategories, namely: political and regulatory environment, business and innovation environment, infrastructure, affordability, skills, individual usage, business usage, government usage, economic impacts, and social impacts (Baller et al., 2016). The country's sub-optimal performance in the NRI means that the Philippines still has to rise above many challenges in order to obtain the greatest economic and innovation impact from ICTs, including coming up with policies that create a conducive environment for innovation/startups to flourish.

In fact, in 2018, a consumer research group undertook a study of the 'Best Countries in Asia-Pacific for Startups'. The research evaluated Asia's 12 leading countries in terms of economic health, cost of doing business, business

climate, and labor force quality.¹ The Philippines ranked 11 out of the 12 countries in the composite score and the lowest in the Economic Health and Business Climate categories (ValuePenguin, 2018). The results demonstrate that current socio-economic conditions in the country remain below par and not ideal for business and innovation.

These barriers notwithstanding, the Philippine digital economy continues to expand, and various stakeholders believe that such growth may soon play a significant role in the country's overall economic development. Microsoft Philippines (2018) predicts that by 2021, 40 percent of the Philippines' Gross Domestic Product (GDP) will be derived from digital products and services. Further, Microsoft's research predicts that digital transformation will increase the Philippines' GDP growth rate by 0.4 percent annually by 2021, along with the acceleration of digital transformation across Asia Pacific economies. Such acceleration, according to Microsoft, will be primarily driven by the use of emerging digital technologies such as mobility, cloud, Internet of Things, and Artificial Intelligence.

This policy overview maps the evolving digital policy landscape in the Philippines, particularly in relation to the startup ecosystem that constitutes a significant fraction of the platform economy in the country. The report lays out the context for a forthcoming case study on the platformization of care work in the Philippines and therefore includes a review of relevant laws and policies such as those on labor contracting, domestic work, taxation, and e-commerce.

2. Mapping Platformization in Policy and Praxis

2.1 The Philippine digital policy landscape

The Philippines is generally recognized as a connected country, with 63 percent of the population having access to the internet, as of 2018 (We Are Social, 2018). We Are Social's Digital 2018 report ranks the Philippines as the first among 40 countries in terms of social media usage, with Filipinos spending an average of 3 hours and 57 minutes per day on social media, primarily Facebook (Kemp, 2018).

The Philippine Constitution itself recognizes the role of technology in national development (Article XIV, Section 10) and mandates the State to "provide the policy environment for [...] the emergence of communication structures suitable to the needs and aspirations of the nation and the balanced flow of information into, out of, and across the country, in accordance with a policy that respects the freedom of speech and of the press" (Article XVI, Section 10).

From the late 1990s to 2016, the Philippines saw breakneck growth in its Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) industry, a sector that heavily relies on ICTs and internet access. Despite this, the Philippines not only has the slowest internet connection in Asia (DTI, n.d.; Barreiro Jr., 2017) but also the most expensive internet connection in the world (DTI, n.d.). This is often attributed to the lack of competition in digital and communication services in the Philippines, which, as pointed out, are dominated by a duopoly. The country's telecommunications industry is governed by Republic Act No. 7925 or the Public Telecommunications Policy Act of the Philippines, which was enacted in 1995, more than two decades ago.

Even before the introduction of the internet in the 1990s, the earliest digital policies in the Philippines emerged out of e-government initiatives, starting from the establishment of the National Computer Center way back in 1971. In 1997, President Fidel V. Ramos issued Administrative Order No. 332, which directed all government agencies and

¹ The countries evaluated include Singapore, Hong Kong, Japan, Taiwan, Malaysia, South Korea, China, India, Indonesia, Thailand, Philippines, and Vietnam.

offices to undertake electronic interconnection through the Internet. The interconnection of all government offices was to be known as RPWEB, created as a precursor to the Philippine Information Infrastructure.

In 2000, the E-Commerce Act (Republic Act No. 8792) finally recognized and promoted the use of electronic commercial and non-commercial transactions. Since then, digital policy in the Philippines has expanded to include laws governing online activities. Another landmark legislation in this area is the Cybercrime Prevention Act of 2012 (Republic Act No. 10175), which criminalizes cybercrime offenses such as illegal access and interception of computer data and systems, computer-related forgery, fraud, and identity theft, and content-related offenses such as cybersex, child pornography, and libel. Human rights defenders, particularly advocates of internet freedom and women's rights, have criticized the cybersex² and cyber libel provisions of the law for restricting free speech online. The cybersex provision is overly broad and vague and thus may end up limiting women's sexual expression, while punishment for cyber libel is one degree higher than offline libel, which could effectively produce a chilling effect and discourage the open flow of thought and speech in online spaces. In 2018, the Philippines became party to the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime, the first international treaty aimed at addressing and combating Internet and computer crime.

The Data Privacy Act or DPA (Republic Act No. 10173) is the law governing the practices of both public and private data handlers in the country. Implemented by the National Privacy Commission (NPC), the DPA allows the processing of personal information as long as it adheres to the general privacy principles as defined in the Act. The DPA also requires all personal information controllers to set in place organizational, physical, and technical security measures.

The Philippines is also subject to the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Privacy Framework and the larger APEC Cross Border Privacy Rules system.

The year 2016 marked a turning point in the digital policy landscape of the Philippines, as it was the year the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) was created. By virtue of Republic Act No. 10844, the DICT was formed to be the primary policy, planning, coordinating, implementing, and administrative entity of the Executive Branch of the government that will plan, develop, and promote the national ICT development agenda. Today, the DICT is in charge of developing and implementing several ICT development plans and frameworks, including: the National Broadband Plan, National Cybersecurity Plan, E-Government Masterplan, and pertinent sections of the Philippine Development Plan. The DICT is also tasked to cascade initiatives under the ASEAN ICT Masterplan 2020. Attached to the DICT are the National Telecommunications Commission, Cybercrime Investigation and Coordinating Center, and the NPC.

It is therefore clear that since 2000 and especially after 2010, Philippine lawmakers and policymakers have been making efforts to build a strong and robust digital policy framework, but actual implementation of the laws has been far from smooth sailing. For instance, the NPC was created only in 2016 despite the DPA having been passed four years prior. Ironically, the creation of the Commission coincided with the biggest data breach in the Philippines. In March 2016, several databases of the Commission on Elections were ex-filtrated and made available to the public. The leaked data included personal information of over 55 million registered Filipino voters (Foundation for Media Alternatives, 2018). Since then, the NPC has had to deal with other data breaches in the private sector, including a reported "potential breach" of COL Financial, the country's largest online stock broker (National Privacy Commission, 2017a), as well as the Uber global data breach in 2016, which had exposed as well the personal data of around 171,000 Filipino drivers and passengers that the company confirmed only the following

² Sec.4(c)1 of R.A. 10175 defines cybersex as "the willful engagement, maintenance or operation, directly or indirectly, of any lascivious exhibition of sexual organs or sexual activity, with the aid of a computer system, for favor or consideration".

year. Uber has claimed that the breach included only the registered names, e-mail addresses, and phone numbers of the affected users (National Privacy Commission, 2017b).

Outside the purview of digital policy, several other policies and laws in the country also play a role in developing an enabling environment for tech startups and local digital platforms. For instance, the Philippine Competition Act (Republic Act No. 10667) was enacted in 2014, promoting fair market competition and mandating the creation of the Philippine Competition Commission (PCC). The law prohibits anti-competitive practices such as bid-rigging, predatory pricing, tying and bundling by dominant players, unfair exercise of monopsony power, and anti-competitive mergers and acquisitions. One of the major cases reviewed by the PCC in 2018 was the acquisition of global ride-hailing firm Uber's Southeast Asia business, including its assets located in the Philippines, by Grab.

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The Consumer Act of the Philippines (Republic Act No. 7394) mandates implementing agencies to establish product quality and safety standards and provides for measures to protect the interest of consumers and promote general consumer welfare.

2.1.1 Labor

As the gig economy started taking root in the Philippine business scene, startups and regulators alike inevitably found themselves struggling with new labor arrangements that challenge the boundaries and classifications set by Philippine labor laws. For instance, after the much-publicized controversy over the legality of ride-sharing services Uber and GrabCar (now Grab) in 2015, the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) issued Memorandum Circular No. 2015-015 providing rules and regulations to govern the accreditation of transport network companies (TNCs). Although the issuance was primarily meant to address the issue of transport accreditation, the LTFRB Circular in effect explicitly classified TNC drivers as independent contractors, thereby exempting the TNCs themselves from liability in cases that are out of their control. The LTFRB borrowed the concept of TNCs and the resulting driver classification from the California Public Utilities Commission, which had previously dealt with a labor case concerning an Uber driver.³ Since then, more Uber drivers have filed similar lawsuits all over the United States, which have seen mixed results (Sheen, 2017). In some class action suits, Uber has resorted to paying up to \$100 million in settlements so that they could keep categorizing drivers as independent contractors (McCormick, 2016).

In the Philippines, independent contracting is allowed by law and usually referred to as "contracting," which is defined in the Labor Code as a situation in which an employer enters into a contract with another person for the performance of the employer's work. For an engagement to be qualified as permissible contracting, it must satisfy all of the following conditions, as required by DOLE Department Order No. 174 Series of 2017:

1. The contractor or subcontractor is engaged in a distinct and independent business and undertakes to perform the job or work on its own responsibility, according to its own manner and method;

³ In this particular case, the State Labor Commission ruled that Uber drivers are employees and not independent contractors. The ruling is for a claim for employee expense reimbursement by Barbara Ann Berwick, a former Uber driver.

2. The contractor or subcontractor has substantial capital to carry out the job farmed out by the principal on his account, manner and method, investment in the form of tools, equipment, machinery and supervision;
3. In performing the work farmed out, the contractor or subcontractor is free from the control and/or direction of the principal in all matters connected with the performance of the work except as to the result thereto; and
4. The Service Agreement ensures compliance with all the rights and benefits for all the employees of the contractor or subcontractor under the labor laws.

In contrast, the law defines “labor-only contracting” as arrangements in which the contractor only supplies workers to an employer and does not have substantial capital and investment in the form of tools, equipment, machineries, work premises, and others. Another essential requirement of labor-only contracting is that the workers placed by the contractor shall perform activities that are directly related to the employer’s principal business. This kind of contracting is prohibited by law.

The definition of contractors and subcontractors also distinguishes them from private recruitment and placement agencies (PRPA). Whereas subcontractors employ their own workers to perform the work farmed out by the employer, PRPAs merely recruits workers so that they may be employed by another employer. As such, independent contractors are required to undergo a different registration process from PRPAs. The rules on PRPAs, along with the rules on contracting, are two areas of regulation often applied to domestic work and recruitment. However, these rules have not been applied in the case of platforms.

2.1.2 Taxation

Until 2013, there were no explicit tax laws on electronic commerce in the Philippines. E-commerce activities such as online selling were subject to existing tax laws. The volume of e-commerce in the country remains small compared to other countries, but there is recognition by the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) that it has the potential to grow exponentially in the future (Patajo-Kapunan, 2015). In August 2013, the BIR issued Memorandum Circular 55-2013 identifying the tax obligations of online sellers, including the amount of taxes that an online retailer should pay. For local startups, however, a Startup Business bill was filed in Congress as early as 2014, seeking to grant tax exemptions to them during the first two years of their establishment. When it was re-filed in the 17th Congress as the Innovative Startup Act, more tax exemptions and benefits were added to encourage the establishment of more startups in the country.

Passed on third reading at the Senate, the proposed Innovative Startup Act (Senate Bill 1532 filed by Sen. Bam Aquino in August 2017) is for the development of an Innovative Startup Development program that aims to, among other objectives, support and promote the access of an innovative startup, as well as support the development and growth of enterprises whose products and services are integral to building an innovative startup ecosystem in the country.⁴

The proposed bill also sets up the Startup Venture Fund to cover initial grants in aid for innovative startups and support service providers. Under the bill, startups stand to benefit through (1) waived application fees; (2) Refund of fees for the permits and certificates; and (3) Expedited processing of permits and certificates.

In May 2018, the Ease of Doing Business and Efficient Government Service Delivery Act of 2018 was passed into law. The law covers business and non-business-related transactions from all government offices and agencies,

⁴ As of May 2019, the bill has lapsed.

including Local Government Units (LGUs), Government-Owned or Controlled Corporations (GOCCs) and other government instrumentalities, whether located in the Philippines or abroad.

The Revised Corporation Code of the Philippines (Republic Act No. 11232), passed in February 2019, introduced the one-person corporation as a new kind of corporation. Under the new law, solo entrepreneurs can form a corporation by themselves instead of needing a minimum of five incorporators as was required under the previous law. The Revised Corporation Code was passed with the aim of encouraging more entrepreneurs to set up businesses in the country and will likely benefit startups in particular, which are usually established by one person or by a small team.

2.2 The Philippine digital economy

In the midst of the policy developments cited in the previous section, the platform economy has found its way into the Philippines and has attracted many, especially young people – who may use apps to access services or to find jobs online. According to the 2017 Global Freelancer Insights Report released by PayPal, the top three most popular freelancing jobs among Filipinos were in the areas of data entry and internet research (34 percent), virtual assistant (13 percent), and customer service (8 percent). The employers of these freelancers are mostly based in the United States, Australia, the UK, or Canada. The report also revealed that most popular websites among freelancing Filipinos were upwork.com, freelancer.com and shutterstock.com (Fenol, 2018). Reported figures notwithstanding, there is still a dearth of academic research with regard to the gig economy in the country.

The Philippines boasts of a vibrant and continuously growing tech and digital startup community. However, compared to other countries, it may take longer to set up a business in the Philippines. A fast and reliable Internet is also one of the main requirements for tech-related startups, and compared to its ASEAN neighbors, Internet speed and affordability in the Philippines lags behind its neighbors. The dismal Internet quality and poor business climate in the country is compensated for by its young and tech savvy population, high English proficiency, and minimal business competition.

Technology startups in the Philippines have a long history. As early as 2000, the Ayala Foundation was providing mentorship to entrepreneurs. By 2011, Startup Weekends were already being organized in different parts of the country, including in Manila, Cebu, Bohol, and Davao. But the startup community is said to have become mainstream in 2012 when Kickstart, Wireless Wings, and IdeaSpace started funding a number of potential startups and entrepreneurs. Kickstart is a subsidiary of Globe Telecom, IdeaSpace is supported by Smart Communications, and Wireless Wings is funded by Novare Technologies, a wireless applications developer.

The Philippine Startup Report of 2013 stated that around 70 percent of local startups are bootstrapped, i.e., the founders relied on their personal resources.⁵ However, there were also support activities for startups in the form of competitions such as the Philippine Startup Challenge, which is organized by the DICT, as well as meet ups and hackathons like Startup Weekend, organized by the Techstars startup community.

Recent estimates on the number of tech startups in the country range from 100 (Lorenciana, 2017) to 547 (Galolo, 2017) to almost 900 (AngelList, n.d.). Some of the earliest local startups have grown into big companies, such as Sulit.com.ph (now OLX.ph), Netbooster, Xurpas, iRemit, and Morphlabs. Most of the platform-based startups that have successfully made a name for themselves are retail platforms that were acquired by bigger companies such as OLX.

⁵This is the same observation made by IdeaSpace during the interview conducted on August 8, 2018

Apart from local startups and platforms, major players in the global digital economy such as Uber and Airbnb have also expanded operations in the Philippines. Uber officially launched in the country in early 2014 and has been through a whirlwind of regulatory controversies ever since. As of March 2018, Uber is also operating in Cebu and Pampanga. At the time that this research was underway in March 2018, Uber had just announced that it will be transitioning its services in the Philippines and across Southeast Asia over to the Grab platform starting April 8, 2018.

Such tremendous growth and increasing significance of the startup environment has not gone unnoticed by policymakers, both at the national and regional levels. In 2015, the leaders of the 21-member economies of the APEC adopted what is now known as the Boracay Action Agenda to Globalize Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). The agenda was created to facilitate the participation of MSMEs in global trade, expand internationalization opportunities for such enterprises providing goods and services through ICT and e-commerce, and strengthen the focus on MSMEs led by women.

At the local level, the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) has championed the need for innovation in local trade and industry, and helps boost the development of MSMEs in the country. Together with the Department of Science and Technology (DOST), the DTI has been implementing measures to promote innovation while also creating a supportive innovation ecosystem, such as with the creation of the QBO Innovation Hub. QBO Innovation Hub is a public-private partnership between the DTI and IdeaSpace Foundation, the leading early-stage technology incubator and accelerator in the country. QBO was also launched with the support of the Department of Science and Technology and JP Morgan Foundation. Ideaspace is a non-profit foundation supported by companies such as First Pacific, Metro Pacific Investments Corporation, PLDT, Smart Communications, Meralco, Indofood, Philex Mining, Maynilad, MediaQuest, and TV5.

For its part, in 2015, the then ICT Office of the DOST came up with a Philippine Roadmap for Internet-related (Digital) Innovation. It is a collaborative strategic plan between the ICT Office and the Philippine startup community, covering the period 2015 to 2020. The goal of the initiative is to generate startups that will spur economic growth and find solutions for the pressing issues in the country.

In 2014, the ICT Office (now DICT) held the first Philippine Startup Challenge (PSC) in partnership with the Philippine Software Industry Association, Intel Philippines and the Philippine Society of IT Educators. The PSC is a competition for students to create socially relevant technologies that can be viable business ventures.

In 2016, the DTI came up with the E-commerce Roadmap 2016-2020 as a result of a series of meetings and consultations with stakeholders from the business, government, and public sectors in various regions

In 2016, the DTI came up with the E-commerce Roadmap 2016-2020 as a result of a series of meetings and consultations with stakeholders from the business, government, and public sectors in various regions. The primary goal of the Roadmap is for e-commerce to contribute to 25 percent of the GDP by 2020. As of July 2018, the DTI has stated that it is in the process of conducting a midterm assessment of the E-commerce Roadmap.

The DTI Startup Ecosystem Development Program (SEDP) is a five-point program developed with the aim of creating high-growth and high-impact startups that will nurture innovation, sustain economic growth and generate large-scale employment opportunities. The SEDP is divided into the following development areas:

- Action No. 1: Increase culture and collaboration
- Action No. 2: Address legal and regulatory barriers
- Action No. 3: Support through government services, capital, and resources
- Action No. 4: Create a national startup business council
- Action No. 5: Establish a Philippine startup economic zone

2.3 Care work and the on-demand platform economy

One area that has recently started to intersect with the Philippine platform ecosystem is domestic and care work. With rising incomes and consumption, the demand for care work and services has remained high in the Philippines, specifically for workers coming from rural areas. In a 2007 ILO report, Nicole Sayres cited the following reasons for the constant demand for provincial domestic workers in urban areas in the Philippines:

1. Workers in urban areas find employment in factories or industrial jobs, so are less inclined to work as house helpers,
2. Greater participation in the workforce among urban women, which results in a need for household help; and
3. The migration of urban domestic workers overseas, which leaves a gap in the local supply of domestic workers.

The January 2018 Labor Force Survey released by the Philippine Statistics Office reported that 5.7 percent of the total labor force (of about 41 million) is made up of those who work for private households. Of the total number, 81 percent are women.

Local domestic workers are protected by the *Batas Kasambahay* or the Domestic Workers Act (Republic Act No. 10361), which was enacted in 2013 to strengthen the respect, protection and promotion of rights of domestic workers in the country. The Act also provides for the terms and conditions of a domestic worker's employment (Article IV), including his/her rest period, extent of duty, minimum wage, and benefits, among others. The country is likewise a signatory to the ILO Convention 189 or the Decent Work for Domestic Workers Convention and has ratified the same in 2012.

Under the *Kasambahay Act*, a domestic worker or *kasambahay* is "any person engaged in domestic work within an employment relationship, such as but not limited to the following: general house help, nursemaid or "yaya", cook, gardener, or laundry person, but shall exclude any person who performs domestic work only occasionally or sporadically and not on an occupational basis", whereas an employer is defined as "any person who engages and controls the services of a domestic worker and is party to the employment contract."

These days, the execution of traditional work, including domestic work, can be channeled through and transacted with the use of digital applications (De Stefano, 2016). In the Philippines, the number of on-demand platforms that provide domestic and care work, such as those that offer cleaning services and babysitting arrangements, is growing, although it can still be considered negligible. The 2015 Philippine Roadmap for Digital Startups defined that internet startups and cleaning services provided through digital platforms would fall under disruptive services, under which popular platforms like Uber and Homejoy are also classified.

A case study on the platformization of care work in the Philippines will be released as a complementary report to this policy overview. The case study report will look into the different actors in the care work platform ecosystem,

including its gender and labor dimensions, and see how each of them fit into the work relationships within the online gig economy.

3. Conclusion

As demonstrated by the constantly evolving landscape of the digital economy, technologies -- particularly digital platforms -- have radically transformed the supply chain. It has changed the process by which the end product reaches the end customer, transformed traditional channels of transaction, and blurred the lines between producer and consumer. Manufacturers are using digital platforms for better collaboration and coordination between employees, customers, and suppliers, for more efficiency, and digital security. In the same manner, digital technology is radically transforming the future of work. The 2018 Microsoft study, mentioned in an earlier section, cites that digital transformation will bring about a potential increment to personal income through freelance and digital work, creation of more higher value jobs, and increased educational and training opportunities. The Philippine survey cited in the same Microsoft study shows that respondents feel that 92 percent of jobs will be transformed in the next three years, and 65 percent of the jobs in the current market will be redeployed to higher value roles or reskilled to meet the needs of the digital age (Microsoft Philippines, 2018).

The present research, through a forthcoming research report, hopes to analyze the extent by which platforms have restructured economic activities and social relationships, as well as the extent by which work and wage arrangements are reconfigured, including control of the whole employment set-up. Through this analysis, the study would seek to lay out pertinent policy recommendations that would hopefully address the gaps identified in this overview.

Considering that the platform economy in the Philippines is relatively new and constantly in flux, the limited legal and regulatory frameworks that are currently in place are unable to keep up. In particular, issues related to labor and gender are left unaddressed and unexplored. For instance, Philippine laws and regulations fail to account for the rising gig economy, including platform-dependent freelancers. However, it is imperative for digital policies to incorporate such issues so as to prevent discrimination and exclusion. There is also a need to harmonize and better delineate the respective roles of government bodies tasked to regulate digital platforms and startups, such as the DTI and the DICT. Finally, the changing ownership structures and relationships that are evident in local labor platforms are worth examining in light of the existing duopoly in the Internet and telecommunications market and the imminent entry of a third major telco player.

To develop policy frameworks that are economically and socially just, such policies must account for all the social, economic, and political dynamics at play in the emerging platform economy. This paper, as well as the upcoming case study, aims to uncover and understand said dynamics and present policy recommendations that would encourage openness and inclusion in the Philippine digital platform ecosystem.

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