

Platform Power and the Geopolitical Order: Greece 2.0 as a Tech Colony

Charis Papaevangelou (University of Toulouse)

Eugenia Siapera (University College Dublin)

Platform Governance Research Network
Conference 2023

4 April 2023

1. Introduction

RQ: What can we learn from Big Tech investments in Greece about platform power?

2. Theoretical Framework

Platform Power

- **Infiltrates** state & political power
- **Creates** dependencies
- **Imposes** platform logics
- **Becomes embedded** in governance & the social fabric

Data Colonialism

- **Frames** platform power as a form of colonialism
- **Highlights** the data extractivist practices
- **Combines** colonialism, capitalism & neoliberalism

Geopolitical & Economic Order

- **Emphasises** the political economy of platforms' infrastructural investments
- **Enquires** into broader power structures & relationships between countries
- **Sheds light on** the underlying dependencies of periphery on core/Western countries

3. Case Study: Greece 2.0 & Big Tech

Research Context

- Greece's long & complex history of colonisation and dependency on core Western countries
- Greece's financial collapse & severe austerity measures between 2009-2018
- Neoliberal governmental policies & digitisation of the state
- Covid-19, NextGenerationEU & Greece 2.0

Methods

- Discourse analysis of government & tech companies' communication material
- Document analysis of legal & policy texts

Case Study

- Greece's National Recovery and Resilience Plan: Greece 2.0
- Microsoft's GR for Growth Project (2020)
- Amazon Web Services (AWS) Pilot Project: Turning Naxos into a Smart Island

3. Case Study: Greece 2.0 & Big Tech

Greece 2.0

- €30.5 billion in grants & loans from the NextGenerationEU recovery package
 - €1.3 billion for the digital transformation of the public sector
 - €300 million for the digitalisation of SMEs
 - €500 million for the digital transformation of the education and health system
 - €750 million for digital upskilling

Microsoft GR For Growth

- 3 data centres in Attiki, Greece by 2025
 - Qualified for the privileged 'Strategic Investment' legal framework
 - €976 million investment, 300 new jobs in 10 years
- Cloud services, legal advices & Microsoft products for businesses & the public sector
- Digital literacy programs for 100,000 employees
- AI for Cultural Heritage: Ancient Olympia

AWS: Naxos Smart Island

- Designed by a consortium of 20 Greek & int'l companies, and supported by the Greek govt, local authorities & the US embassy
 - Cloud-powered services for health, tourism, transportation, resource management
 - Digital literacy
- Follows a series of agreements:
 - MoU with Min. of Digital Governance in 2020 for the "Digital Transformation of Greece"
 - MoU with Min. of Development for a "Regional Space Hub" in 2021
 - Awarded 2 contracts to support Greece's Covid-19 cloud services in 2020, 2021
 - AWS Local Zone in Greece (€200 million)
 - Opened offices in Athens in 2021 / Launched other cloud services

4. Preliminary Findings

Dependencies

- Economic
- Infrastructural
- Governmental
- Geopolitical
- Lock-in effects

Transformation

- Greece is framed as a technological laggard & in deficit compared to core EU/Western countries
- Foreign investments – primarily US capital – are presented as the solution (creation of jobs, upskilling, connection to the “information highways” of powerful economies)
- Regulatory facilitations (e.g., fast-track processes)

Colonialism

- Extractivist practices from core socioeconomic & health-related exchanges of individuals
- Occupation of territories and space
- Deterioration of environment & local landscapes
- Strengthening of neoliberal governance (governance *through* platforms)
- Appropriation of public resources & funds

Works Cited

THANK YOU!

Charis Papaevangelou (University of Toulouse) - @charispapaev /
charilaos.Papaevangelou@univ-tlse3.fr

Eugenia Siapera (University College Dublin) - @eugeniasiapera /
eugenia.siapera@ucd.ie

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