

Research on Wotobuy and Platform Capitalism

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Abstract: The Web 3.0 era has made the use of digital e-platforms extremely popular, and people can access various digital platforms for online communication through mobile phones, computers and other devices. Nowadays, when material life is booming, the emergence of digital e-platforms has also led to great changes in people's consumption patterns. The platform capitalism arising from digital e-platforms has gradually taken a dominant position in the global economic market, and e-commerce-based platforms combined with social media platforms have created a new type of s-commerce. This article will use the research method of qualitative analysis, taking Wotobuy as an example, to introduce Wotobuy's platform characteristics and operation modes, and to explore and explain how platform capitalism affects consumer spending patterns, sectors of the economy, the labor market, the value creation process and social dynamics. The research finds that platform capitalism has changed the way consumers shop, but it has also raised significant concerns about power, privacy and the treatment of employees. In order to address these concerns, a balance must be found between innovation and regulation, and the development and intervention of relevant laws is necessary due to the growing influence of platforms.

Keywords: Wotobuy, social media, platform capitalism, e-commerce, s-commerce

1. Introduction

Platform capitalism has dominated the global economy in this time of rapid technology development and widespread digitalization. These platforms facilitate cross-border commerce and knowledge sharing by mediating between buyers and sellers. Wotobuy, a widely used online marketplace, illustrates the workings and consequences of platform capitalism. This report explores on the platform capitalism, analyzes the effect Wotobuy has had as a platform, and investigates the more significant ramifications of this trend. The recent explosive expansion of digital platforms has profoundly impacted many industries, from travel and hospitality to retail and the arts. Increases in internet availability, the popularity of mobile devices, and the general acceptance of digital tools in daily life have all contributed to the development of platform capitalism [1]. Wotobuy and similar platforms have changed how people shop forever by creating a global digital market that is easy to access anywhere.

Some of the defining characteristics of platform capitalism include the increased concentration of power in the hands of platform owners, the reshaping of labor markets, the redefining of value generation and capture, and the ramifications for society and culture of an increase in the prevalence of online communication. This paper uses Wotobuy as a case study to discuss how platform

capitalism affects various sectors of the economy, the labor market, the value creation process, and social dynamics.

2. The Platform in the Big Data Era

The present society has really proven the importance of data in supporting a number of activities. The current society is described as “Surveillance Society” because both the private sector and the government require data from various sources like the people for instance consumers and citizens in an effort to predict, observe or dictate the future service consumption behavior of the public or a certain group of individuals. Thus, it is unimaginable that people have to slowly adjust and accept the surveillance in their daily lives as they routinely monitored [2]. There is an acceptance from the general population of continuous monitoring and observation and preventing this from happening is a very hard phenomenon whether as a common citizen or in employment. However, monitoring is not a controller of the behaviors of the users. There are platforms which observe, collect data, classify the data and use it in predicting the future behavior. Their primary objective is not on the outcomes of the monitoring, but they use the data to make predictions of future trends and directions so that they can guide the users and help them in achieving the goals that they specifically desire to achieve. There is a predominance emergence of platforms as business models and the mainstream is seeing the impact and presence of platform capitalism in all the sectors [3]. Platforms are being considered as important defining characteristics of contemporary capitalism and many firms are looking to put their service models to be in form of platforms for instance Ford Motor Company has placed itself as platform for data in the field of telemetry in automation [4]. The main types of platforms in the aspect of platform capitalism include; lean, product, advertising, industrial and cloud which bring about benefits that are either data rents or monetary rents. The monetary rents are the ones that consumers pay so as to get certain resources for example Spotify subscriptions so as to listen to music whereas on the other hand the data rents are the user data that the platform gets fed which are for monitoring systematically the users data and used in the optimization of products and prediction of demand which helps platforms to efficiently and accurately improve the quality of products [5].

There are many unprecedented opportunities that are provided by big data mostly in innovation and economic growth. It is able to create new business models, products and services and the improvement of the efficacy of the public sector [6]. The aspect of big data analytics which refers to the deriving of information from large databases using data mining tools so that it can be used in the expansion of markets and generation of revenue. Due to the features of big data analytics, the strength of the capabilities of data analytics have become a factor which has widened the gap in businesses. There are firms which apply analytics in their products and service data which helps them to get more opportunities and share of the market compared to others which can result in them being referred to as analytical competitors and considered to be examples of private companies that apply data surveillance for the achievement of success in the market [7]. Thus, the technology of data surveillance is considered a contributor of the transformation of the society [8]. Data surveillance serves to achieve the goals of firms by monitoring the actions of users during a TV program presentation for example eating and this has been patented by Verizon, a US telecom company [9]. The behavioral information collected is used to understand the habits of the users and give audiences targeted advertisement and this is how data surveillance is used for improvement of sales [10].

3. How Wotobuy Utilize Big Data

This is a Chinese online shopping platform which reflects its slogan “Wotobuy, labelling my life” It is social commerce platform which takes the consumption and lifestyle behavior for establishment of relationships and promotion of services [11].

Consumption behavior cannot be separated from product, consumer and the platform used. Wotobuy interacts with the users and creates the scene with the three elements. Its users are many like influencers, ordinary users, key opinion leaders (KOLs) and celebrities and it serves a wide field that are able to provide a lot of information for making consumption decisions [13]. Wotobuy uses a culture of hashtags which are similar to keywords in content. Through tagging users can identify the areas of relevance and thus can be able to accumulate many followers in the field and develop KOLs [11]. The platform uses big data analytics for automatic filtering of data and matching the preference of the users and efficiently recommends products [14]. The big data calculates, operates and judges according to many dimensions like the users. The user behavior like retweeting is taken as user preference for a certain product. and with more interaction with a post user can get more content related to it [15]. The content that Wotobuy publishes is also a dimension which is on the basis of how popular a hashtag is and thus matches it to the preferred searches of the user for the decision on pushing frequency. The mechanism of recommendation is centered on the match and how frequent the hashtag is. While browsing through posts on Wotobuy one gets extended recommendations of reading which are as a result of big data analysis. For instance, a user wants to buy cosmetics and does a search on the platform, the big data will push products which may be relevant to the needs of the user basing on the search history or activity and thus the cosmetic product will be increasingly exposed and its sales may increase [15].

4. Wotobuy and Platform Capitalism

With the rise of platforms as efficient go-betweens for buyers and sellers, there are now more options for transnational commerce. Wotobuy perfectly illustrates how the platform economy functions and what changes it might bring about. In order to better understand "platform capitalism," we will analyze Wotobuy's role as a marketplace and evaluate the repercussions of this development more generally. The phrase "platform capitalism" describes a way of doing business in which digital platforms make it easier for people to share information, work together, and buy and sell goods and services [1]. These platforms act as middlemen, maximizing profits for those involved by capitalizing on synergies between participants and insights gleaned from collected data. A confluence of circumstances led to the rise of platform capitalism, including technical development, the spread of the internet, and an ever-increasing dependence on digital technology across all industries [16].

Online marketplaces like Wotobuy are great examples of platform economies. It facilitates trade and economic growth worldwide by connecting buyers and sellers. Wotobuy has changed the face of online shopping, drawing millions of users thanks to its intuitive design, a wide range of products, and reliable payment methods. By offering a convenient and user-friendly alternative to traditional stores, Wotobuy has shaken up the retail business. In a platform-capitalist economy, the platform owners own a monopoly on the means of production [17]. Wotobuy is a significant player in the s-commerce business because of its dominant position. This concentration of power raises concerns about unjust tactics, anticompetitive conduct, and the collapse of established market systems. Critics assert that platforms like Wotobuy may abuse their dominant market position by charging merchants exorbitant fees or favoring their products over those of competitors. Such actions could be detrimental to market competition and consumer liberty.

4.1. The Impact of Platform Capitalism on the Job Market

In addition, the advent of platform capitalism has substantially altered the job market. Wotobuy is supported predominantly by a network of independent merchants who advertise and sell their products on the website. This both facilitates and complicates the access of small businesses and entrepreneurs to international markets. Platform workers frequently endure hazardous working

conditions, a lack of benefits, and inconsistent pay [3]. The platform capitalist freelance economy may exacerbate existing inequalities and contribute to a more dispersed workforce [18]. Participating in the contracting economy made possible by websites like Wotobuy has advantages and disadvantages. It paves the way for individuals to become "micro-entrepreneurs" and choose their hours and working conditions. With the platform's large user base, they can profit from their skills and assets. On the other hand, it may diminish the bargaining power of employees, contribute to economic instability, and diminish benefits and social protections [19]. Moreover, algorithmic systems on the platform impose authority over the task by establishing its guidelines and standards.

4.2. The Impact of Platform Capitalism on the Value Production and Capture

Furthermore, platform capitalism has altered the dynamics of value production and capture. Production and distribution of physical goods were fundamental to conventional business practices. However, Wotobuy and similar platforms create value by accumulating and analyzing user data to facilitate more relevant advertising, improved product recommendations, and satisfied customers. Now, platform owners can profit from their data and ability to draw conclusions. This has prompted conversations regarding the morality of data-driven business strategies, as well as data privacy and ownership. Data is frequently described as the "oil" of the information economy. Marketplaces such as Wotobuy collect vast quantities of information about the behaviors, interests, and purchases of their customers. This information is evaluated and sold for financial gain. However, there are concerns regarding confidentiality and the prospect of misuse or unauthorized access. Users may need to be made aware of how much data is collected and utilized from them. Concerns about data ownership and how individuals can control their online identities have also been expressed. In the age of platform capitalism, it is crucial to balance data-driven innovation and individual privacy rights.

4.3. The Impact of Platform Capitalism on the Society and Culture

The effects of platform capitalism extend well beyond the realm of finance. Additionally, the dynamics of society and culture have been altered. Online marketplaces such as Wotobuy have revolutionized shopping and item interaction. The accessibility and convenience of e-commerce platforms have completely transformed the retail industry. With the convenience of online purchasing and door-to-door delivery, consumers can browse for and receive a vast selection of products without leaving their homes [17]. This trend has ramifications for traditional retailers, who have struggled to compete with online alternatives' convenience and reduced prices. However, concerns arise regarding the impact on local businesses, employment, and communities. Smaller, autonomous businesses need help to compete with global marketplaces such as Wotobuy. With these channels, it may be easier for modest businesses to attract many consumers online. Due to the concentration of power in the hands of a small number of platform proprietors, local economies may lose their diversity and vitality. In addition, the loss of brick-and-mortar retail locations may have a social and cultural impact on communities, as these locations frequently serve as centers of neighborhood life.

The algorithms that power platforms' personalized recommendations may also result in "filter bubbles" and "echo chambers," which isolate users from other points of view and may exacerbate existing societal divisions. Users may only see advertisements and recommendations for items and content that already appeal to them, limiting their worldview and preventing them from making accidental discoveries. Consequences for social dynamics, such as political polarization and the spread of disinformation, transcend the sphere of human choice.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, Wotobuy exemplifies the transformative potential and far-reaching effects digital platforms may have on economies worldwide. It is conceivable that the platform economy has altered how customers shop, but it has also raised significant concerns regarding power, privacy, and employee treatment. To address these issues, it is important to find a balance between innovation and regulation that allows platform capitalism to promote economic growth while preserving the rights of consumers, firms, and employees. Due to the increasing influence of platforms, it is necessary to examine the repercussions of their actions and create laws that will foster a digital economy that benefits everyone.

In addition, the article has some limitations. Wotobuy as a popular s-commerce platform in China, it has a large part of the economic market share of platform capitalism in China, but the impacts of platform capitalism explored by Wotobuy as an example may not include the impacts brought by platform capitalism in all western countries. Future research could start with how relevant laws could be enacted and a comparative study of platform capitalism markets in Western countries in the context of this article.

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