Contents

| Acknowledgments | | | | |
|-----------------|---|---|--------|--|
| | Inti | oduction: The Perils of Platform Misgovernance | 1 | |
| | Wh | What Is "Platform Governance" Anyway? | | |
| | | Why and How Do Platforms Govern? | 5 7 | |
| | | Political Governments Can Help Platforms Govern | 12 | |
| | | Platforms Need the Help: They Are Often Unable to | | |
| | | Govern Their Users | 14 | |
| | Sch | olars Have the Tools to Improve Platform Governance: | | |
| | В | forrowing from Political Governance | 17 | |
| | Wh | ere We're Going | 23 | |
| | App | endix to Introduction: Addressing Some Ethical Challenges | 24 | |
| 1 | The | e Nature and Problems of Platforms | 28 | |
| | 1.1 | The Core Features of Platforms | 30 | |
| | | 1.1.1 Positive Network Externalities | 30 | |
| | | 1.1.2 Interactive Network Affordances | 30 | |
| | | 1.1.3 Skim as a Revenue Model and Incentives to Scale | | |
| | | (and Maybe Concentration) | 32 | |
| | | 1.1.4 Recommender Algorithms | 33 | |
| | | 1.1.5 Virality (with a Caveat) | 35 | |
| | | 1.1.6 Diversity of People and of Behavior | 37 | |
| | 1.2 | Platform Problems Are Like State Problems: | | |
| | | There Are Lessons to Be Borrowed | 38 | |
| 2 | The Enterprise of Platform Governance Development | | 45 | |
| | 2.1 | Why Is Conduct on Platforms So Hard to Regulate? | 46 | |
| | 2.2 | Why Build Capacity? | 48 | |
| | 2.3 | How to Build Capacity? | 51 | |
| | 2.4 | | | |
| | š | or a Danger? | 55 | |

vi Contents

| | 2.5 | Objection 2: Does Platform Capacity Building Over-empower | |
|---|-----|--|-----|
| | - | the Already Powerful? Is It Colonial? Imperial? | 60 |
| | | 2.5.1 Mitigating Platform Neocolonialism | 65 |
| | | 2.5.2 Facebook Probably Shouldn't Have Been in | |
| | | Myanmar at All | 67 |
| | | 2.5.3 Dispersing Power: Simultaneously a Governance | , |
| | | Reform and an Anti-colonial Measure? | 68 |
| | 2.6 | Objection 3: The Whole Industry Is Bad – Radically Remake | |
| | | It by Force | 71 |
| | 2.7 | A Cautionary Approach to Antitrust Law | 75 |
| 3 | The | Problem of Platform Knowledge | 80 |
| | 3.1 | The Problem of Knowledge: A Pervasive Challenge for | |
| | | Centralized Governors of Dispersed Populations in | |
| | | Changing Environments | 82 |
| | 3.2 | The Democratic, Decentralized Solution to the | |
| | | Knowledge Problem | 86 |
| | 3.3 | Participatory Governance Facilitates Legibility | 92 |
| | 3.4 | The Polycentric Mechanics of Decentralized Participation | 99 |
| | 3.5 | A Design Criterion for Any Polycentric Platform System: | |
| | | Adaptive Capacity | 105 |
| 4 | The | Problem of Platform Self-control | 109 |
| | 4.1 | Mark Zuckerberg Isn't Plotting to Fix the Election for | |
| | | Your Political Enemies, I Promise | 110 |
| | | 4.1.1 Sometimes Failures of Self-control Are Just Failures | |
| | | of Corporate Governance | 116 |
| | 4.2 | Can Platforms Commit Themselves to Govern Consistently? | 118 |
| | | 4.2.1 Lessons in Self-binding from Political Science | 123 |
| | 4.3 | Organizational Tools for Self-binding | 127 |
| | | 4.3.1 Independent Enforcers (Like the Meta Oversight Board?) | 127 |
| | | 4.3.2 The Political Foundations of Credible Commitment: | |
| | | Recruiting Workers and Ordinary People to | |
| | | Backstop Self-binding | 129 |
| | | 4.3.3 User-Generated Sanctions for Company Commitment | 133 |
| | 4.4 | Toward Platform Rule of Law | 137 |
| 5 | | ually Existing Platform Self-constraint Up to a Point: | |
| | The | e Meta Oversight Board | 140 |
| | 5.1 | What Functions Might the Oversight Board Serve? | |
| | | Does It Do So Well? | 141 |

Contents vii

| | 5.2 | A Defense of the Oversight Board's Treatment of the | | | |
|------|---------------------------------------|--|------------|--|--|
| | | Trump Case | 148 | | |
| | | 5.2.1 How the Oversight Board's Trump Decision Serves as a | - | | |
| | | Counterexample to Carl Schmitt | 151 | | |
| | | 5.2.2 Can Platforms Have a Constitutional Identity? | 155 | | |
| | 5.3 | Can Platforms Have a Liberal-Democratic Identity? | 157 | | |
| | | 5.3.1 Toward Participatory Platform Identity | 164 | | |
| 6 | Platform Democracy Now! | | | | |
| | 6.1 | Can Platforms Be Governed Democratically without States? | 167 167 | | |
| | | 6.1.1 Against Naive Participation | 169 | | |
| | 6.2 | What Would Effective Democratic Platform Governance | ĺ | | |
| | | Look Like? | 171 | | |
| | | 6.2.1 Overlapping Governance Entities at Multiple Scales | 171 | | |
| | | 6.2.2 Genuine Empowerment of Workers, Users, and Nonusers | 173 | | |
| | | 6.2.3 Iterative Stakeholder Inclusion and Experimentation | 175 | | |
| | | 6.2.4 Robustness, of a Sort | 177 | | |
| | | 6.2.5 Robustness against Bottom-Up as well as Top-Down Threats | 178 | | |
| | 6.3 | Democracy within a Single Platform: A Sketch for Reddit | 179 | | |
| | 6.4 | A Democratic Constitution for Global Social Media | 183 | | |
| | | 6.4.1 Application: Managing Cross-cultural and | | | |
| | | Intracultural Social Conflict | 192 | | |
| | 6.5 | Is Any of This Realistic? | 195 | | |
| | | 6.5.1 Recognizing and Mitigating the Limits of Platform | | | |
| | | Constitutionalism | 197 | | |
| | Cor | nclusion: How Liberal-Democratic Governments Can Act Now | 201 | | |
| | Inte | rventions on the Platform Workplace | 202 | | |
| | Interventions on Platform Information | | | | |
| | Interventions on Human Rights Law | | | | |
| | Interventions on Competition Policy | | | | |
| Refe | rence | S | 211 | | |
| Inde | Index | | | | |

