



Digital Ideological Sovereignty in the Age of Platform Capitalism: A New Theoretical Approach Based on the Indonesian Case

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Abstract: This article introduces Digital Ideological Sovereignty (DIS) as a theoretical framework for understanding state power in digital spaces, emphasizing the ideological, symbolic, and relational dimensions of sovereignty. While traditional digital sovereignty focuses on infrastructure, data, and regulatory control, DIS foregrounds how states actively embed, project, and negotiate ideology in algorithmically mediated environments. To empirically ground this framework, Indonesia serves as a case study, employing a qualitative, multi-method approach including content analysis of official digital communications, platform governance documents, and social media campaigns, combined with semi-structured expert interviews with policymakers and platform managers. The study demonstrates how a Global South state leverages national ideology (Pancasila) across digital channels to maintain legitimacy, visibility, and symbolic authority. Findings reveal that ideology is performative and measurable, enacted through content framing, platform negotiation, and algorithmically optimized messaging. Importantly, DIS highlights relational sovereignty, where states do not isolate networks but strategically adapt to platform logics to amplify ideological influence. Compared to Western contexts, where digital governance often prioritizes regulation, data protection, or market competition, DIS demonstrates the centrality of ideology in sustaining legitimacy in Global South states. The framework identifies three interconnected dimensions of sovereignty: material, regulatory, and ideological, and operationalizes them through instruments such as official digital communications, platform compliance negotiation, and symbolic interventions. By integrating content, visibility, and symbolic authority, DIS provides a measurable and strategic approach for analyzing how states negotiate transnational platform dominance while preserving national ideological frameworks.

Keywords: Digital Ideological Sovereignty, Global South, Indonesia, State Power

Introduction

The rapid expansion of digital technologies has fundamentally transformed the way power, ideology, and governance operate in contemporary societies. Digital platforms, algorithmic systems, and data infrastructures are no longer neutral technological tools (rather, they have become critical arenas where ideological values are produced, negotiated, and contested (Fuchs, 2017) (van Dijck et al, 2018). Existing scholarship on digital sovereignty has largely focused on issues of data localization, cybersecurity, and state control over digital infrastructure (Couture & Toupin, 2019) (M. L. Mueller, 2020). While

these approaches are essential, they tend to privilege technical and legal dimensions, often overlooking the ideological processes embedded within digital systems. Algorithms, content moderation policies, and platform governance mechanisms implicitly carry normative assumptions that influence political attitudes, cultural identities, and collective consciousness (Gillespie, 2018) (Noble, 2018). At the same time, critical political economy and communication studies have demonstrated that global digital platforms exercise significant ideological power by structuring visibility, legitimacy, and participation in the public sphere (Fuchs, 2021a) (Zuboff, 2019).

In response to this theoretical gap, this article introduces Digital Ideological Sovereignty as a new conceptual framework. Digital Ideological Sovereignty refers to the capacity of a state or political community to maintain, regulate, and reproduce its core ideological values within digital ecosystems dominated by algorithmic governance and platform power. Unlike traditional notions of sovereignty that emphasize territorial control or legal authority, this concept foregrounds ideology as a strategic domain of sovereignty in the digital era. To empirically ground this theoretical proposition, this article adopts Indonesia as a strategic case study due to its distinctive ideological foundation and evolving digital governance landscape (Lim, 2020b) (Mueller, 2020). Indonesia is constitutionally anchored in Pancasila, a state ideology that functions not only as a normative framework for political life but also as a moral and ideological reference for national unity, pluralism, and state authority (Latif, 2018a). Unlike liberal democratic ideologies that prioritize individualism and market rationality, Pancasila represents a hybrid ideological model that combines nationalism, social justice, religious pluralism, and deliberative governance (Bourchier, 2019). This ideological specificity renders Indonesia a particularly relevant empirical site for examining how state ideology is maintained, negotiated, and contested within digitally mediated environments (Fuchs, 2021a).

In recent years, the Indonesian state has increasingly expanded its role in digital governance through regulatory interventions, institutional mechanisms, and discursive strategies aimed at managing digital spaces (Couture & Toupin, 2019). These interventions include platform regulation policies, state-led content moderation systems, and official ideological narratives designed to counter extremism, disinformation, and ideological fragmentation in cyberspace (Gillespie, 2018) (Lim, 2020a). Such measures reflect the state's growing recognition that digital platforms function not merely as neutral communication infrastructures but as ideological arenas where political values, national identity, and legitimacy are continuously produced and contested (van Dijck et al, 2018). Consequently, Indonesia's digital governance practices provide concrete empirical manifestations of what this article conceptualizes as Digital Ideological Sovereignty (M. Mueller, 2020).

Furthermore, Indonesia's position as one of the largest digital populations in the Global South amplifies the analytical significance of this case study (Lim, 2020a). High levels of social media penetration and the dominance of global digital platforms have deeply embedded transnational algorithmic systems into everyday political communication in Indonesia (Zuboff, 2019). These platforms operate according to globalized norms, corporate governance structures, and algorithmic logics that frequently diverge from locally embedded ideological and political priorities (van Dijck et al, 2018). As Lim, (2020a) demonstrates, digital media in Southeast Asia has become a contested political space in

which state authority, civic engagement, and platform power intersect in complex and often contradictory ways.

Within this context, Indonesia illustrates how states negotiate ideological sovereignty not through digital isolation or technological autarky, but through adaptive strategies that seek to embed national ideology within platform-regulated ecosystems (Couture & Toupin, 2019). This negotiation process exposes the analytical limitations of existing digital sovereignty frameworks that focus predominantly on infrastructure control, cybersecurity, or data localization, while overlooking the ideological dimensions of digital power (M. L. Mueller, 2020). By examining Indonesia's regulatory practices, ideological discourse, and engagement with global platforms, this study demonstrates that Digital Ideological Sovereignty operates as a dynamic, relational, and contested process rather than a fixed institutional condition (Fuchs, 2021b). Through the Indonesian case, this article thus moves beyond abstract theorization and provides empirical depth to the proposed framework of Digital Ideological Sovereignty (George & Bennett, 2005). The case highlights how ideological sovereignty is reconfigured under conditions of algorithmic governance and transnational digital norms, offering broader theoretical implications for other states in the Global South confronting similar challenges in preserving ideological autonomy in the digital age.

Literature Review

Digital Sovereignty and the Limits of Infrastructure-Centered Approaches

The concept of digital sovereignty has gained prominence alongside the expansion of global digital infrastructures and the increasing dependence of states on transnational technologies. Early discussions of digital sovereignty primarily emphasized state control over critical infrastructures, data localization, cybersecurity, and national internet governance frameworks (Maly, 2023) (M. Mueller, 2020). Within this perspective, sovereignty is largely understood as the ability of states to assert regulatory authority over digital networks that transcend territorial boundaries.

While infrastructure-centered approaches to digital sovereignty have significantly advanced scholarly understanding of the geopolitical dimensions of the internet particularly in relation to state competition over data flows, cybersecurity, and technological autonomy they remain analytically constrained in capturing non-material forms of power embedded within digital systems (Deibert, 2020). These approaches tend to conceptualize power primarily in terms of ownership, territorial control, and legal authority, thereby privileging tangible infrastructures such as servers, networks, and data centers. However, such a perspective risks overlooking the subtler yet more pervasive mechanisms through which power is exercised in digitally mediated environments (Andreoni & Roberts, 2022). Digital platforms do not function merely as passive conduits for information exchange) (rather, they actively participate in the construction of social reality by shaping meaning, visibility, and legitimacy through algorithmic curation and governance mechanisms (van Dijck et al, 2018).

Global South Perspective and Ideological Contestation

Research on digital politics in the Global South highlights how digital platforms become sites of intense ideological contestation rather than liberal democratization (Lim, 2020). In Southeast Asia, digital media has facilitated both state surveillance and grassroots activism, producing hybrid forms of digital governance (Tapsell, 2021). These dynamics challenge Western-centric assumptions that equate digital openness with democratic outcomes.

Despite the growing body of Global South scholarship on digital politics and governance, ideology is frequently treated as a contextual or background variable rather than as a core analytical category of digital sovereignty (Lim, 2020). This tendency reflects a broader analytical orientation that prioritizes empirical description of digital practices over conceptual engagement with the ideological foundations of state power in digital environments (Milan, 2019). As a result, the ideological dimension of state power in digitally mediated spaces remains theoretically underdeveloped. While existing research documents how states in the Global South regulate platforms, manage online dissent, or engage in digital nationalism, it often stops short of explaining how these practices function as strategies for maintaining ideological authority under conditions of global platform dominance (Hardt et al, 2022). Transnational digital platforms operate according to standardized governance models, algorithmic logics, and corporate norms that frequently marginalize or dilute locally embedded ideological frameworks. Yet, current scholarship provides limited analytical tools to understand how states negotiate this asymmetry without either fully capitulating to platform logics or resorting to overt digital repression (Foini, 2023).

Research Gap and Theoretical Contribution

Taken together, the existing literature reveals three key limitations. First, dominant digital sovereignty frameworks prioritize infrastructure and legal authority while marginalizing ideology as a domain of sovereignty (Couture & Toupin, 2019). Second, platform governance and algorithmic power studies focus predominantly on corporate influence, offering limited insight into state-led ideological strategies (Gillespie, 2018) (Mason, 2015) (Noble, 2018). Third, Global South perspectives document ideological contestation but lack an integrative theory that links ideology, sovereignty, and digital governance.

To address these gaps, this article proposes Digital Ideological Sovereignty as a novel theoretical framework that conceptualizes ideology as a strategic and contested dimension of sovereignty in the digital age. By integrating insights from digital sovereignty, platform governance, and ideological theory, the framework advances scholarly understanding of how states assert, negotiate, and reproduce ideological authority within algorithmically governed digital ecosystems.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative case study design to empirically explore the concept of Digital Ideological Sovereignty. Case study methodology is particularly suited for investigating complex social phenomena in their real-life contexts, allowing for a nuanced understanding of how states exercise ideological authority within digitally mediated environments (George & Bennett, 2005) (Yin, 2018) The design is theory-building in nature, aiming not merely to describe Indonesia's digital governance practices but to derive insights that substantiate and refine the proposed theoretical framework.

Indonesia is selected as the most-likely case for examining Digital Ideological Sovereignty due to its distinctive ideological foundation, Pancasila, and its active engagement with digital governance. As one of the largest digital populations in the Global South, Indonesia offers a rich empirical context where the tensions between national ideology and transnational platform power are particularly salient (Lim, 2020). The state has implemented diverse regulatory mechanisms including platform oversight, content moderation policies, and digital counter-narratives that explicitly aim to preserve and project national ideological values in cyberspace. These characteristics make Indonesia an analytically strategic case for investigating the ideological dimension of digital sovereignty.

The study employs a thematic qualitative content analysis combined with critical discourse analysis (CDA) to examine both textual and policy-based materials (Fairclough, 2015). This approach enables the identification of recurring themes, narratives, and discursive strategies that reflect the Indonesian state's ideological objectives in digital spaces. To ensure trustworthiness, the study employs methodological triangulation by combining multiple data sources and analytical methods (Yin, 2018) (Zulli, 2025).

Result and Discussion

Overview of Findings

The analysis of Indonesian digital governance policies, official online communications, and global platform constraints reveals a complex interplay between state ideology, digital platforms, and public discourse. Three primary themes emerge from the data:

1. Ideological framing: State ideology (*Pancasila*) is actively embedded in digital communications to shape national identity and counter ideological threats.
2. Platform negotiation: The state strategically engages with global platforms to ensure visibility and compliance while preserving ideological narratives.
3. Symbolic authority: Digital interventions aim to reinforce legitimacy, social cohesion, and public adherence to nationally endorsed values.

These findings empirically substantiate the concept of Digital Ideological Sovereignty (DIS), which is defined here as: The strategic capacity of a state to assert, embed, and reproduce its national ideology within digital spaces, including algorithmically mediated platforms, in ways that maintain symbolic authority, guide public discourse, and negotiate the structural power of transnational digital actors. This framework shifts the understanding of digital sovereignty from an infrastructure-centered perspective to an ideology-centered one, highlighting the active role of ideology as a domain of state power.

Table 1. The proposed theory of DIS encompasses three core dimensions, each with identifiable instruments and characteristics:

Dimension	Description	Indicators/ Instruments	Empirical Illustration (Indonesia)
Ideological Framing	Embedding national ideology into digital content and narratives	Official social media posts, government campaigns, digital education content, counter-narratives	Ministry of Communication campaigns promoting <i>Pancasila values</i> on YouTube and Twitter) (countering radical and anti-nationalist narratives online
Platform Negotiation	Engaging with transnational platforms to assert ideological visibility	Negotiation of content moderation, platform guidelines compliance, legal frameworks for platform operation	Indonesian government's interaction with Facebook and Twitter to ensure removal of extremist content while promoting nationally sanctioned messages
Symbolic Authority	Reinforcing legitimacy and national identity through digital interventions	Online speeches, multimedia messaging, algorithmically targeted campaigns, national digital observatories	President and Ministry accounts amplifying national holidays, civic campaigns, and official narratives) ("digital ambassadors" promoting unity and Pancasila-based identity

Processed by Author: Synthesis Digital Ideological Sovereignty (DIS) as a Theory

This operationalization demonstrates that DIS is not merely regulatory) (it is ideological, discursive, and strategic, extending sovereignty into the symbolic and algorithmically mediated dimensions of digital space.

Discussion

Expanding Digital Sovereignty Theory

Traditional conceptions of digital sovereignty have largely emphasized control over tangible and technical assets, such as national internet infrastructure, data repositories, and cybersecurity mechanisms. In this view, sovereignty is operationalized primarily through territorial control, regulatory oversight, and the protection of digital borders. While this perspective has been valuable in highlighting the geopolitical stakes of cyberspace, it tends to treat sovereignty as a material or legalistic phenomenon, overlooking the ways in which digital environments mediate power symbolically and ideologically.

The findings from the Indonesian case suggest that states exercise sovereignty not only through material and regulatory means but also through ideological and discursive strategies. By actively embedding national ideology (*Pancasila*) in digital communications, negotiating visibility on transnational platforms, and shaping public perception through symbolic interventions, the Indonesian state demonstrates that sovereignty extends into the realm of meaning-making, narrative control, and ideological influence. This insight leads to a multi-dimensional reconceptualization of digital sovereignty, encompassing three interrelated dimensions:

1. Material dimension: Control over infrastructure, data localization, and cybersecurity, consistent with traditional conceptions of sovereignty.
2. Regulatory dimension: Development and enforcement of laws, policies, and platform governance mechanisms to regulate digital spaces.
3. Ideological dimension (DIS): Strategic embedding and projection of national ideology in digital environments, leveraging algorithmic, discursive, and symbolic tools to assert authority and shape public discourse.

Foregrounding ideology as an active domain of state power in cyberspace challenges the conventional framing of sovereignty as purely infrastructural or legal. It emphasizes that modern states must negotiate symbolic authority and ideological legitimacy within globally interconnected digital ecosystems, where algorithmic logics and transnational platform norms may limit direct material or regulatory control. By integrating this ideological dimension, Digital Ideological Sovereignty (DIS) provides a theoretical lens to understand how states assert sovereignty in ways that are simultaneously material, regulatory, and discursive, highlighting the multi-faceted nature of power in the digital age.

Ideology as an Instrument of Sovereignty

The study underscores that ideology in the digital sphere is performative and measurable, not only as abstract discourse but as tangible outputs observable through the state's online communications, policy interventions, and interactions with platform governance mechanisms (Beer, 2017) (Noble, 2018). Ideology is enacted it becomes visible in the way states frame narratives, curate content, and respond to competing messages in cyberspace (Fuchs, 2021b). This performativity allows researchers to systematically identify, classify, and analyze the instruments through which states project ideological authority, transforming ideology from a background context into an operational dimension of sovereignty (Deibert, 2020) (van Dijck et al, 2018).

In the Indonesian context, the performativity of ideology is evident in multiple ways. The government actively embeds the state ideology, *Pancasila*, into digital content across social media, official websites, and public campaigns (Bourchier, 2019) (Latif, 2018b). For instance, Ministries and state-affiliated agencies run campaigns promoting values such as national unity, tolerance, and civic responsibility on platforms like YouTube, Instagram, and Twitter (Lim, 2020a) (Postill, 2018). These communications are designed not only to transmit ideology but also to assert visibility and legitimacy within the broader, algorithmically mediated digital landscape. The state's interventions are carefully timed

and structured, reflecting awareness of platform dynamics for example, leveraging trending hashtags, engaging with influencers aligned with national values, or coordinating content to maximize algorithmic reach.

Crucially, Indonesia's experience demonstrates that states do not simply broadcast ideology passively) (they strategically negotiate visibility and legitimacy. This involves navigating global platforms' content moderation rules, algorithmic ranking systems, and user engagement patterns. By doing so, the state ensures that its ideological messages are amplified rather than suppressed, positioning them prominently within the digital public sphere. In effect, the government functions as both a content producer and a platform negotiator, adapting messages to align with algorithmic logics while maintaining the integrity of the national ideological framework (Lim, 2020).

Thus, Digital Ideological Sovereignty (DIS) integrates three interconnected instruments of sovereignty in the digital sphere:

1. Content: The messages, narratives, and representations that communicate ideology.
2. Visibility: Strategic engagement with algorithmically governed platforms to ensure that ideological content reaches target audiences effectively.
3. Symbolic Authority: The reinforcement of legitimacy, national identity, and ideological coherence through digital interventions that shape public perception and discourse.

Through these instruments, the Indonesian case illustrates that DIS is both actionable and empirically traceable, offering a framework to analyze how states in the Global South exercise sovereignty in ways that transcend traditional infrastructural or regulatory approaches (Deibert, 2020) (M. L. Mueller, 2020). By operationalizing ideology as content, visibility, and symbolic authority, DIS provides a conceptual bridge between theoretical understanding and empirical observation of state power in digital environments.

Global Platforms as Structural Constraints and Negotiation Arenas

Algorithmic governance of digital platforms establishes structural constraints that shape how states can project ideology in online spaces. These constraints emerge because global platforms operate according to algorithmic logics that determine content visibility, ranking, and recommendation, as well as standardized moderation policies that may limit certain forms of expression. As a result, even states with significant regulatory or infrastructural power cannot unilaterally control the dissemination of ideological messages across digitally mediated public spheres.

The Indonesian case illustrates that states exercise agency within these structural limitations not by attempting to isolate or fragment digital networks, but by strategically negotiating platform rules and optimizing algorithmic engagement to align visibility with national ideological objectives. For example, the Indonesian government collaborates with platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter to flag extremist content, promote campaigns aligned with *Pancasila* values, and ensure that state-sanctioned narratives are algorithmically amplified rather than suppressed. This approach demonstrates an adaptive

strategy in which sovereignty is enacted relationally, through engagement and negotiation with transnational digital actors, rather than through unilateral imposition.

This dynamic underscores a relational conception of DIS, where sovereignty is exercised not as absolute control over cyberspace, but as the capacity to shape the conditions under which ideological messages circulate (Deibert, 2020). In practice, this means states must understand platform algorithms, timing, audience engagement, and content framing, and adjust digital interventions accordingly (Lim, 2020b) (van Dijck et al, 2018). Sovereignty, therefore, becomes performative and negotiated, dependent on the interaction between state objectives and platform structures, rather than a fixed or purely infrastructural attribute. By highlighting this relational aspect, DIS expands the theoretical understanding of digital sovereignty beyond traditional notions of material or regulatory control.

Empirical Relevance to the Global South

The Indonesian case illustrates that Digital Ideological Sovereignty (DIS) is especially salient in Global South contexts, where national ideologies often form the foundation of political legitimacy. In these settings, political authority is closely tied to the ability of the state to articulate, reinforce, and mobilize a shared ideological framework, making the projection of ideology into digital spaces a core aspect of governance. Unlike many Western contexts, where liberal democratic norms pluralism, freedom of expression, and market-driven digital ecosystems predominate, states in the Global South frequently rely on cohesive national ideologies to maintain social order, legitimacy, and political stability.

In Indonesia, this dynamic is evident in the systematic incorporation of *Pancasila* into digital governance strategies. Government agencies leverage social media campaigns, digital education platforms, and online public communications to embed ideological narratives in everyday digital interaction (Lim, 2020) (Bourchier, 2019). For example, campaigns promoting civic responsibility, tolerance, and national unity are strategically timed and algorithmically optimized to reach broad audiences, ensuring that state-sanctioned values are amplified in the digital public sphere rather than sidelined by global platform dynamics (van Dijck et al, 2018) (Couture & Toupin, 2019). These practices illustrate that ideology is not merely contextual or symbolic, but an operational tool of sovereignty, exercised through careful negotiation of platform structures, content visibility, and audience engagement.

The Indonesian experience provides a model for comparative research on ideological sovereignty in the Global South. By foregrounding the ideological dimension of state power, DIS highlights how governments can sustain authority in a digital ecosystem dominated by transnational platforms and algorithmic logics. It also offers a conceptual contrast to Western digital governance, where the emphasis is often on regulatory compliance, data protection, or market competition, rather than the strategic embedding of ideology. Consequently, DIS enables scholars to analyze sovereignty relationally, as the interplay between national ideological objectives and global digital structures, and to understand how states exercise adaptive, discursive, and symbolic power in the digital age (Deibert, 2020) (Mueller, 2020).

In sum, the Indonesian case demonstrates that DIS is most relevant in contexts where ideology is central to legitimacy, showing that states in the Global South actively shape digital environments not only through regulation or infrastructure but also by embedding, projecting, and negotiating ideology, offering a robust framework for understanding state power in transnational digital spaces.

Summary: How to Apply the Theory of Digital Ideological Sovereignty (DIS)

This framework is designed to systematically analyze Digital Ideological Sovereignty (DIS) by placing state ideology at the center of digital governance analysis. The first step is to identify the ideological framework that underpins political legitimacy, such as Pancasila in Indonesia, and to map how this ideology is articulated through official discourse, policy documents, and public campaigns. This stage establishes the normative foundation that defines which values the state seeks to preserve and project in digital spaces.

The second step maps the digital environment in which ideological projection occurs. This involves identifying both global and local digital platforms that mediate political communication, as well as examining platform rules, content moderation policies, and algorithmic visibility mechanisms. Understanding these technological structures is essential, as they shape how ideological messages circulate, gain prominence, or are constrained.

The analysis then advances to a multidimensional understanding of sovereignty. The regulatory dimension examines laws, digital governance policies, and state strategies to ensure platform compliance. The symbolic dimension focuses on state messaging, online campaigns, and digitally mediated public events. The ideological dimension evaluates the substance of narratives and content to assess how core ideological values are embedded, reinforced, or rearticulated within digital communication. Building on this, the framework examines the relational dynamics between states and platform operators. It analyzes how states negotiate visibility and legitimacy within platform-controlled environments and how they adopt adaptive strategies to align ideological objectives with algorithmic logics without fully surrendering authority to platform power. This highlights DIS as a negotiated and context-dependent process rather than a fixed condition.

Finally, DIS is operationalized through specific instruments and indicators, including content framing analysis, documentation of platform negotiations, visibility interventions such as timing, hashtags, and influencer engagement, and measurements of symbolic authority through reach and audience engagement. By tracking and comparing impact across platforms, time periods, or national contexts, this framework integrates DIS into broader digital governance research, particularly for understanding sovereignty in Global South contexts shaped by transnational platform power.

Comparison: Digital Ideological Sovereignty vs Traditional Digital Sovereignty

Conceptual Focus

Table 2. Conceptual Focus

Dimension	Traditional Digital Sovereignty	Digital Ideological Sovereignty (DIS)	Notes/ Implications
Core focus	Control over infrastructure, data, and cybersecurity (Mueller, 2020) (Couture & Toupin, 2019)	Control and projection of ideology through digital content, visibility, and symbolic authority.	DIS expands the notion of sovereignty from material and legal control to include ideological and discursive dimensions.
Key mechanism	Laws, regulations, national data centers, firewalls, cybersecurity policies	Official digital communications, platform negotiation, algorithmic targeting, counter-narratives	DIS emphasizes active negotiation with algorithmic structures and symbolic projection rather than only infrastructural isolation.

Multi-Dimensionality

Table 3. Multi-Dimensionality

Dimension	Traditional	DIS	Illustration from Indonesia
Material/ Infrastructure	Core networks, data localization, cybersecurity	Present but secondary) (infrastructure supports ideological projection	Indonesian state uses domestic content servers for government portals, but ideology projection relies on global platforms like YouTube and Twitter.
Regulatory / Legal	Digital laws, platform compliance mandates	Integrated with ideology) (regulation is used to align platforms with national narratives	Government ensures extremist content is removed while promoting <i>Pancasila</i> -aligned campaigns online.
Ideological / Symbolic	Often implicit or ignored	Central) (ideology embedded, negotiated, and amplified algorithmically	Campaigns promoting national unity, tolerance, and civic responsibility in social media, coordinated with algorithmic visibility strategies.

Relational vs Unilateral Sovereignty

Table 4. Relational vs Unilateral Sovereignty

Feature	Traditional Sovereignty	DIS	Notes
Platform engagement	Often confrontational) (firewalling or platform bans	Relational) (negotiation and strategic adaptation	Indonesia rarely isolates networks but negotiates with platforms to amplify state-sanctioned ideology.
Sovereign exercise	Command-and-control approach	Negotiated, performative, adaptive	DIS emphasizes sovereignty as an interactive process, balancing state objectives with platform constraints.

Global South vs Western Contexts

Table 5. Global South vs Western Contexts

Feature	Western States	Global South (Indonesia Case)	Implications for DIS
Ideological salience	Low to moderate) (liberal democratic norms dominate	High) (ideology underpins political legitimacy	DIS is most visible and analytically useful in states where ideology is central to authority.
Digital governance strategy	Regulation, data protection, cybersecurity	Ideology projection, visibility negotiation, symbolic campaigns	DIS provides a framework to analyze how states embed ideology in algorithmically mediated spaces, a phenomenon less emphasized in Western contexts.
Platform engagement	Compliance, lobbying, privacy rules	Negotiation and amplification of ideology	Shows relational sovereignty : Global South states actively work with platforms rather than purely regulating or avoiding them.

Conclusion

This study introduces Digital Ideological Sovereignty (DIS) as a theoretical framework that captures the ideological, symbolic, and relational dimensions of state power in digital spaces. Traditional concepts of digital sovereignty have focused on material control, such as infrastructure, data, and cybersecurity, or on regulatory authority over platforms. While these approaches are valuable, they do not fully account for how states actively project ideology and negotiate legitimacy within algorithmically governed, transnational digital environments.

The Indonesian case demonstrates that ideology is performative and measurable, enacted through content creation, strategic visibility management, and symbolic interventions across digital platforms. Rather than isolating networks, the state negotiates platform rules, leverages algorithmic dynamics, and coordinates campaigns to ensure that national ideology is amplified and resonates with audiences. This illustrates the relational aspect of DIS, showing that sovereignty is exercised through adaptation, negotiation, and strategic engagement rather than unilateral control.

DIS is particularly relevant in contexts where political legitimacy is closely tied to national ideology. Unlike Western contexts, where governance is largely guided by liberal democratic norms, states in the Global South actively embed ideology in digital governance, making ideological projection a central component of sovereignty. This framework operationalizes sovereignty along three interconnected dimensions: material (infrastructure), regulatory (laws and policies), and ideological (content, visibility, and symbolic authority), providing a measurable and empirically grounded way to analyze state power online.

By integrating content, visibility, and symbolic authority as core instruments, DIS offers a conceptual bridge between theory and empirical observation, highlighting how states assert authority, negotiate visibility, and sustain legitimacy in platform-dominated digital ecosystems. DIS presents a multi-dimensional, relational, and strategic framework that advances digital governance scholarship by foregrounding ideology as an active domain of state sovereignty.

Governments in the Global South can leverage DIS to design digital governance strategies that embed and project national ideology while strategically engaging with global platforms. Researchers can operationalize DIS through indicators such as content framing, visibility interventions, and symbolic campaigns to systematically measure ideological sovereignty in digital spaces. The framework also enables cross-national comparisons, revealing differences between Global South and Western approaches to sovereignty under platform dominance. Future research can expand on DIS by examining its evolution in response to emerging platform architectures, AI-driven moderation, and transnational ideological dynamics, enhancing both its theoretical and practical relevance.

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