



Deconstructing Methodological Platformism in South Asian Hybrid Communication in Public Participation

Chair Amin*

Universitas Mercu Buana, Jakarta, Indonesia
Email: Khairamin75@gmail.com

Nur Kholisoh

Universitas Mercu Buana, Jakarta, Indonesia

Leila Mona Ganiem

Universitas Mercu Buana, Jakarta, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

This systematic review critically examines methodological platformism within South Asian hybrid communication ecosystems, challenging the assumption that digital visibility equates to authentic participation. A comprehensive search of Scopus (2022–2026) identified 559 records, and following dual-blind screening, 161 studies were selected. The results demonstrate that digital affordances are subordinate to offline vernacular kinship networks. Low-friction algorithms function as secondary conduits and are frequently replaced by high-friction social structures. Western computational models often misinterpret offline political patronage as online virality. Dependence on API extraction introduces methodological constraints by neglecting deliberative practices within encrypted and less visible 'dark social' communication channels. The synthesis is further limited by the exclusion of non-English literature, which introduces a risk of translational bias. Methodological platformism constitutes an analytical blind spot. Authentic measurement of participation requires cross-validating digital traces with offline spatial friction.

Keywords: methodological platformism; socio-technical entanglement; methodological gap; dark social; algorithmic affordances; public participation; spatial friction.

1. INTRODUCTION

The contemporary public sphere is fractured; the notion of a unified rational debate has given way to intersecting online and offline spaces (Bruns, 2023). Current communication scholarship, however, uncritically accepts social media metrics as proxies for civic participation, subordinating authentic discourse to the logic of the attention economy (Bruns, 2023; Hasebrink, Merten, & Behre, 2023). This “methodological platformism” assumes that communicative phenomena manifest only through datafied interactions within bounded technological environments (Bruns, 2023). We operationalise methodological platformism as a specific analytical bias: the practice of treating platform-native, application programming interface (API)-extractable traces (e.g., likes, shares, hashtag volume) as a sufficient and self-contained proxy for civic participation, without independently measuring the offline

structures—kinship networks, patronage relations, face-to-face deliberation—that the present review treats as necessary correlates of participation in South Asian contexts. If engagement cannot be scraped via an API, it is presumed not to exist. Digital platforms are treated as neutral agoras, yet they are socio-technical architectures engineered for behavioural extraction, not deliberative democracy (Bruns, 2023). Western-centric models ignore the complex mechanics of information exchange outside highly industrialised, platform-saturated democracies (Bruns, 2023; Gadjanova et al., 2022).

This theoretical apparatus faces important limitations when applied to hybrid communication ecosystems in the Global South. In contexts characterized by uneven infrastructural access, linguistic diversity, and deeply rooted communal values, exclusive reliance on platform-native data produces

Table 1. Thematic Synthesis of the Extant Literature into Six Dominant Clusters and the Identified Epistemic Gap

Research Domain / Paradigmatic Focus	Dominant Methodological Stance in Extant Literature	Structural Blind Spots (The Epistemic Gap)	Novelty of Current Review (Critical Platform Analysis)
1. Digital Civic Engagement & E-Participation	API extraction; equates digital visibility with democratic consensus (Prasetyo et al., 2024; Santoveña-Casal & Pérez, 2022).	Assumes socio-technical vacuum; ignores offline integration and 'pavement media' (Bruns, 2023; Gadjanova et al., 2022).	Couples digital initiation triggers with localised offline trust-building
2. Information Disorder & Misinformation	Network topology, text mining, rapid spread on bounded platforms (Gadjanova et al., 2022; Tomassi et al., 2024).	Fails to account for how algorithms intersect with offline political patronage and rumours (Gadjanova et al., 2022).	Shows how algorithmic environments obscure systemic power imbalances and physical realities
3. Platformization & Algorithmic Publics	Analyses platform logics, echo chambers, filter bubbles in Western contexts (Bruns, 2023; Friemel & Neuberger, 2023).	Treats platform as sole arena; overlooks how physical networks validate or reject online trends (Bruns, 2023; Gadjanova et al., 2022).	Formulates a falsifiable framework establishing boundary limits of platform-native metrics
4. Social Movements & Connective Action	Traces hashtag activism and connective issue publics via digital trace data (Bruns, 2023).	Misses translation of online dissent into offline mobilisation in hybrid regimes lacking infrastructure (Castro-Martínez et al., 2025; Gadjanova et al., 2022).	Redefines connective action as deeply dependent on informal offline communal sanctioning
5. Digital Inclusion & Marginalized Communities	Quantitative scales of accessibility, user-computer interface metrics, broad demographic usage (Black & Sykes, 2022; Hasebrink, Merten, & Behre, 2023).	Fails to connect digital accessibility with spatial, embodied realities of the Global South (Black & Sykes, 2022; Gadjanova et al., 2022).	Exposes systematic omission of ignoring non-digital, localised dialogue
6. Crisis Communication & Resilience	Analyzes rapid digital alerts, risk perception sentiment analysis, risk sentiment, top-down messaging (Castro-Martínez et al., 2025; Vujić et al., 2025).	Assumes digital alerts translate directly into preparedness; ignores local cultural translation (Castro-Martínez et al., 2025; Vujić et al., 2025).	Repositions traditional community networks as primary validators of digital emergency alerts

significant empirical discrepancies (Gadjanova et al., 2022). Algorithmic amplification operates within complex environments, intersecting with local political patronage, historical dispossession, and established socio-economic structures. Digital platforms serve as low-friction catalysts for mass mobilisation; however, genuine democratic legitimacy requires integration with offline, topological networks such as town halls, neighbourhood forums, and physical 'pavement media' (Castro-Martínez et al., 2025; Gadjanova et al., 2022). Platform-centric models often overestimate visible online engagement, obscuring the friction-intensive processes of physical deliberation that remain inaccessible to algorithmic analysis.

A review of current syntheses reveals a methodological bottleneck across six main paradigmatic clusters (Table 1). Although these clusters are thematically diverse, each shows a structural bias by analyzing platform dynamics without considering physical environments (Bruns, 2023; Gadjanova et al., 2022). Heavy reliance on digital metrics for data extraction limits qualitative depth, overlooks power asymmetries, and excludes spatial realities faced by marginalized groups (Black & Sykes, 2022; Hasebrink, Merten, & Behre, 2023). Bibliometric analyses provide additional evidence for this vulnerability. Clusters centered on "social media" and "algorithmic engagement" are densely populated, whereas nodes associated with offline spatial contexts

remain peripheral. This distribution indicates a clear epistemic gap (Friemel & Neuberger, 2023; Hasebrink, Merten, & Behre, 2023).

To operationalise a structural understanding of hybrid public participation, this systematic review synthesises a new theoretical framework guided by three research questions:

- RQ1: How does the intellectual topography of public participation literature manifest symptoms of methodological platformism when mapped bibliometrically?
- RQ2: What mechanistic bottlenecks and Western-centric biases restrict algorithmic governance models in South Asian and Global South contexts?
- RQ3: How can a Critical Platform Analysis framework couple digital initiation triggers with offline trust-building to bypass inclusivity gaps in purely datafied ecosystems?

The manuscript advances Critical Platform Analysis as a falsifiable, mechanistic framework that isolates the boundary-condition failures of digital optimism. By structurally integrating digital amplification with high-friction physical deliberation, it links structural exclusions to algorithmic governance. The ultimate contribution is a robust mechanism for decoding hybrid communicative realities of marginalised publics: any governance infrastructure engineered exclusively around platform-native data will miscalculate political mobilisation outside Western contexts. Critical Platform Analysis was operationalized during full-text coding through a set of analytic questions used to evaluate each included study: (a) whether the study reports offline structural data, such as kinship, patronage, spatial, or organisational variables, alongside platform-derived metrics; (b) whether it explains the process of triangulating these two data types; and (c) whether it distinguishes claims supported by offline evidence from those inferred solely from platform traces. Studies that met these criteria were coded as demonstrating socio-technical entanglement, whereas those that did not were coded as exhibiting methodological platformism.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 *The Fallacy of Universal Affordances: A Critique of Methodological Platformism*

Many current communication frameworks rely heavily on technology, assuming that socio-technical systems always shape user behavior in the same way across different regions (Breek, 2024; Hu et al., 2024). These platforms are often seen as closed systems where algorithms directly control civic engagement. However, foundational infrastructure studies show that digital platforms are not neutral or seamless public spaces. Existing social structures influence and constrain these models (Star, 1999; Parks & Starosielski, 2015). By encouraging the creation of communication theories that are more inclusive of the variety of global situations, this review aims to solve the shortcomings of the Western viewpoint (Thussu, 2009; Waisbord & Mellado, 2014). Visibility in the data is often equated with actual participation, meaning that the role of cultural factors outside the digital sphere risks being overlooked (Gadjanova et al., 2022; Jönsson, 2024).

Interpersonal relationships, local social and cultural factors, and human decisions influence the variation in affordances depending on the context (Breek, 2024). Digital signals are often combined with physical methods in areas where digital platforms are not yet very common. The aim is to build trust, such as through 'pavement media' and informal community gatherings (Gadjanova et al., 2022). An approach that relies solely on API extraction is capable of recording digital footprints, but fails to capture the links between online and offline activities, thereby potentially leading to significant sampling bias (Berglez & Hedenmo, 2025; Bruns, 2023; Hasebrink, Merten, Behre, et al., 2023). Research shows that human interaction is not influenced by platform design, particularly in diverse non-Western social and cultural contexts (Gadjanova et al., 2022; Hasebrink, Merten, Behre, et al., 2023; Ison et al., 2024).

2.2 *Empirical Anomalies in South Asia's Hybrid Communication Ecosystem*

Findings from South Asia indicate the limitations of theories that are overly platform-oriented. Although Chadwick (2017) defines hybrid media systems as the integration of traditional and new media, this pattern of integration does not occur uniformly in the

South Asian context. Social and political hierarchies, including the caste system and local patronage networks, influence digital growth (Graf et al., 2026; Vujić et al., 2025). Although interactions may begin on digital platforms, the development of meaningful civic action, consensus and trust still depends on offline networks, including 'pavement media' and community forums (Charoenloasiri et al., 2025; Gadjanova et al., 2022; Hasebrink, Merten, Behre, et al., 2023). Digital messages' credibility is more dependent on the sender's real-world social standing than on their online presence. Real-world communities' approbation shapes digital narratives, which frequently take precedence over platform dynamics. Digital systems are influenced by local social and political contexts, therefore public participation cannot be fully captured by platform data alone. Online data flows rely on offline validation sites, as shown by mapping their dynamics (see Figure 1).

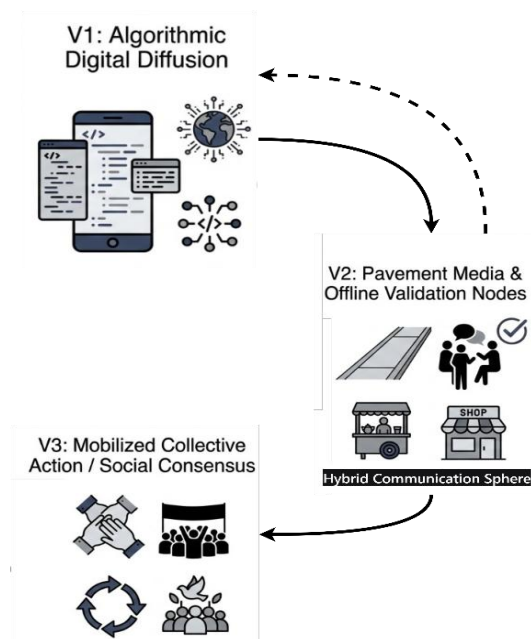


Figure 1. South Asian hybrid communication ecosystem

2.3 Methodological Bottlenecks and Epistemic Blind Spots

API-based data extraction is frequently used in current research techniques. This approach typically overlooks offline activity and focuses on measurable digital traces (Bruns, 2023; Hasebrink, Merten, Behre, et al., 2023; Yildiz et al., 2025). This focus creates a knowledge gap because the limits of platform-based data are often mistaken for the real limits of public

participation, as illustrated in Figure 2. Researchers are restricted by these algorithmic boundaries and may miss the complex ways social networks, traditional media, and grassroots efforts interact (Gadjanova et al., 2022; Matthey et al., 2025). People who are not tracked by algorithms, such as those who only hear about digital stories through offline community discussions, are often left out (Gadjanova et al., 2022; Xiao et al., 2026). Also, digital trace data alone cannot capture the local consensus-building that is key to real democratic participation.

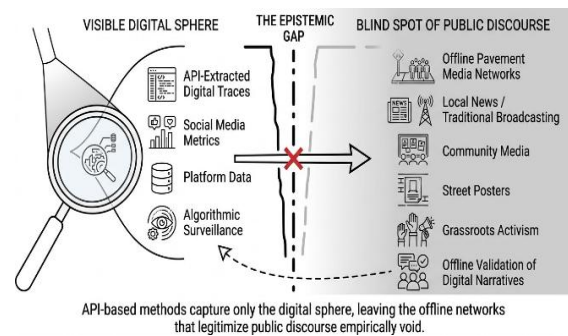


Figure 2. Conceptual visualization of the methodological bottleneck in contemporary communication studies

3. METHODS

3.1 Epistemological Foundations and Information Retrieval Protocols

This systematic review utilizes a structural diagnostic methodology to identify boundary-condition failures in algorithmic determinism. Data retrieval, extraction, and synthesis are conducted in accordance with PRISMA 2020 guidelines (Graf et al., 2026).

3.2 Primary Algorithmic Retrieval and Database Selection

On March 2, 2026, a search on Scopus Database using the search query: (ALL ((digital communication) OR (hybrid communication)) AND ALL (public participation) AND ALL (public space)) AND (LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD, "Communication")). The search returned 559 documents: 438 articles, 51 reviews, 40 conference papers, 15 books, 13 book chapters, 1 editorial, and 1 note.

3.3 Search Protocol and Study Selection

A second filter was used to select documents in English and published between 2022 and 2026, resulting in 275 documents. The bibliographic data were exported to Mendeley and then

analyzed with VOSviewer (Van Eck & Waltman, 2016) to find theoretical commitments. The clustering showed a strong focus on the “platform society paradigm,” while topics related to offline spatial variables appeared at the edges. This suggests that current research may pay little attention to offline aspects of public participation. The dataset was then moved to an Excel screening matrix for detailed review.

The PCC (Population, Concept, Context) framework was used to set the inclusion and exclusion criteria (see Table 2). Studies were included if they looked at how digital triggers were integrated with offline validation in South Asian or similar Global South settings. Studies that used only computational methods based on API metrics were not included.

Table 2. PCC-based eligibility criteria for South Asian hybridity

PCC Framework	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Population	Marginalised publics, civic actors, local community networks operating across digital and physical domains	WEIRD populations analysed in isolation; automated accounts (bots) independent of human social structures
Concept	Structural integration of digital initiation with high-friction offline validation; socio-technical entanglement; ‘pavement media’	Purely computational network analyses with strict algorithmic path dependency; studies conceptualising engagement exclusively through platform-native metrics
Context	South Asian hybrid communication ecosystems, or comparable Global South contexts with linguistic diversity, digital divides, local political patronage	Highly industrialised, platform-saturated environments in assumed socio-technical vacuum

The theoretical bias under criticism would be replicated if research that conceptualize involvement only through API extraction were kept. The screening matrix therefore mandated uncompromising exclusion of literature demonstrating strict algorithmic path dependency, forcing analysis of genuine socio-technical entanglement (Allan et al., 2024). Moreover, two independent auditors evaluated titles/abstracts of the 275 documents against the PCC parameters in a blinded dual-evaluation Excel matrix. Studies lacking any integration with offline physical topologies were flagged for exclusion.

A randomised 20% subset (n = 55) yielded 92.7% raw agreement and Cohen’s $\kappa = 0.82$, indicating substantial agreement (Badiuzzaman et al., 2025). Discrepancies were resolved by a third senior auditor blind to initial evaluations. Coding at full-text stage followed a structured codebook capturing, for each study, the population and context, the type of offline structural data reported (if any), the type of platform-derived metric reported, and whether and how the two were triangulated; this codebook operationalised the Critical Platform Analysis criteria described above.

Because the corpus spanned qualitative, mixed-methods, and bibliometric designs, no single standardised quality-appraisal checklist (e.g., CASP or MMAT) was applied uniformly; instead, a minimum reporting threshold (clearly described sampling or data source, and an identifiable empirical basis for claims) was used as a quality filter during full-text screening. We acknowledge this as a methodological choice rather than a formal quality-appraisal protocol, and note it as a limitation below.

Furthermore, full-text appraisal purged 114 articles that claimed hybridity but relied solely on API data without spatial triangulation. The final dataset comprised 161 documents (Figure 3). Thematic analysis extracted data on socio-technical variables, offline validation nodes, and power asymmetries to construct the Critical Platform Analysis framework (Badiuzzaman et al., 2025; Turnbull et al., 2025).

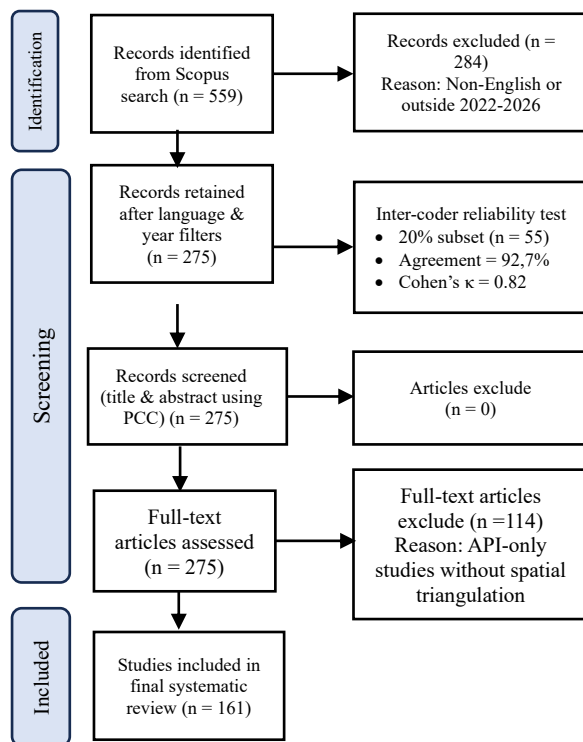


Figure 3. PRISMA 2020 Flow Diagram for Systematic Review on Hybrid Communication Ecosystem

4. RESULTS

4.1 Thematic Landscape of Platformization in the Global South

In the literature reviewed, the results of this analysis reveal conceptual differences. The predominant school of thought centres on the platform society paradigm, which prioritises democratic participation over indicators of algorithmic engagement (Bruns, 2023; Friemel & Neuberger, 2023; Hasebrink, Merten, Behre, et al., 2023). This pattern reflects a greater representation of industrialised Western contexts. In particular, this is evident in the literary corpus dealing with countries in the

Global South (Gadjanova et al., 2022; Hasebrink, Merten, Behre, et al., 2023; Kantartopoulos et al., 2020; Rumata & Nugraha, 2020; Tomassi et al., 2024). However, this suggests a shift towards a socio-technical approach from an algorithmic perspective. Platforms often serve as an easily accessible starting point in regions characterised by linguistic diversity and infrastructure disparities. Meanwhile, real-world validation processes influence community mobilisation, thereby shifting communication back from 'tweets' to 'the streets' (Kantartopoulos et al., 2020; Sun et al., 2025; Tomassi et al., 2024). An approach that goes beyond fragmented network analysis is required to address this methodological gap. This can be achieved by integrating studies of digital amplification with face-to-face trust-building processes. The empirical differences between Western assumptions and the reality observed in South Asia are shown in Table 3.

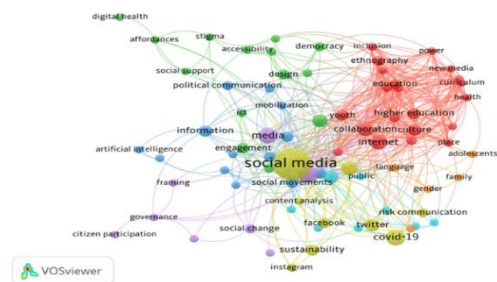


Figure 4. Co-occurrence network: 'platform communities' clusters and offline spatial variables.

4.2 Algorithmic Affordances Versus Vernacular Kinship Networks

The potential for a reconfiguration of technology's role, as demonstrated in the corpus, suggests that discourse is not

Table 3. Empirical gaps: Western assumptions vs. South Asian realities

Analytical Variable	Established Platform Assumption (WEIRD)	Extracted South Asian Reality	Scientific Trend / Thematic Shift
Ontology of Engagement	Quantifiable API traces mirror civic mobilisation	Digital virality may act as an initial trigger, while mobilisation can involve offline community validation	Shift from algorithmic behaviourism to socio-technical entanglement
Information Diffusion	Driven by algorithmic curation, filter bubbles	May be influenced by interactions among political, demographic, and offline communication factors	Integration of sociological variables into network analysis
Data Extraction Validity	Digital trace data provides complete topography	Pure digital extraction creates methodological gaps; ignores friction-heavy deliberation	Demand for mixed-method triangulation (digital + spatial ethnography)
Contextual Application	Platforms as neutral agoras	Disinformation patterns may be shaped by local socio-cultural contexts	Rising focus on political ecology of communication failures

unilaterally governed by algorithmic capabilities of visibility and network connectivity (Amirova et al., 2024; Leader et al., 2024; Wardle & Scales, 2025). The reviewed studies indicate that digital infrastructure may interact with pre-existing offline social structures in South Asian contexts. In the reviewed studies, local kinship architectures are described as taking precedence over digital affordances (Baú, 2025; Bavngaard et al., 2023; Ladousa & Davis, 2022; Rudwiarti et al., 2021). The reviewed studies suggest that patterns of digital virality can be influenced by offline political patronage structures and coordinated social networks (Gadjanova et al., 2022; Ladousa & Davis, 2022). The synthesis indicates that platform-native metrics may sometimes reflect offline mobilisation dynamics rather than directly representing democratic consensus (Gadjanova et al., 2022; Ladousa & Davis, 2022; Tomassi et al., 2024). The reviewed literature suggests that information legitimacy may be shaped by interactions between algorithmic systems and offline social networks. The reviewed literature suggests that Global South contexts may involve stronger roles of local social structures than assumed in context collapse frameworks— offline actors may reinterpret digital content according to local contexts and social dynamics.

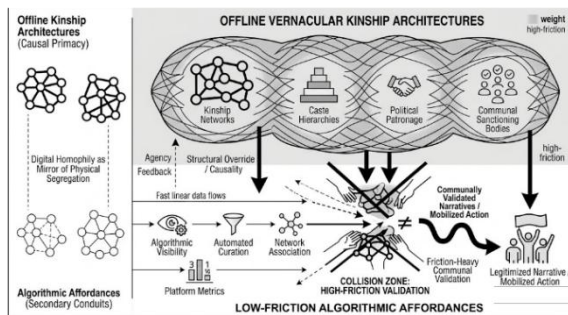


Figure 5. Causal pathway: algorithmic affordances and offline validation

Table 4. Moderation Vulnerabilities against Dark Social Architectures

Moderation Mechanism	Operational Dependency	Point of Failure in Dark Social	Extracted Consequence
Algorithmic Downgrading	Requires public visibility of virality	End-to-end encryption obscures content hashes and propagation speed	Unrestricted hyper-local spread of sectarian narratives
Automated Fact-Checking	Relies on NLP of public APIs and centralised databases	Decentralised vernacular audio-visual files bypass text-centric moderation	Fact-checks cannot be injected into closed peer-to-peer groups
Account Suspension	Identifies inauthentic behaviour via network traffic	Human-driven, high-friction forwarding mimics authentic dialogue	Complete failure to distinguish propaganda from organic engagement

4.3 Political Co-optation and the Architecture of Dark Social

The reviewed literature suggests that conventional platform moderation policies may face limitations when applied to encrypted communication environments in South Asia. Political mobilisation can increasingly occur within ‘dark social’ spaces, including end-to-end encrypted messaging applications such as WhatsApp and Telegram (Gadjanova et al., 2022; Nobre et al., 2022; Tomassi et al., 2024).

The reviewed studies indicate that interactions between offline networks and encrypted infrastructures may contribute to communication environments that are difficult to externally verify (Nobre et al., 2022). Some studies suggest that disinformation may gain credibility through offline social relationships before or alongside digital circulation; legitimacy comes from the sender’s local authority, not platform metrics (Ghasiya & Sasahara, 2022; Tomassi et al., 2024). Studies suggest that political actors may strategically use these architectures for campaigns that are less visible within conventional platform monitoring systems.

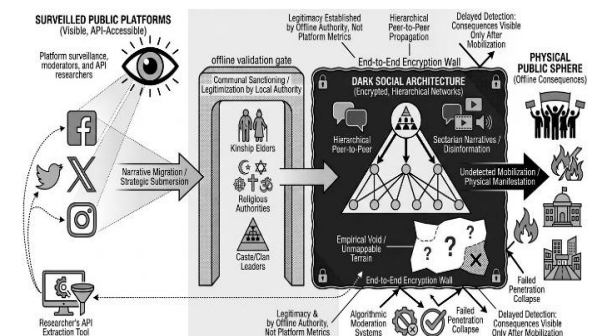


Figure 6. Architecture of Dark Social Evasion: Submersion from public platforms into encrypted peer-to-peer networks

Table 5. Synthesis of epistemic friction between Western algorithmic assumptions and South Asian realities

Domain of Communication	Western Algorithmic Assumption (Platformist view)	Extracted South Asian Empirical Reality (Anomaly)	Key Epistemic Friction
Political Mobilisation & Civic Engagement	API traces = direct proxies for democratic participation	Digital virality = low-friction trigger; mobilisation demands high-friction offline sanctioning	Equating platform-native data with participation boundaries may overlook less visible forms of civic engagement.
Information Diffusion & Network Virality	Content governed by algorithmic curation, homophily	Amplification manufactured by offline patronage, kinship, 'pavement media' rumour mills	Algorithmic determinism fails to account for subordination to pre-existing hierarchies
Content Moderation & Algorithmic Governance	Automated flagging neutralises inauthentic behaviour	Narratives submerged into encrypted 'dark social', relying on sender's local authority	Western moderation approaches may face limitations within decentralised vernacular communication environments.
Epistemic Authority & Trust-Building	Legitimacy established through platform metrics	Information resists curation; demands local interpretation driven by caste and allegiances	Universal affordances assumption obscures rigid offline context enforcement

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 Principal Findings: The Subordination of Digital Affordances

Based on a review of the South Asian literature, this study found that interactions with local networks in the real world are formed on digital platforms. The dissemination of information digitally is facilitated by algorithmic infrastructure. In the South Asian context, local communities play a significant role in the validation process. In the studies reviewed, real-world political patronage structures influence digital virality in certain contexts. A review of the literature shows that real-world social relationships are linked to epistemic authority. Meanwhile, less visible deliberative processes cannot be captured by platform-specific metrics.

5.2 Comparative Paradigm Tension: Western Platformism vs. Vernacular Realities

These findings highlight potential tensions with some assumptions within participatory culture and deep mediatisation frameworks that posit digital architectures flatten social hierarchies. Western-centric models may face limitations when applied to South Asian vernacular communication contexts. Prior literature may have provided limited attention to these dynamics due to methodological platformism, where the prioritisation of public-

facing API extraction can create methodological gaps in capturing offline communication processes. Certain less quantifiable variables – friction-heavy deliberation, 'pavement media', communication in encrypted 'dark social' channels – may have received limited analytical attention. To formalise this limitation, we conceptualise the *Vernacular Friction Threshold* (Φ_{VF}) as a heuristic:

$$\Phi_{VF} = \lim_{\delta \rightarrow 0} \left(\frac{\sum_{i=1}^n (K_{offline} \times \rho_{patronage})}{V_{API}} \right) \quad (1)$$

Where: Φ_{VF} = Vernacular Friction Threshold
 $K_{offline}$ = Density of offline kinship networks
 $\rho_{patronage}$ = Coefficient of localized political patronage
 V_{API} = Volume of algorithmically visible API-extracted traces
 δ = Degree of assumed socio-technical vacuum".

We emphasise that Φ_{VF} is presented as a conceptual heuristic intended to guide future operationalisation and measurement, not as a quantity calculated from the studies included in this review. None of the included studies reported the data (e.g., a validated index of offline kinship-network density, or a comparable measure of patronage influence) that would be required to compute Φ_{VF} empirically. We therefore frame the formula as

a proposed analytic structure for future primary research, and distinguish it explicitly from the empirical findings reported in the Results section above.

5.3 Epistemological Boundaries and Methodological Limitations

The study is constrained by exclusive reliance on Scopus, which may increase representation of industrialised Western academic outputs, excluding regional journals and grey literature. The English-language restriction risks translational bias and marginalises indigenous epistemologies. Bibliometric clustering, while revealing macro-topography, cannot capture affective, embodied dimensions of communication. Future research could integrate vernacular repositories, cross-linguistic NLP, and multi-sited ethnography to cross-validate digital traces against offline realities (Table 6). In this review, a more in-depth examination of these two criteria is required, as both are directly related to the main argument.

First, the Scopus-only restriction excludes most South Asian regional journals, university repositories, NGO and policy reports, and grey literature that are precisely the venues most likely to document offline, vernacular communication practices; this means the corpus may itself under-represent the offline phenomena the review argues are understudied, and the apparent dominance of the ‘platform society’ paradigm in our dataset (Table 1, Figure 4) may partly reflect this indexing bias rather than the state of the wider literature.

Second, the English-only restriction is in tension with the review’s own critique of Western-centric, platform-native epistemology, since it systematically excludes scholarship published in South Asian languages that may already document the vernacular, kinship-based, and patronage-mediated dynamics we propose. We treat both restrictions as a substantive limitation on the generalisability of our synthesis rather than a minor technical caveat, and we recommend that future reviews combine multilingual, multi-database search strategies (including regional indexes and grey-literature repositories) to test whether the patterns identified here hold beyond the boundaries of this corpus.

Table 6. Epistemological boundaries and actionable trajectories

Analytic Domain	Methodological Boundary	Resulting Epistemic Blind Spot	Actionable Trajectory
Data Extraction Architecture	Scopus-only selection	Exclusion of non-indexed Global South journals, grassroots reports	Decentralised extraction integrating vernacular repositories, policy documents
Linguistic Parameters	English-only publications	Western-centric translational bias; marginalisation of indigenous epistemologies	Cross-linguistic NLP to map phenomena across diverse vernaculars
Computational Apparatus	Keyword co-occurrence clustering	Inability to parse affective, embodied, improvisational dimensions	Mandatory integration with deep, multi-sited spatial ethnography

6. CONCLUSIONS

The bibliometric mapping suggests a strong orientation toward methodological platformism, with dominant clusters around algorithmic engagement and relatively limited representation of offline spatial variables. These patterns indicate a methodological gap in existing research regarding the integration of digital traces with vernacular and community-based communication practices. The reviewed literature suggests a growing shift toward computational approaches, which may provide limited attention to high-friction offline

communication processes. To address these analytical limitations, this review proposes the Vernacular Friction Threshold and Critical Platform Analysis as conceptual frameworks for encouraging interdisciplinary engagement with geography and anthropology. High-friction offline structures override algorithmic determinism; algorithms propose information, physical pavement media dispose of legitimacy. Policy interventions are limited by an over-reliance on platform-generated data. This is because forms of participation that take place via offline and community-based communication networks are overlooked. Reliance on automatic tagging systems renders the global governance architecture ineffective when applied to encrypted topologies. A 'community-in-the-loop' approach that takes local sociocultural contexts into account within the framework of technology policy could prove beneficial in the future. The interplay between algorithmic visibility and local political and social structures needs to be addressed in digital literacy programmes. Given the limitations of this study ranging from Scopus bias and the restriction to English-language sources to computational constraints. It is hoped that future research will be able to penetrate end-to-end encrypted channels through data donations. Furthermore, it is also necessary to analyse infrastructure deficiencies as an active socio-technical variable. This approach can be used to bridge the socio-technical analytical gap.

7. AUTHORSHIP CONTRIBUTION

Pooja Agnihotri: synthesis of the theoretical framework and methodological conceptualisation. Dr Vanya Chaturvedi: data curation, validation of the extraction protocol, and the double-blind evaluation matrix. Both authors carried out macrostructural bibliometric diagnostics and an audit of the final manuscript. All authors approved the final version of this paper.

8. DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Corresponding authors may provide the extracted bibliographic data set together with the filtering matrix. This may be provided following methodological verification and upon reasonable academic request.

REFERENCES

Allan, H. T., Caldwell, C., Mehigan, S., & Trueman, S. (2024). Opening up

conversations: Collaborative working across sociomaterial contexts in nursing in London. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 80(1), 226–236. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jan.15799>

Amirova, A., Fteropoulli, T., Ahmed, N., Cowie, M. R., & Leibo, J. Z. (2024). Framework-based qualitative analysis of free responses of Large Language Models: Algorithmic fidelity. *PLoS ONE*, 19(3 March). <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0300024>

Badiuzzaman, M., Lee, J.-S., & Cumming, T. M. (2025). A Systematic Review of the Impact of the Multilevel Digital Divide in Technology-Integrated Family-School Partnerships. *Review of Educational Research*, 00346543251400771.

Baú, V. (2025). Posting “what” on social media? The (mis-)use of Facebook by young people in refugee camps. *Journal of Information, Communication and Ethics in Society*, 23(1), 134–147. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JICES-05-2024-0065>

Bavngaard, M. V., Lüchau, E. C., Assing Hvidt, E. A., & Grønning, A. (2023). Exploring patient participation during video consultations: A qualitative study. *Digital Health*, 9. <https://doi.org/10.1177/20552076231180682>

Berglez, P., & Hedenmo, O. (2025). The mediatedness of interorganizational collaboration. How collaboration materializes through affordances, chains, and switches. *Organization*, 32(1), 9–29.

Black, G. F., & Sykes, P. (2022). Steps Toward Engagement Integrity: Learning from Participatory Visual Methods in Marginalized South African Communities. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 10. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2022.794905>

Breek, P. (2024). Neighborhood governance during COVID-19: What is lost with reduced face-to-face communication? *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 46(5), 925–943.

Bruns, A. (2023). From “the” public sphere to a network of publics: Towards an empirically founded model of contemporary public communication spaces. *Communication Theory*, 33(2–3), 70–81.

- Castro-Martínez, A., Torres-Martín, J.-L., & Villena-Alarcón, E. (2025). When Authorities' Response Fails and Citizens Act: Social Media Responses to the DANA Disaster in Spain. *International Journal of Disaster Risk Science*, 16(6), 980–992. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13753-025-00686-7>
- Chadwick, A. (2017). *The hybrid media system: Politics and power* (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Charoenloasiri, N., Yimsook, N., & Walsh, C. (2025). Understand and Find a Mechanism to Enhance the Power of App-based Food Delivery Riders in Thailand. *Journal of Arts and Thai Studies*, 47(1). <https://doi.org/10.69598/artssu.2025.3142>
- Friemel, T. N., & Neuberger, C. (2023). The public sphere as a dynamic network. *Communication Theory*, 33(2–3), 92–101. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ct/qtad003>
- Gadjanova, E., Lynch, G., & Saibu, G. (2022). Misinformation across digital divides: Theory and evidence from northern Ghana. *African Affairs*, 121(483), 161–195.
- Ghasiya, P., & Sasahara, K. (2022). Rapid sharing of Islamophobic hate on Facebook: The case of the Tablighi Jamaat controversy. *Social Media+ Society*, 8(4), 20563051221129150.
- Graf, J., Renner, R., & Klebel, T. (2026). Bridging warning and adaptation addressing risk communication strategies for short-term natural hazard warnings and long-term risk adaptation – A scoping review. *Progress in Disaster Science*, 29. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pdisas.2026.100515>
- Hasebrink, U., Merten, L., & Behre, J. (2023). Public connection repertoires and communicative figurations of publics: Conceptualizing individuals' contribution to public spheres. *Communication Theory*, 33(2–3), 82–91.
- Hasebrink, U., Merten, L., Behre, J., Lin, Y., Berglez, P., Hedenmo, O., Skey, M., Bruns, A., Collins, M., Arienzo, M. M., Nieminen, S., Hatchett, B. J., Nolin, A., Jennings, K. S., Das, M., Becker, J., Doyle, E. E. H., Breek, P., Alvarado Vazquez, S., ... Dong, R. K. (2023). Social media for collaborative planning: A typology of support functions and challenges. *Communication Theory*, 33(1), 161–195. <https://doi.org/10.55845/jos-2026-21100>
- Hu, A., Yuan, R., Chen, R., & Liu, M. J. (2024). A glamorous but highly stressful job: The role of social media-afforded status in micro-celebrity stress coping. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 209. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2024.123791>
- Ison, S., Cvitanovic, C., Pecl, G., Hobday, A. J., & Van Putten, I. (2024). Participatory research in complex marine conservation settings: A review of recent trends and lessons for the future. *Ocean and Coastal Management*, 253. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ocecoaman.2024.107053>
- Jönsson, J. (2024). Exploring the social and spatial role of social media for community entrepreneurship. *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development*, 36(7–8), 1054–1070. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08985626.2023.2287696>
- Kantartopoulos, P., Pitropakis, N., Mylonas, A., & Kylilis, N. (2020). Exploring adversarial attacks and defences for fake twitter account detection. *Technologies*, 8(4), 64.
- Ladousa, C., & Davis, C. P. (2022). South Asian Language Practices: Mother Tongue, Medium, and Media. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 51, 289–305. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-anthro-041420-110048>
- Leader, A., Kinsella, J., & O'Brien, R. (2024). Making sense of farmland biodiversity management: an evaluation of a farmland biodiversity management communication strategy with farmers. *Agriculture and Human Values*, 41(4), 1647–1665. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10460-024-10573-4>
- Matthey, L., Gaberell, S., Ambal, J., & Lanza, E. C. (2025). Promoting a master plan by encouraging participation: On the culture of convergence in urban planning. *Journal of Urban Cultural Studies*, 12(1), 119–145. https://doi.org/10.1386/jucs_00098_1
- Nobre, G. P., Ferreira, C. H. G., & Almeida, J. M. (2022). A hierarchical network-oriented analysis of user participation in misinformation spread on WhatsApp. *Information Processing & Management*, 59(1), 102757.

- Parks, L., & Starosielski, N. (Eds.). (2015). *Signal traffic: Critical studies of media infrastructures*. University of Illinois Press.
- Prasetyo, A., Sumarno, S., Jayaputra, A., Benedictus, M., Murni, R., Nainggolan, T., Purwasantana, D., Miftah, M., Taruna, M. M., & Wibowo, A. M. (2024). Critical communication of disaster preparedness areas for informational strategies in disaster management in Indonesia. *Progress in Disaster Science*, 24. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pdisas.2024.100368>
- Rudwiarti, L. A., Pudianti, A., & Adiwinata, S. M. (2021). Inspiring User Motivation through Oral Traditions in Conserving Vernacular Houses: Brayut Tourist Village, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. *ISVS E-Journal*, 8(2), 39–50.
- Rumata, V. M., & Nugraha, F. K. (2020). An analysis of fake narratives on social media during 2019 Indonesian presidential election. *Jurnal Komunikasi: Malaysian Journal of Communication*, 36(4), 351–368.
- Santoveña-Casal, S., & Pérez, M. D. F. (2022). Relevance of E-Participation in the state health campaign in Spain: #EstoNoEsUnJuego / #ThisIsNotAGame. *Technology in Society*, 68. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techsoc.2022.101877>
- Star, S. L. (1999). The ethnography of infrastructure. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 43(3), 377–391.
- Sun, C., Ren, Q., & Ge, Y. (2025). Local response to global risk: a case study of risk perception and communication on Chinese social media regarding Fukushima's treated radioactive water discharge. *Scientific Reports*, 15(1). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-025-02845-8>
- Thussu, D. K. (Ed.). (2009). *Internationalizing media studies*. Routledge.
- Tomassi, A., Falegnami, A., & Romano, E. (2024). Mapping automatic social media information disorder. The role of bots and AI in spreading misleading information in society. *PLoS ONE*, 19(5). <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0303183>
- Turnbull, M., Neupane Bastola, M. N., & Oktavianus, J. (2025). Cancer as communication work: A qualitative study of Filipino migrant domestic workers with cancer in Hong Kong. *Social Science and Medicine*, 383. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2025.118477>
- Van Eck, N. J., & Waltman, L. (2016). *VOSviewer manual*.
- Vujić, I., Lenzholzer, S., Carsjens, G. J., Brown, R. D., & Tavares, S. G. (2025). Communicating Urban Climate: An International Overview. *City and Environment Interactions*, 28. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cacint.2025.100248>
- Waisbord, S., & Mellado, C. (2014). De-westernizing communication studies: A reassessment. *Communication Theory*, 24(4), 361–372.
- Wardle, C., & Scales, D. (2025). Advocating for a community-centred model for responding to potential information harms. *Nature Human Behaviour*, 9(8), 1546–1556. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-025-02233-2>
- Xiao, Y., Tang, R., Guo, Z., & Wang, X. (2026). How Digital Mythological Narratives in Video Games Enhance Audiences' Destination Perceptions and Travel Intentions: Evidence from YouTube Comments on Black Myth: Wukong. *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, 18(1). <https://doi.org/10.3390/su18010160>
- Yildiz, D., Lucas, C., & Davison, A. (2025). Framing the flames: Addressing public disengagement through fear framings in Australian bushfire preparedness campaign videos. *Geoforum*, 160. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2025.104215>
