

# FRAGMENTATION OF DIGITAL PLATFORMS IN INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL DYNAMICS: ANALYSIS AND PREDICTIONS OF GLOBAL TRENDS

---

**Marija Gombar**

---

ORIGINAL RESEARCH ARTICLE / DOI: 10.20901/ms.16.32.4 / SUBMITTED: 20.01.2025.

**ABSTRACT** *Political decisions made under geopolitical conditions significantly influence global digital ecosystems, as illustrated by the U.S. ban on TikTok and Germany's withdrawal of advertising from the platform X (formerly Twitter). This study identifies and predicts patterns of digital platform fragmentation emerging from such politically driven interventions. By integrating social network analysis, sentiment analysis, and predictive modelling, the research connects regulatory behaviour, public sentiment, and predictive scenarios to demonstrate how political and corporate strategies jointly reshape global communication structures. The findings reveal deep polarisation of public opinion on digital regulation, while predictive results suggest that ongoing fragmentation may accelerate the formation of regional platforms and increase digital isolation. The paper concludes with recommendations for policymakers to develop adaptable legal and governance frameworks capable of addressing the geopolitical complexity of contemporary digital environments.*

---

## KEYWORDS

DIGITAL ECOSYSTEMS, FRAGMENTATION, POLITICAL DECISIONS UNDER GEOPOLITICAL CONDITIONS, PLATFORM GOVERNANCE, PREDICTIVE MODELLING, SENTIMENT ANALYSIS (NLP)

---

*Author's note* \_\_\_\_\_

**Marija Gombar** :: General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia ::  
gombar.ma@gmail.com

## INTRODUCTION

In an era of rapid digitalisation, political decisions shaped by geopolitical conditions have become a powerful force in reshaping the global digital landscape (Fernández-Villaverde et al., 2024; Mayer & Nock, 2025). The once-borderless internet envisioned as a free and open communication space – an imaginary that was always uneven, shaped by structural asymmetries in infrastructure, capital, and regulation (Benkler, 2006; Castells, 2010; Mansell & Steinmueller, 2020) – is now fracturing under state-imposed regulations, economic rivalries, and national security concerns (DeNardis, 2020; Pohle & Thiel, 2020). Recent political interventions – such as the United States’ pressure on TikTok and the German government’s withdrawal of advertising from the platform X – highlight the accelerating fragmentation of digital ecosystems and the rise of digital sovereignty (Gray, 2021; Huq, 2025).

This trend reflects a broader shift toward technological protectionism, as states seek control over digital infrastructures and data flows (Couldry & Mejias, 2019; Nye, 2011; Srnicek, 2017). At the same time, the concentration of power within a small group of dominant tech corporations creates asymmetrical dependencies between sovereign states and transnational platforms (Gillespie, 2018; Moore & Tambini, 2018). Embedded in global communication infrastructures, these corporations blur the boundaries between state authority and corporate governance (Caplan & Napoli, 2018) and contribute to the emergence of increasingly fragmented digital spheres. The stakes of this fragmentation extend beyond economic competition. They disrupt global information flows, strain international cooperation, and intensify ideological polarisation as platforms become battlegrounds for influence and information warfare (Flew et al., 2019; Helberger et al., 2018; Kaye, 2019; Kreiss & McGregor, 2019).

This article addresses the following central research question: How do political decisions shaped by geopolitical conditions transform global digital ecosystems? Specifically, the study aims to (1) map structural shifts in platform–state relations, (2) analyse discursive changes surrounding digital sovereignty, and (3) forecast plausible trajectories of future fragmentation. To address these questions, the study integrates three methodological lenses: social network analysis (SNA) to map structural ties (Acs et al., 2021; Plantin et al., 2018), natural language processing (NLP) to capture discursive shifts (Sharma et al., 2025; Yoon & Oh, 2022), and predictive modelling to simulate long-term geopolitical scenarios (Feldstein, 2023). The detailed operationalisation of these methods is presented in the Methodological Approach section.

## MAPPING THE THEORETICAL LANDSCAPE OF DIGITAL FRAGMENTATION

Digital fragmentation has become a defining feature of contemporary global communication systems, shaped by tensions between platform power, state intervention, and geopolitical rivalry. Existing scholarship provides several theoretical strands that

help explain how political decisions under geopolitical conditions reconfigure digital infrastructures, information flows, and governance arrangements.

The theory of platform capitalism offers a foundational perspective on the structural forces behind these transformations. Major technology corporations – Google, Amazon, Facebook, and Apple – have consolidated unprecedented infrastructural and data power, positioning themselves as dominant global actors within digital economies (Couldry & Mejias, 2019; Srnicek, 2017). Their influence extends across economic transactions, public discourse, and political processes, producing asymmetrical dependencies between states and transnational platforms and intensifying regulatory tensions (Caplan & Napoli, 2018; Van Dijck et al., 2018). These dynamics contribute directly to digital fragmentation, as states attempt to regain control over infrastructures and information flows managed by globally distributed corporate actors (Zuboff, 2019).

A parallel strand of research focuses on digital sovereignty, increasingly central to understanding how states seek to protect national security, economic interests, and data governance capacities in the digital age (DeNardis, 2014; Scholte, 2020). Sovereignty-driven interventions – ranging from platform bans to data localisation and targeted regulation – mark a decisive turn toward state-centred control of digital infrastructures and data flows (Flew et al., 2019; Huq, 2025). Examples such as the U.S. restrictions on TikTok or the EU’s regulatory measures targeting large platforms reflect this broader strategic shift (Mayer & Nock, 2025). These state actions underline how geopolitical concerns directly shape platform accessibility, operational conditions, and global interoperability.

Network theory provides another crucial lens for analysing the structural dynamics of digital fragmentation. By conceptualising states, corporations, and users as interconnected nodes, network analysis reveals how political decisions reshape relational structures within global digital ecosystems (Castells, 2010). Social network analysis (SNA) highlights the emergence of parallel digital spheres, altered patterns of connectivity, and reconfigured flows of information triggered by state interventions under geopolitical tensions (Wasserman & Faust, 1994). Information governance and algorithmic control further complement this approach by explaining how platform rules, content moderation systems, and automated decision-making shape visibility, participation, and public discourse (Galloway, 2004; Helberger et al., 2018; Kaye, 2019). Together, these perspectives show how state regulation and corporate algorithmic architectures co-produce new boundaries and segmented digital environments.

Methodologically, prior research has applied SNA, sentiment analysis, and predictive modelling to questions of platform governance, regulatory conflict, and geopolitical influence (Feldstein, 2023; Plantin et al., 2018; Sun et al., 2025). Sentiment analysis provides insight into discursive dynamics and public reactions to regulatory interventions (Pang & Lee, 2008; Sharma et al., 2025). Predictive models extend this inquiry by simulating possible long-term geopolitical and infrastructural outcomes (Feldstein, 2023; Nye, 2014). While these strands have been explored individually, they are seldom integrated. This gap motivates the present study, which synthesises these approaches to examine how

political decisions under geopolitical conditions reshape digital ecosystems in structural, discursive, and prospective terms, contributing to ongoing debates in digital governance and offering analytical value for policymakers.

Geopolitical theory adds a final conceptual layer. Contemporary geopolitics examines how power is organised spatially through infrastructures, territorial control, and symbolic representations (Agnew, 2022; Dodds, 2014). Critical geopolitics emphasises how media and technology construct geopolitical imaginaries (Ó Tuathail et al., 1998), especially through popular culture, media narratives, and everyday identity work (Dittmer, 2010). From this perspective, digital platforms operate as geostrategic actors in international politics rather than neutral intermediaries, shaping territoriality through code, standards, and policy regimes. Their governance mechanisms – content moderation, data-localisation norms, interoperability constraints – function as instruments of what Ó Tuathail et al. (1998) conceptualise as geopolitical authority. Understanding digital sovereignty through this lens highlights how states and corporations negotiate influence through the demarcation of data flows, infrastructural boundaries, and technical standards (Harvey, 2006; Morgado, 2023). Platform alliances similarly act as soft-power networks, shaping preferences and information circulation through defaults, distribution mechanisms, and regulatory alignment (Dittmer & Dodds, 2008).

Viewed together, these theoretical perspectives depict digital fragmentation as a process of reterritorialisation across infrastructural, regulatory, and geopolitical dimensions. This integrated framework guides the empirical analysis that follows, which investigates how political decisions under geopolitical conditions reorganise platform–state relations, discursive environments, and potential future trajectories.

## METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The empirical design operationalises this framework through three methods: social network analysis (SNA), sentiment analysis (NLP), and predictive modelling, used respectively to (i) map networked reconfigurations, (ii) quantify opinion polarisation, and (iii) project plausible fragmentation trajectories. All empirical analyses presented in this article – the network mapping, sentiment scores, and predictive scenarios – are based on the author’s own construction of datasets and models, rather than secondary empirical studies.

Also, this study is grounded in the theoretical frameworks of platform capitalism (Srnicsek, 2017) and algorithmic governance (Gillespie, 2018), which explain how digital platforms operate within complex socio-economic and geopolitical contexts. The concept of platformisation (van Dijck et al., 2018) further illuminates how states and corporations collaborate to shape digital infrastructures, creating fragmented digital environments. By integrating these perspectives, the study critically examines how political interventions embedded in geopolitical rivalries affect digital connectivity and sovereignty. To map the relationships between nation-states, digital platforms, and user communities, the study

utilises advanced SNA techniques. Python's NetworkX library facilitates quantitative network analysis, while Gephi is employed for detailed network visualisation. These tools allow for identifying influential actors and observing shifts in the structure of digital networks following policy measures enacted under geopolitical tensions, such as platform bans and regulatory restrictions. The data informing this analysis are drawn from publicly available datasets, including the *Global Digital Platform Index* (GDPI), the *OECD Digital Economy Outlook*, and various cross-platform engagement reports. Centrality measures, clustering coefficients, and network density metrics are computed to uncover how state-level actors operating under geopolitical pressures function as critical nodes of influence and how their roles adapt to policy changes. The resulting visual representations offer insight into how the flow of information and digital influence is reshaped across national and global digital ecosystems.

This study employs sentiment analysis (NLP) to analyse public discourse on digital sovereignty and regulatory interventions, drawing on data from over 500,000 social media posts and news articles from 2019 to 2023. Data is collected via the Twitter API (Tweepy) and web scraping tools. The sentiment is assessed using the VADER (Valence Aware Dictionary and Sentiment Reasoner) model, which is well-suited for social media language. BERTopic is used for topic detection and trend analysis, while preprocessing is handled by libraries like NLTK, TextBlob, and SpaCy.

The analysis identifies public attitudes – support, opposition, and polarisation – toward political actions affecting digital platforms, offering insights into societal perceptions of digital governance. Predictive modelling techniques, including random forest classifier and ARIMA models, are employed through Scikit-learn and Statsmodels to project future developments in digital fragmentation. Historical data serves as a critical input for these models, which undergo rigorous validation using 10-fold cross-validation and evaluation metrics such as accuracy, precision, recall, and F1-score to confirm their reliability. The research focuses on five major international political actors – the United States, the European Union, China, Russia, and India – selected for their significant influence on global digital policymaking. The analysis encompasses global platforms, such as TikTok, Twitter, and Google, as well as domestic platforms, including WeChat, VK, and Jio, to comprehensively capture the diverse impacts of regulatory measures. The study covers the period from 2019 to 2023 to align the analysis with critical geopolitical and regulatory developments shaping digital governance in recent years.

### Data Sources and Robustness

Twitter/X and online news APIs are used in this study as high-frequency indicators of public discourse on digital regulation and sovereignty. These signals are triangulated with longitudinal indicators from the *OECD Digital Economy Outlook* and the *Global Digital Platform Index* (GDPI) to avoid relying on a single commercial platform. The sentiment dataset comprises over 500,000 posts collected between 2019 and 2023, filtered by country, language, and topic-specific keywords related to regulation, bans, and digital sovereignty. To reduce platform bias, the sample is stratified by region and language, rate-limited to avoid over-representation of highly active accounts, and cleaned of obvious bots,

duplicates, and automated reposts. This triangulated strategy increases the robustness of the findings by combining user-generated discourse with institutional indicators of digital policy and infrastructure.

### Bias and Validity

Several sources of bias may affect the analysis, including changes in platform policies, uneven API coverage, and sampling error, as well as the well-known difficulty of detecting sarcasm and culturally specific expressions in sentiment analysis. These risks are mitigated by validating the sentiment model on a human-coded subsample of approximately 1,000 posts, with agreement rates used to calibrate sentiment thresholds. Sensitivity tests are performed across alternative polarity cut-offs to check the stability of country-level patterns. In the network analysis, community structures are cross-checked using alternative detection algorithms (Louvain and Leiden) to ensure that the main modules are not artefacts of a single method. Although these measures cannot eliminate all bias, they provide a transparent framework for interpreting the results and for situating the empirical findings within the broader limitations of platform-based research. Acknowledging the research limitations is essential for maintaining methodological transparency. The restricted availability of proprietary data and the difficulty of accessing information from state-controlled digital ecosystems may limit the comprehensiveness of the network analysis, while rapidly changing geopolitical events constrain the long-term reliability of predictive models. Algorithmic bias in sentiment analysis – especially in multilingual contexts or when processing irony and culturally nuanced expressions – remains a further challenge. Future research could address these issues by combining lexicon-based and deep-learning models, expanding data sources through collaboration with institutional partners, and adopting longitudinal designs that track fragmentation over longer periods.

Ethical considerations are rigorously upheld throughout the research process. All data collection complies with international regulations, including the *General Data Protection Regulation* (GDPR). Social media data are anonymised before analysis, and web-scraping tools are configured to respect platform-specific terms of service. These steps limit the bias of single-platform studies and make the results more interpretable for policymakers.

## RESULTS

### Global Networks Under Pressure: Mapping Digital Fragmentation

Social Network Analysis of state–platform ties between 2019 and 2023 shows that political decisions and regulatory interventions under geopolitical conditions are already reshaping patterns of connectivity in the global digital ecosystem. Using social network analysis (SNA), this study examines how measures such as the U.S. ban on TikTok and the European Union’s data governance regulations alter structural relationships among nations, digital platforms, and users. The network analysis reveals the emergence of fragmented digital clusters in which geopolitical alliances and regulatory frameworks dictate digital accessibility and connectivity (Acs et al., 2021). The SNA results indicate

the consolidation of regional digital blocs, with countries aligning digital policies along political and economic alliances. China has developed a tightly controlled and self-contained digital ecosystem largely isolated from Western platforms, reflecting state-driven strategies that prioritise control over infrastructures and content (Zhao, 2008). The European Union enforces strict data governance through instruments such as the *General Data Protection Regulation* (GDPR), introducing compliance barriers for global technology companies. In contrast, the United States continues to dominate the global digital environment through its major technology corporations, despite selective restrictions on foreign platforms.

This fragmentation weakens global information flows and encourages the rise of localised digital infrastructures. Network analysis further demonstrates how state-imposed regulations and platform-specific restrictions sever or weaken existing connections, contributing to market isolation and the creation of parallel internet ecosystems (DeNardis, 2020; Lessig, 2006). Visualising these divides underscores the decisive influence of geopolitical policymaking in reshaping online spaces. Countries that enforce data-localisation laws, ban specific platforms, or foster domestic alternatives collectively produce a complex web of influence and control.

Table 1. Disrupted or Restricted Platform Connections (2019–2023)

Country	TikTok	Facebook	Twitter	WeChat	VK	Google
USA	1 (ban attempts, 2020–2023)	–	–	–	–	–
EU	–	–	1 (regulatory conflict, 2022–2023)	–	–	–
China	–	1 (blocked, 2009–2023)	1 (blocked, 2009–2023)	–	–	1 (blocked, 2010–2023)
Russia	–	–	–	–	–	–
India	1 (full ban, 2020)	–	–	–	–	–

Source: Author’s analysis based on data from the OECD, the GDPi, and the Twitter API (2019–2023)

Table 1 summarises the configuration of platform disruptions across five major state actors in international politics – the United States of America (USA), European Union (EU), China, Russia, and India – and six dominant platforms (TikTok, Facebook, Twitter, WeChat, VK, and Google) between 2019 and 2023. A value of “1” indicates a restricted or severed connection (e.g., bans, blocks, or regulatory conflicts), while a dash denotes stable or unimpeded access. These configurations correspond to the community structures detected in the SNA, where country clusters align with regulatory blocs.

This mapping reflects the growing strategic focus on technological protectionism as states seek to assert control over digital infrastructures and data flows. The findings show how decisive regulatory interventions – such as the U.S. attempts to ban TikTok or the EU’s enforcement of data governance standards – accelerate the formation of regional

digital blocs (Acs et al., 2021; Plantin et al., 2018). China remains structurally isolated from Western platforms through longstanding state-imposed blocks on Facebook, Twitter, and Google (Pohle & Thiel, 2020), while India's full ban on TikTok in 2020 demonstrates how geopolitical tensions and national security discourses can directly reconfigure platform access.

These disruptions undermine the coherence of global information flows and intensify the emergence of parallel digital environments. As more states engage in proactive or punitive platform governance, the resulting fragmentation fuels public distrust, reinforces ideological divisions, and complicates efforts to develop coordinated global digital governance. In this context, the politicisation of digital infrastructures becomes inseparable from broader state strategies shaped by international political dynamics, reshaping the future trajectory of global connectivity.

### **Divided Opinions: Public Sentiment on Digital Sovereignty**

Public sentiment toward digital sovereignty has become increasingly polarised amid growing political interventions in digital governance, shaped by geopolitical rivalries and regulatory reforms. This polarisation is particularly evident among younger demographics whose social interactions are deeply embedded in digital platforms (Boyd, 2014). Governments worldwide are adopting policies to control digital infrastructures and platform operations in pursuit of national interests and secure data governance. These interventions, however, elicit diverse public reactions that reflect distinct social, political, and cultural dynamics (Pohle & Thiel, 2020).

In democratic societies, debates around digital sovereignty often hinge on balancing data privacy and market monopolies with the preservation of freedom of expression and open internet access. In the United States and the European Union, significant public support for digital autonomy stems from frustration with the dominance of major technology corporations such as Google, Amazon, Facebook, and Apple (GAFA) (Doctorow, 2020; Srnicek, 2017). Regulatory instruments such as the EU's *General Data Protection Regulation* (GDPR) have been broadly welcomed as protective of privacy, even though they impose compliance costs and operational limits on global platforms.

In contrast, authoritarian regimes such as China and Russia face more complex patterns of public sentiment. State-driven censorship and surveillance, often justified under national security imperatives, have produced ambivalent or negative public reactions. China's Great Firewall and Russia's expanding internet control restrict access to global platforms, fostering public scepticism toward excessive state intervention (DeNardis, 2020). Sentiment in these contexts reflects a delicate equilibrium between accepting state oversight for security and resisting constraints on information access. Social media platforms play a key role in mediating these perceptions and even influencing financial markets (Couldry & Mejias, 2019; Sprenger et al., 2014). India presents a hybrid case, oscillating between nationalistic support for digital sovereignty and public concern over restricted freedoms. The 2020 ban on TikTok, driven by tensions with China, provoked both patriotic approval and criticism for curbing online expression (Feldstein, 2023).

Empirical studies show that platform governance policies exacerbate ideological polarisation, intensifying echo chambers and limiting exposure to diverse viewpoints. Platforms such as Facebook often reinforce these divisions, thereby undermining democratic deliberation (Sharma et al., 2025; Vaidhyanathan, 2018). This polarisation complicates the pursuit of coherent global digital governance and raises critical questions about how to balance national security with civil liberties (Flew et al., 2019). The sentiment analysis (NLP) applied in this study quantifies public discourse surrounding digital platform regulation, providing insights into how public attitudes differ across geopolitical contexts. These findings are crucial for policymakers navigating the tensions between regulatory sovereignty, technological interdependence, and global platform governance.

Table 2. Public Sentiment Toward Digital Sovereignty by Country (2019–2023)

Country	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Valence Ratio (P-N)	N (Posts)	Sentiment Dispersion	Top Sentiment Drivers
USA	0.4	0.2	0.4	0.0	240,000	Medium	privacy, monopoly, TikTok ban
EU	0.5	0.3	0.2	+0.3	310,000	Low	GDPR, data rights, regulation
China	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.0	210,000	Medium	firewall, censorship, security
Russia	0.2	0.4	0.4	-0.2	180,000	High	surveillance, blocking, control
India	0.5	0.3	0.2	+0.3	260,000	Medium	ban 2020, nationalism, freedom

Source: Author's analysis based on data from the OECD, the GDPi, and the Twitter API (n = 1.2 million posts, 2019–2023)

Table 2 summarises the distribution of positive, neutral, and negative sentiment toward digital sovereignty across five major geopolitical regions, complemented by post volume and dispersion scores to capture the stability or volatility of sentiment patterns. The data reveal significant divergences shaped by political systems and regulatory approaches. These aggregate scores are derived from the cleaned and validated sentiment corpus described in the Methodological Approach.

In democratic regions, positive sentiment tends to favour toward measures that enhance data privacy and autonomy, often reflecting concerns over data exploitation by global technology firms (West, 2017). The GDPR, for instance, enjoys moderate approval as a framework that balances privacy with digital freedom. Conversely, China and Russia exhibit more neutral or negative sentiment (Couldry & Mejias, 2019) due to state-imposed restrictions and pervasive surveillance justified in the name of national security. The Great Firewall and Russia's sovereign internet policies have produced fragmented digital environments and growing scepticism toward state control. India again shows a mixed pattern. Geopolitical tensions and data security concerns underpin support for sovereignty measures, such as the TikTok ban; however, these same actions trigger criticism for constraining digital freedoms (Lanier, 2018).

These results confirm that public sentiment toward digital governance is context-dependent, shaped by political regimes, media freedom, and historical relationships with technology. The growing polarisation of opinion underscores the difficulty of reconciling digital sovereignty with open access and civil rights. Political decisions under geopolitical conditions are therefore not merely regulatory – they carry profound social implications, shaping public trust in governance and influencing the trajectory of global digital fragmentation.

### Predicting the Future: Scenarios of Digital Isolation

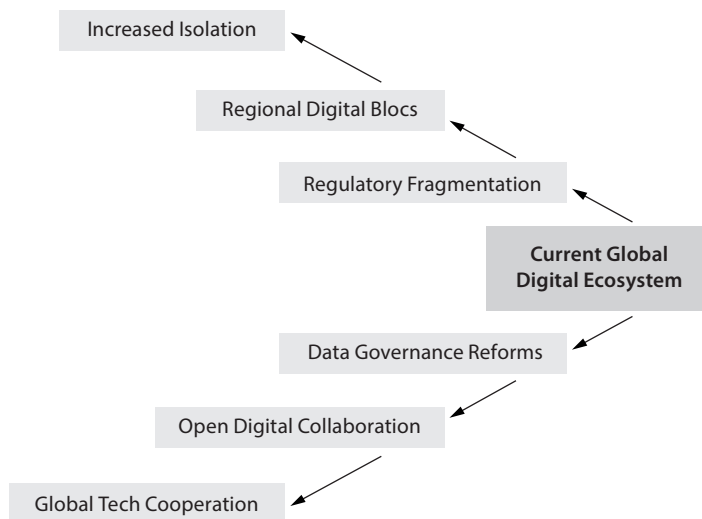
The future of the global digital ecosystem has become increasingly uncertain due to the interplay between state-led strategies, geopolitical tensions, and corporate dominance in the technology sector. The accelerating trend of internet fragmentation indicates the gradual formation of regional digital blocs and the erosion of a globally interconnected space. States increasingly regulate digital infrastructures, data governance, and platform access to safeguard national interests and reduce external dependencies (Huq, 2025; Pohle & Thiel, 2020).

The rise of technological protectionism – exemplified by the United States' ban on TikTok, Russia's internet restrictions, China's Great Firewall, and the European Union's stringent data protection regime – signals a strategic shift toward digital isolation aimed at mitigating cybersecurity threats and reinforcing economic sovereignty (Feldstein, 2023).

Predictive modelling suggests two divergent trajectories for the evolution of global digital ecosystems:

- >Escalation of fragmentation: Continued enforcement of restrictive digital policies may result in isolated markets, nationalised platforms, and diminished cross-border data flows (Couldry & Mejias, 2019; Klimburg, 2017).
- >Global collaboration and reform: Strengthened international cooperation could promote unified standards for data governance and cybersecurity, encouraging open collaboration and reducing digital isolation (Flew et al., 2019; Mayer & Nock, 2025).

Figure 1 visualises a bifurcated scenario in which the current global digital ecosystem evolves toward either increased isolation or expanded cooperation. The upper trajectory illustrates how regulatory fragmentation can escalate into regional digital blocs and, ultimately, digital isolation. The lower trajectory presents a collaborative pathway driven by governance reforms, cross-border cooperation, and shared technological standards. Rising protectionism leads to regional digital blocs and heightened isolation, whereas global cooperation enables more inclusive digital ecosystems through harmonised governance and shared innovation. These scenarios underscore the need for proactive policy interventions that mitigate the effects of fragmentation while balancing national security with global interdependence (Fernández-Villaverde et al., 2024).



▲ *Figure 1.*  
Scenario Trajectories of Global Digital Fragmentation and Integration  
(Source: Author's own work)

In the fragmentation trajectory, regulatory protectionism drives the formation of regional digital blocs, reinforcing geopolitical divisions and limiting interoperability. This path is sustained by national security concerns and efforts to reduce reliance on foreign technology providers – visible in China's Great Firewall, Russia's sovereign internet laws, and the U.S. TikTok ban (DeNardis, 2020; Srnicek, 2017). The collaboration trajectory envisions open digital cooperation, in which international frameworks strengthen digital governance and support technological exchange. This includes global initiatives for standardised data privacy laws, cross-border cybersecurity agreements, and cooperative innovation networks (Huq, 2025).

These predictive scenarios underline the strategic choices facing global digital development. Without collective governance, the world risks deepening digital divides and consolidating protectionist regimes. Yet, through deliberate international collaboration, policymakers can foster a more open, resilient, and equitable digital future.

### State-Corporate Alliances: The Rise of Controlled Platforms

In the evolving global digital order, the consolidation of power between states and domestic technology firms has emerged as a defining strategy for enforcing digital sovereignty. Governments increasingly collaborate with national platforms to regulate infrastructures, manage data governance, and control online content (Van Dijck et al., 2018). These alliances are not merely technical arrangements but instruments of political

economy that secure national interests and reduce dependence on foreign technologies. Across regions, state–corporate coupling manifests as a spectrum – from soft regulatory partnerships to full infrastructural integration. In the European Union, the *Digital Services Act* (DSA) and *Digital Markets Act* (DMA), alongside the jurisprudence of data-protection law, constitute a form of regulatory sovereignty that re-territorialises platform governance on European terms while continuing to rely on U.S. cloud and app ecosystems (Boban, 2019; Pohle & Thiel, 2020). This alignment exercises soft power through market standards and legal norms rather than direct control.

In contrast, deep infrastructural coupling in China embeds governance within the architecture of platforms themselves. Corporations such as Tencent and Alibaba operate as extensions of the state’s digital apparatus, combining Great Firewall controls with domestic super-apps that render sovereignty territorial through code (Acs et al., 2021). Russia follows a similar model through VK and Yandex, ensuring the dominance of state-aligned narratives while constraining foreign influence (Feldstein, 2023). A mixed variant – visible in India’s *Digital Personal Data Protection Act* (DPDP) and the rise of the Jio ecosystem – pairs sovereignty-first measures such as data-localisation and selective platform bans with the promotion of national champions, producing selective openness and leverage over foreign firms (Feldstein, 2023). These arrangements transform platform alliances into architectures of soft power that steer defaults, attention, and standards, materialising digital sovereignty as territoriality by technical means (Harvey, 2006; Morgado, 2023).

In authoritarian systems, these alliances create self-contained digital ecosystems. China’s and Russia’s integration of state policy and corporate infrastructure effectively isolates users from global platforms while enhancing domestic control (Acs et al., 2021; DeNardis, 2020). In democratic contexts, similar logics appear through subtler mechanisms. The EU’s DSA/DMA framework seeks to discipline U.S. tech monopolies and stimulate regional alternatives (Gillespie, 2018; Pohle & Thiel, 2020; Timmers, 2019), yet these same regulations risk intensifying global fragmentation by hardening jurisdictional borders in data governance. The resulting regulatory pluralism challenges interoperability and constrains cross-border data flows (Moore & Tambini, 2018). States are thus pursuing technological self-sufficiency under the banner of security and resilience, fuelling an era of digital protectionism.

Public perception of these state–corporate alliances remains divided. In some societies, citizens support tighter regulation to enhance data security and national autonomy; in others, such measures evoke anxiety over censorship, surveillance, and constrained freedoms (Yoon & Oh, 2022). This ambivalence illustrates the enduring dilemma between safeguarding sovereignty and protecting civil liberties in the digital domain (Klimburg, 2017).

Table 3 synthesises these dynamics by mapping how major state actors in international politics align with domestic technology firms while simultaneously exerting regulatory pressure on global platforms. The table highlights how China, Russia, India, the European Union, and the United States use different forms of state–corporate coordination –

ranging from deep infrastructural integration to regulatory conditionality – to shape their digital ecosystems in line with national priorities (Mayer & Nock, 2025).

Table 3. State–Platform Alignments and Patterns of Digital Fragmentation

Domestic Platforms (State-Supported / Integrated)	Mode of Alignment	Global Platforms Restricted / Pressure	Mechanism of Restriction / Regulatory Tool
<i>State / Region</i>			
<i>China</i>			
WeChat, Weibo, Baidu, Alibaba, Douyin	Deep infrastructural integration; platforms act as extensions of state governance	Google, Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, YouTube, Instagram	Great Firewall; licensing rules; data localisation; ideological content control
<i>Russia</i>			
VK, Yandex, RuTube	Strong state alignment; narrative control and infrastructural sovereignty	Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Google, YouTube	Sovereign Internet Law; data localisation; platform blocking
<i>India</i>			
Jio, Paytm, Bharat Browser	Selective openness; promotion of “national champions” + selective bans	TikTok (banned), Twitter (legal conflict), Meta apps (regulated)	DPDP Act; intermediary liability; selective platform bans
<i>European Union</i>			
OVHcloud, Nextcloud, ProtonMail	Regulatory sovereignty; soft power via legal and market norms	Amazon, Google, Facebook, Apple	DSA/DMA obligations; competition enforcement; data protection regime (GDPR)
<i>United States</i>			
Amazon, Google, Facebook, Twitter, Netflix	Market-driven ecosystem with selective national-security enforcement	TikTok (ban attempts), WeChat (restrictions), Huawei, ZTE	National security reviews; FCC restrictions; executive orders

(Source: Author’s own work)

Domestic platforms such as WeChat, VK, Jio, OVHcloud, and the U.S. cloud and social media giants reflect varying degrees of state support and strategic alignment, from China’s embedded platform governance to the EU’s regulatory sovereignty model (Feldstein, 2023). Conversely, global platforms – including TikTok, Twitter, Netflix, Google, and Meta services – appear in contexts where states impose restrictions, bans, or compliance obligations that reshape market access and operational autonomy (Pohle & Thiel, 2020).

Across political systems, the convergence of regulatory power and corporate infrastructure emerges as a central driver of global digital fragmentation. While authoritarian regimes consolidate control through infrastructural sovereignty, democratic states increasingly institutionalise control through legal and economic governance mechanisms (Helberger et al., 2018). These alignments recalibrate privacy norms, competition structures, and communication flows, ultimately challenging interoperability and the idea of a unified global digital public sphere (Fernández-Villaverde et al., 2024). Understanding these relationships is essential for anticipating future trajectories of digital sovereignty and for mitigating the structural risks that arise when political authority and platform capitalism intersect (Huskaj, 2023).

### Case Studies of Digital Sovereignty in Action

Following the analytical stages of social network mapping, sentiment analysis, and predictive modelling, three contextual case studies were selected to illustrate how political decisions under geopolitical conditions manifest as concrete regulatory and infrastructural transformations. Each case exemplifies a distinct form of digital sovereignty – ranging from protective nationalism to normative governance and infrastructural isolation – and demonstrates how the interplay between state policy and platform governance reshapes the global digital ecosystem.

This section is grounded in the framework of *critical geopolitics* (Agnew, 2022; Dodds, 2014; Ó Tuathail et al., 2006), which interprets geopolitics not merely as territorial rivalry but as the spatial and infrastructural expression of power within networked systems. Digital sovereignty thus becomes a geopolitical practice enacted through regulation, code, and data governance, through which states project power via technological control and regulatory design rather than territorial conquest.

#### **Case Study 1: India's Ban on TikTok (2020)**

In June 2020, India banned TikTok alongside fifty-eight other Chinese mobile applications, citing national security concerns following border tensions with China. The decision, publicly framed as a data-protection measure, had deeper geopolitical implications: it marked India's repositioning within the strategic competition between the United States and China. By invoking "data sovereignty," India aligned itself with a U.S.-led technological bloc while simultaneously promoting domestic digital autonomy (Feldstein, 2023).

This move redirected hundreds of millions of users toward national platforms such as Chingari, Mitron, and Roposo, thereby catalysing the expansion of India's domestic tech ecosystem. From an international-relations perspective, the ban reflects *neoclassical geopolitics*, wherein states pursue strategic alignment through technology rather than military dependency (Dittmer & Sharp, 2014). It also demonstrates how the discourse of cybersecurity operates as a diplomatic instrument – legitimising market protectionism while reconfiguring global platform hierarchies (Couldry & Mejias, 2019; Huq, 2025). India's approach thus transformed a content-moderation issue into a geopolitical signal of digital realignment in the Indo-Pacific sphere.

### **Case Study 2: The European Union's Digital Services Act (2022)**

The European Union's *Digital Services Act (DSA)*, adopted in 2022, represents a paradigmatic shift in global platform regulation. Aimed at enhancing accountability, transparency, and data protection, the DSA introduced binding obligations for dominant online intermediaries such as Google, Meta, and Amazon (Pohle & Thiel, 2020). While the legislation was justified through consumer-protection rhetoric, it effectively re-territorialised digital space by asserting European normative power over transnational platforms.

Within the framework of *regulatory geopolitics* (Agnew, 2022), the DSA functions as an instrument of soft power – projecting European values through legal and infrastructural standards. This reassertion of jurisdiction in the digital domain strengthens the EU's position as a global norm-setter, capable of exporting its regulatory models beyond its borders (Timmers, 2019). However, it also contributes to the patterned fragmentation of the global internet, as divergent regulatory ecosystems between the EU, the United States, and Asia challenge interoperability and cross-border data exchange. The DSA thus illustrates the paradox of digital sovereignty in democratic governance: the pursuit of autonomy through regulation simultaneously deepens the structural divisions it aims to manage.

### **Case Study 3: Russia's Sovereign Internet Law (2019)**

In 2019, Russia enacted the *Sovereign Internet Law*, granting the state authority to isolate the national segment of the internet (*Runet*) from the global network in times of crisis (Russian Federation, 2019). This measure institutionalised state control over data routing and network exchange points, enabling near-total supervision of domestic digital traffic (Feldstein, 2023). The law was accompanied by extensive infrastructural investments – state-managed domain systems, mandatory localisation of servers, and monitoring technologies – that collectively transformed Russia's internet into a securitised communication zone.

From the lens of critical geopolitics (Ó Tuathail, 2000), Russia's digital isolationism represents a spatialisation of sovereignty in cyberspace: the re-drawing of political borders through information infrastructure. Rather than a purely defensive act, it performs power symbolically by transforming connectivity itself into an instrument of governance. The consolidation of domestic platforms such as VK and Yandex further embeds this sovereign logic, ensuring that national narratives dominate the informational field while access to global discourses remains restricted (Klimburg, 2017; Moore & Tambini, 2018). This case demonstrates how digital sovereignty can evolve into digital autarky, where infrastructural control substitutes for democratic legitimacy. The geopolitical consequence is not merely isolation but the creation of alternative digital orders that challenge the universality of the open internet.

These case studies illustrate the multidimensional nature of digital sovereignty as a geopolitical phenomenon enacted through political, regulatory, and infrastructural means. India's selective protectionism, the EU's normative governance, and Russia's

infrastructural isolation represent three modalities of the same global process: the fragmentation of the digital sphere under conditions of strategic competition and regulatory divergence. By interpreting these developments through the lens of critical geopolitics, it becomes clear that contemporary struggles for power are increasingly conducted not over territory, but through infrastructures of connection and control. Digital sovereignty thus functions simultaneously as an instrument of protection, competition, and exclusion – defining the contours of an emerging world order shaped as much by algorithms and legal codes as by borders and armies (Ó Tuathail et al., 2006). The three case studies mirror the empirical patterns identified in the SNA and sentiment analysis: tightening national controls coincide with denser domestic platform clusters and increasingly polarised public discourse around sovereignty and security.

## DISCUSSION

The accelerating fragmentation of digital platforms, driven by political decisions made under geopolitical conditions and corporate strategies, represents a profound shift in the global digital landscape. The analysis identifies a pattern of increasing decoupling between global digital ecosystems following regulatory measures enacted under geopolitical conditions. Prominent examples include the bans on TikTok in the United States and the German government's withdrawal of advertising from platform X (formerly Twitter), both of which demonstrate how state-level political actions reshape digital communication infrastructures (Feldstein, 2023). While this article focuses on major state actors in international politics, similar dynamics shape the vulnerabilities of smaller European states operating in asymmetrical digital environments (Car & Zorko, 2025).

This phenomenon is not an isolated result of singular policies but reflects a structural transformation where sovereignty, corporate dominance, and technological control intertwine (Everett & Fritz, 2022; Naughton, 2020). At the core of this shift lies digital sovereignty – the assertion of control over data, infrastructures, and content in defense of national security and economic interests. This strategic turn toward technological protectionism aligns with what Srnicek (2017) and Gillespie (2018) describe as the political economy of platform capitalism, where GAFA's dominance challenges state authority and complicates global governance.

The network analysis indicates a growing presence of state-corporate alliances, in which governments increasingly collaborate with domestic technology firms to consolidate control and ensure policy alignment within national digital ecosystems. These partnerships strengthen internal infrastructures but simultaneously contribute to the fragmentation of the global digital space, reducing cross-border information flows (Helberger, Pierson, & Poell, 2018; Van Dijck et al., 2018). Such alignments can be read as manifestations of geopolitical reterritorialisation – a reassertion of national control over previously global digital terrains. Digital infrastructures thus become instruments of geopolitical strategy rather than neutral conduits of communication. Sentiment

analysis demonstrates that democratic and authoritarian contexts diverge significantly: democratic publics primarily express concerns about freedom of expression, whereas authoritarian regimes justify stricter controls on the grounds of national security (Ranco et al., 2015; Sharma et al., 2025; Yoon & Oh, 2022). This divergence contributes to deeper echo chambers and ideological clustering, reinforcing the communicative isolation of digital communities (Kreiss & McGregor, 2019).

Predictive models suggest that fragmentation is likely to intensify, with plausible trajectories including the rise of regional platforms, parallel internet infrastructures, and growing digital isolation driven by geopolitical rivalries. These developments may constrain global communication, trade, and cooperation (Klimburg, 2017). From a geopolitical perspective, platform control increasingly functions as an economic and ideological lever, aligning with Morgado's (2023) interpretation of platform alliances as emergent forms of soft power in international relations.

The triangulated analysis (SNA, NLP, and predictive modelling) highlights the interplay between political decisions made under geopolitical conditions, corporate influence, and public sentiment as a defining factor of current digital fragmentation (Plantin et al., 2018). Addressing these tensions requires transnational regulatory coordination and a reconsideration of how digital infrastructures can balance national interests with the foundational principles of an open, interconnected internet.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

This study is limited by its reliance on publicly available platform data and geopolitical events within a defined temporal scope, which may not capture the full complexity of long-term realignments in digital governance. Because the dataset reflects visible state-platform interactions rather than hidden regulatory negotiations or infrastructural dependencies, the findings should be interpreted as a structured snapshot rather than an exhaustive map of the evolving geopolitical landscape.

Future research could expand this approach by incorporating longitudinal datasets that track regulatory shifts and platform behaviours over extended periods. Comparative cross-regional analyses – especially across asymmetrical digital environments – could clarify how fragmentation unfolds in diverse political, economic, and cultural contexts. Multi-platform network mapping and multimodal sentiment analysis may further reveal how fragmentation differentially affects public discourse, user mobility, and information flows.

Finally, integrating behavioural or ethnographic approaches could illuminate how individual users interpret, adapt to, or resist emerging fractures in the global digital environment. Such mixed-method designs would enrich the predictive dimension of future models and offer a more comprehensive understanding of how political decisions made under geopolitical conditions translate into lived communicative realities.

## CONCLUSION: NAVIGATING FRAGMENTATION IN A RECONFIGURED DIGITAL ORDER

The digital world stands at a critical crossroads, at which contemporary political decisions made under geopolitical conditions irreversibly shape tomorrow's technological ecosystems. The growing entanglement of political authority, corporate power, and digital governance has already begun to fracture the once-borderless internet, producing increasingly isolated digital spheres shaped by state-corporate alliances. This separation of global platforms threatens the free flow of information, risks deepening ideological echo chambers, and may restrict access to diverse perspectives – developments with profound consequences for democratic discourse, innovation, and media pluralism.

The future trajectory of digital ecosystems will depend on the degree to which nations can balance the pursuit of digital sovereignty with the imperative of international cooperation. If current protectionist trends persist, the global internet could devolve into a patchwork of bounded and increasingly incompatible national networks. Yet this outcome is not inevitable. Deeply entrenched geopolitical rivalries, divergent economic models, and competing regulatory traditions make full international harmonisation unlikely. Rather than assuming a single global regime, the evidence points to a fragmented “regime complex”, in which overlapping and sometimes conflicting rules will continue to shape digital connectivity.

A coordinated, values-driven approach grounded in transparency, accountability, and interoperability remains a viable path toward preserving the openness of digital environments. While full harmonisation may be unrealistic, sustained efforts to manage overlapping and sometimes conflicting regulatory regimes will be central to maintaining a functional global digital order. The stakes concern far more than technological infrastructure: they involve the character of communication, governance, and collective agency in a fragmented digital future. Decisions taken in this decade will significantly influence whether the internet continues to function as an infrastructure of empowerment or evolves further into a landscape marked by deepening division.

### References

- >Acs, Z. J., Song, A. K., Szerb, L., Komlósi, É., & Márkus, G. (2021). The evolution of the global digital platform economy: 1971–2021. *Small Business Economics*, 57, 1629–1659. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11187-021-00561-x>
- >Agnew, J. (2022). *Hidden geopolitics: Governance in a globalized world*. Rowman & Littlefield.
- >Benkler, Y. (2006). *The Wealth of Networks: How Social Production Transforms Markets and Freedom*. Yale University Press.
- >Boban, M. (2019). *Zaštita podataka i pravo na privatnost u informacijskom društvu* [Data protection and the right to privacy in the information society]. Veleučilište “Nikola Tesla”.
- >Boyd, D. (2014). *It's Complicated: The Social Lives of Networked Teens*. Yale University Press.
- >Car, V., & Zorko, M. (Eds.). (2025). *Digital environment and small states in Europe: Challenges, threats, and opportunities*. Routledge.
- >Caplan, R., & Napoli, P. M. (2018). Why media companies insist they're not media companies, why they're wrong, and why it matters. *In Medias Res*, 7(1), 60–80.

- >Castells, M. (2010). *The Rise of the Network Society* (2nd ed.). Wiley-Blackwell.
- >Couldry, N., & Mejias, U. A. (2019). *The Costs of Connection: How Data Is Colonizing Human Life and Appropriating It for Capitalism*. Stanford University Press.
- >DeNardis, L. (2014). *The Global War for Internet Governance*. Yale University Press.
- >DeNardis, L. (2020). *The Internet in everything: Freedom and security in a world with no off switch*. Yale University Press.
- >Digital Markets Act (DMA). (2022). *Regulation (EU) 2022/1925 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 September 2022*. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32022R1925>
- >Digital Services Act (DSA). (2022). *Regulation (EU) 2022/2065 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 October 2022*. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32022R2065>
- >Digital Personal Data Protection Act. (2023). *The Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023*. Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Government of India. Retrieved 8/1/2026, from <https://www.meity.gov.in/static/uploads/2024/06/2bf1f0e9f04e6fb4f8fef35e82c42aa5.pdf>
- >Dittmer, J., & Dodds, K. (2008). Popular geopolitics past and future: Fandom, identities and audiences. *Geopolitics*, 13(3), 437–457. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14650040802203687>
- >Dittmer, J. (2010). *Popular Culture, Geopolitics, and Identity*. Rowman & Littlefield.
- >Dittmer, J., & Sharp, J. (2014). *Geopolitics: An introductory reader*. Routledge.
- >Dodds, K. (2014). *Global geopolitics: A critical introduction* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- >Doctorow, C. (2020). *How to destroy surveillance capitalism*. OneZero.
- >Everett, S. J., & Fritz, J. (2022). *Emergent digital fragmentation: The perils of unilateralism*. Digital Policy Alert & Global Trade Alert. CEPR Press.
- >European Union. (2016). *Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data (General Data Protection Regulation)*. Official Journal of the European Union, L119, 1–88. Retrieved 8/1/2026, from <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2016/679/oj>
- >Feldstein, S. (Ed.). (2023). *New digital dilemmas: Resisting autocrats, navigating geopolitics, confronting platforms*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. <https://carnegieendowment.org/2023/11/29/new-digital-dilemmas-resisting-autocrats-navigating-geopolitics-confronting-platforms-pub-91024>
- >Fernández-Villaverde, J., Mineyama, T., & Song, D. (2024). *Are we fragmented yet? Measuring geopolitical fragmentation and its causal effect* (NBER Working Paper No. 32638). National Bureau of Economic Research. <https://doi.org/10.3386/w32638>
- >Flew, T., Martin, F., & Suzor, N. (2019). Internet regulation as media policy: Rethinking the question of digital communication platform governance. *Journal of Digital Media & Policy*, 10(1), 33–50. [https://doi.org/10.1386/jdmp.10.1.33\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1386/jdmp.10.1.33_1)
- >Galloway, A. R. (2004). *Protocol: How Control Exists after Decentralization*. MIT Press.
- >Gillespie, T. (2018). *Custodians of the Internet: Platforms, Content Moderation, and the Hidden Decisions That Shape Social Media*. Yale University Press.
- >Gray, J. E. (2021). The geopolitics of 'platforms': The TikTok challenge. *Internet Policy Review*, 10(2). <https://doi.org/10.14763/2021.2.1557>
- >Harvey, D. (2006). *Spaces of global capitalism: A theory of uneven geographical development*. Verso.
- >Helberger, N., Pierson, J., & Poell, T. (2018). Governing online platforms: From contested to cooperative responsibility. *The Information Society*, 34(1), 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01972243.2017.1391913>
- >Huq, A. Z. (2025). The geopolitics of digital regulation. *The University of Chicago Law Review*, 92(3), 833–899. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27388706>
- >Huskaj, G. (2023, March). Digital Geopolitics: A review of the current state. In *International Conference on Cyber Warfare and Security* (pp. 152–XIII). Academic Conferences International Limited.
- >Kaye, D. (2019). *Speech Police: The Global Struggle to Govern the Internet*. Columbia Global Reports.
- >Klimburg, A. (2017). *The darkening web: The war for cyberspace*. Penguin Press.

- >Kreiss, D., & McGregor, S. C. (2019). The “arbiters of what our voters see”: Facebook and Google’s struggle with policy, process, and enforcement around political advertising. *Political Communication*, 36(4), 499–522. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2019.1619639>
- >Lanier, J. (2018). *Ten Arguments for Deleting Your Social Media Accounts Right Now*. Henry Holt and Co.
- >Lessig, L. (2006). *Code: Version 2.0*. Basic Books.
- >Mansell, R., & Steinmueller, W. E. (2020). *Advanced introduction to platform economics*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
- >Mayer, M., & Nock, P. J. (2025). Digital fragmentations, technological sovereignty and new perspectives on the global digital political economy. *Global Political Economy*, 4(1), 2–13. <https://doi.org/10.1332/26352257Y2024D000000029>
- >Moore, M., & Tambini, D. (Eds.). (2018). *Digital dominance: The power of Google, Amazon, Facebook, and Apple*. Oxford University Press.
- >Morgado, N. (2023). Modelling neoclassical geopolitics: An alternative theoretical tradition for geopolitical culture and literacy. *European Journal of Geography*, 14(4), 13–21. <https://doi.org/10.48088/ejg.n.mor.14.4.013.021>
- >Naughton, J. (2020, February 9). The splinternet is growing – and we’re living in it. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/>
- >Nye, J. S. (2011). *The Future of Power*. PublicAffairs.
- >Nye, J. S. (2014). *The regime complex for managing global cyber activities*. Global Commission on Internet Governance.
- >OECD. (2023). *OECD Digital Education Outlook 2023: Towards an effective digital education ecosystem*. OECD Publishing. Retrieved 8/1/2026, from [https://www.oecd.org/publications/oecd-digital-education-outlook-2023\\_c74f03de-en.htm](https://www.oecd.org/publications/oecd-digital-education-outlook-2023_c74f03de-en.htm)
- >Ó Tuathail, G., Dalby, S., & Routledge, P. (Eds.). (1998). *The Geopolitics Reader*. Routledge.
- >Ó Tuathail, G., (2000). The postmodern geopolitical condition: States, statecraft, and security at the millennium. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 90(1), 166–178. <https://doi.org/10.1111/0004-5608.00192>
- >Ó Tuathail, G., Dalby, S., & Routledge, P. (Eds.). (2006). *The geopolitics reader* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- >Pang, B., & Lee, L. (2008). Opinion mining and sentiment analysis. *Foundations and Trends in Information Retrieval*, 2(1–2), 1–135. <https://doi.org/10.1561/15000000011>
- >Plantin, J.-C., Lagoze, C., & Sandvig, C. (2018). *Infrastructure studies meet platform studies in the age of Google and Facebook*. *New Media & Society*, 20(1), 293–310. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444816661553>
- >Pohle, J., & Thiel, T. (2020). *Digital sovereignty*. *Internet Policy Review*, 9(4). <https://doi.org/10.14763/2020.4.1532>
- >Ranco, G., Aleksovski, D., Caldarelli, G., Grčar, M., & Mozetič, I. (2015). The effects of Twitter sentiment on stock price returns. *PLOS ONE*, 10(9), e0138441. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0138441>
- >Russian Federation. (2019). *Sovereign Internet Law*. Retrieved 9/1/2026, from <https://cyrilla.org/entity/mznwu2co0k?file=15574714526528fqlyt3js9.pdf>
- >Scholte, J. A. (2020). *Globalization: A critical introduction* (3rd ed.). Palgrave Macmillan.
- >Sprenger, T. O., Tumasjan, A., Sandner, P. G., & Welpe, I. M. (2014). Tweets and trades: The information content of stock microblogs. *European Financial Management*, 20(5), 926–957. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-036X.2013.12007.x>
- >Sharma, N. A., Ali, A. B. M. S., & Kabir, M. A. (2025). A review of sentiment analysis: Tasks, applications, and deep learning techniques. *International Journal of Data Science and Analytics*, 19, 351–388. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41060-024-00594-x>
- >Srncicek, N. (2017). *Platform Capitalism*. Polity Press.
- >Sun, Z., Wang, D., & Li, Z. (2025). Quantification and evolution of online public opinion heat considering interactive behavior and emotional conflict. *Entropy*, 27(7), 701. <https://doi.org/10.3390/e27070701>

- >Timmers, P. (2019). The European Union's cybersecurity industrial policy. *Journal of Cyber Policy*, 4(3), 366–381.
- >UNCTAD. (2023). *Trade and development report 2023: Growth, debt, and climate – Realigning the global financial architecture*. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. Retrieved 8/1/2026, from [https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/tdr2023\\_en.pdf](https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/tdr2023_en.pdf)
- >Vaidhyanathan, S. (2018). *Antisocial Media: How Facebook Disconnects Us and Undermines Democracy*. Oxford University Press.
- >Van Dijck, J., Poell, T., & De Waal, M. (2018). *The Platform Society: Public Values in a Connective World*. Oxford University Press.
- >Wasserman, S., & Faust, K. (1994). *Social Network Analysis: Methods and Applications*. Cambridge University Press.
- >West, S. M. (2017). Data capitalism: Redefining the logics of surveillance and privacy. *Business & Society*, 58(1), 171–204. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0007650317718185>
- >Yoon, J., & Oh, G. (2022). Investor herding behavior in social media sentiment. *Frontiers in Physics*, 10, Article 1023071. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fphy.2022.1023071>
- >Zhao, Y. (2008). *Communication in China: Political economy, power, and conflict*. Bloomsbury Publishing PLC.
- >Zuboff, S. (2019). *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power*. PublicAffairs.

# FRAGMENTACIJA DIGITALNIH PLATFORMI POD UTJECAJEM MEĐUNARODNIH POLITIČKIH DINAMIKA: ANALIZA I PREDIKCIJA GLOBALNIH TRENDOVA

Marija Gombar

**SAŽETAK** Političke odluke donesene u geopolitičkim okolnostima sve značajnije oblikuju globalne digitalne ekosustave, što pokazuju primjeri poput američke zabrane TikToka i povlačenja oglašavanja njemačkih institucija s platforme X (bivši Twitter). Ovo istraživanje identificira i predviđa obrasce fragmentacije digitalnih platformi koji proizlaze iz takvih politički uvjetovanih intervencija. Integracijom analize društvenih mreža (engl. social network analysis, SNA), analize sentimenta (obrada prirodnog jezika, engl. natural language processing, NLP) i prediktivnog modeliranja, rad povezuje regulatorne procese, javni sentiment i prediktivne scenarije kako bi pokazao na koji način političke i korporativne strategije zajednički preoblikuju globalne komunikacijske strukture. Nalazi upućuju na duboku polarizaciju javnog mnijenja o digitalnoj regulaciji, dok prediktivni rezultati sugeriraju da bi nastavak fragmentacije mogao ubrzati stvaranje regionalnih platformi i povećati digitalnu izolaciju. Rad završava preporukama donositeljima politika o razvoju prilagodljivih pravnih i upravljačkih okvira koji mogu odgovoriti na geopolitičku složenost suvremenih digitalnih okružja.

## KLJUČNE RIJEČI

DIGITALNI EKOSUSTAVI, FRAGMENTACIJA, POLITIČKE ODLUKE U GEOPOLITIČKIM OKOLNOSTIMA, UPRAVLJANJE PLATFORMAMA, PREDIKTIVNO MODELIRANJE, ANALIZA SENTIMENTA

Bilješka o autorici

**Marija Gombar** :: Glavni stožer Oružanih snaga Republike Hrvatske ::  
gombar.ma@gmail.com