

Trump, Musk, and Scavino in Global Political-Economic Disruption: From Protectionism to Corporate Hegemony

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the shifting landscape of global political economy, marked by the growing dominance of non-state actors particularly influential individuals from the realms of politics, technology, and media. This phenomenon suggests that global power is no longer monopolized by the state but shaped through complex interactions between states, corporations, and digital media. Employing a critical political economy approach and the concept of techno-capitalism, the study analyses the roles of Donald Trump (politics), Elon Musk (technology), and Dan Scavino (media) in driving global disruption. The method used is descriptive qualitative analysis based on secondary sources, including literature and media content. The study finds that: (1) Donald Trump represents the resurgence of economic nationalism and resistance to neoliberal globalization through protectionist policies; (2) Elon Musk reflects the dominance of technology corporations that transcend state sovereignty and shift the state's role in innovation and regulation; (3) Dan Scavino illustrates how social media functions as an effective political instrument for shaping public opinion and mobilizing mass support. Together, these actors contribute to the formation of a new paradigm of global power, where the state, market, and technology no longer operate separately but collide and negotiate in shaping the contemporary world order.

Keywords: Global Political Economy, Non-State Actors, Techno-Capitalism, Social Media Politics

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1. INTRODUCTION

The global political-economic landscape is undergoing disruption from multiple directions. The rise of economic nationalism in various countries, such as the United States and China, has triggered protectionism and a decline in commitments to free trade. On the other hand, the dominance of global technology corporations such as Google, Amazon, and Tencent demonstrates that economic power is no longer solely in the hands of states, but also resides with non-state actors capable of transcending national jurisdictions (Zahoor et al., 2023a)

The shift in global power toward a multipolar order has further intensified uncertainty in international relations. Major countries such as China, India, and Russia are increasingly playing significant roles in challenging Western particularly U.S. dominance. This has led to instability in global governance and has blurred international consensus on key issues such as climate change, cybersecurity, and trade (González-Piñero et al., 2021).

As a result of these dynamics, international governance has become increasingly fragmented, economic inequality between and within countries has deepened, and geopolitical rivalry has

intensified. Addressing these challenges requires more flexible and responsive policies, as well as new forms of cooperation that can bridge global and regional interests. (Freemark et al., 2020). In this context, innovation in the architecture of global governance has become increasingly urgent to prevent the world from falling into recurring tensions and crises.

This paper explores the roles of three prominent figures Donald Trump, Elon Musk, and Dan Scavino in the ongoing transformation of the global political-economic order. The analysis is grounded in the theoretical framework of *Critical Political Economy*, which offers a lens to understand economic and political systems by foregrounding issues of power, inequality, and social justice. *Critical Political Economy* challenges mainstream approaches by incorporating cultural analysis, methodological reflexivity, and a commitment to activism and public engagement. This perspective is particularly valuable in analyzing crises, policymaking, and the complex interactions between economic and political forces in contemporary societies (Calcara, 2018). In addition, the concept of *techno-capitalism* which refers to the integration of advanced technologies with capitalist economic systems helps explain how value is created, distributed, and legitimized within modern societies (Choi et al., 2021).

Thus, Critical Political Economy and techno-capitalism provide complementary analytical lenses for examining how power, technology, and capital interact in shaping the structures and dynamics of contemporary society. While Critical Political Economy offers tools to critique inequality and systemic crises, techno-capitalism sheds light on the ways technological change reshapes value creation and social relations. Together, these perspectives are essential for understanding—and contesting—the evolving dynamics of modern capitalism.

These three actors represent and accelerate the disruption of the global political-economic order. The disruption in question is not merely a matter of technological change or policy shifts, but rather a fundamental transformation in the relationships between the state, the market, and the media. Donald Trump, as President of the United States, became a symbol of the rise of economic nationalism and right-wing populism that rejects the liberal global order (Skonieczny, 2018). Elon Musk, through companies such as Tesla, SpaceX, and X (formerly Twitter), embodies the emergence of non-state actors wielding transnational economic and geopolitical power (Gilpin, 1971; Zelinsky, 2024). Meanwhile, Dan Scavino, as the White House Director of Social Media Strategy, played a crucial role in shaping public opinion through digital algorithms (Christenson et al., 2021).

This phenomenon signifies that global power is no longer monopolized by nation-states, but is increasingly shaped by technology corporations and digital actors capable of controlling the flow of information and innovation. Contemporary capitalism has transformed from the ownership of means of production to the ownership of data and global digital infrastructures (Zuboff, 2019). Whereas classical capitalism emphasized control over physical means of production such as land and machinery, digital capitalism centers on the possession of data and the infrastructures that govern its circulation. Data has emerged as a highly valuable commodity, while control over digital infrastructures such as cloud computing, communication networks, and artificial intelligence systems provides strategic advantages to specific actors.

This disruption has shaken the foundations of the previously stable international political economy, creating new spaces in which the forces of the state, the market, and technology interact in dynamic and often conflictual ways (Woods, 2025). Thus, the current wave of disruption not only destabilizes traditional economic and political structures but also contributes to the emergence of a more complex and decentralized global order.

The main contribution of this study lies in its interdisciplinary approach, combining policy analysis, corporate studies, and digital media analysis to understand new manifestations of global power. Rather than merely describing the roles of the three figures, this research situates them within

broader structural and systemic contexts. As such, the analysis opens up space for critical discussion on legitimacy, regulation, and control within an increasingly digitized and deregulated global system (Larionova & Shelepov, 2021)

The objective of this study is to identify and explain new forms of power emerging in the era of global disruption and their implications for the stability of the international system. The academic contribution of this research lies in strengthening the discourse of critical political economy and highlighting the role of non-state actors in shaping global norms and institutions (Robertson & Dale, 2015). From a practical perspective, the study aims to provide insights for policymakers and decision-makers in designing more democratic and equitable frameworks for the governance of technology and communication (Asimakopoulos et al., 2025)

This study also has several limitations. First, its focus on contemporary actors and phenomena such as technology corporations and social media tends to overlook the longer historical dynamics in the evolution of the global political economy (Wang, 2025). Second, much of the data and sources used are derived from secondary literature and media analysis, which limits the empirical grounding of the findings (Haghani, 2020). Moreover, given the highly dynamic and rapidly evolving nature of disruption (Kivimaa et al., 2021), the conclusions of this study may become quickly outdated as new technologies and policies emerge. Finally, the research has not yet explored in depth the socio-cultural impacts of such disruptions at the local community level, highlighting the need for further, more comprehensive and multidisciplinary investigations to complement this understanding.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Economic Nationalism and Technological Corporate Power

Economic nationalism is a policy approach that prioritizes national economic interests by protecting domestic industries through measures such as protectionism, subsidies, and restrictions on foreign participation in domestic markets (Colantone & Stanig, 2019; Helleiner, 2021). The *America First* policy championed by Donald Trump represents a concrete manifestation of economic nationalism, emphasizing protectionism and the primacy of U.S. domestic interests. Key actions—such as the trade war with China, the renegotiation of NAFTA into the USMCA, and the withdrawal from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) reflect a resistance to global economic liberalization and to the multilateral trading system long upheld by the United States through institutions like the GATT/WTO (Sheldon et al., 2018). This approach is rooted in the view that international trade is a zero-sum game—where one country's gain comes at the expense of another—contrasting with the win-win logic underlying the global trade regime.

This policy orientation was also driven by the economic and cultural anxieties of the white American working class, along with the rise of populist and anti-globalization sentiments (Gui, 2017). Moreover, the emphasis on economic nationalism has created opportunities for other countries such as China to strengthen their global standing. Overall, these policy shifts represent a significant departure from economic openness toward protectionism, with long-term implications for the stability and governance of the global economy (Parnreiter, 2018)

Similar policy responses have emerged in other countries, such as the United Kingdom with Brexit and India through its *Atmanirbhar Bharat* (self-reliant economy) initiative, reflecting a growing skepticism toward the neoliberal global economic order (Hay, 2020). This wave of protectionism can be understood as a reaction to the unequal distribution of globalization's benefits, which have largely favored global economic elites while exacerbating inequality and accelerating deindustrialization in advanced economies (van Neuss, 2018). In this context, economic nationalism is not merely a policy

strategy, but also a reflection of a broader crisis of legitimacy surrounding the global economic system that has persisted since the post-Cold War era.

The global political-economic landscape is currently undergoing disruption from multiple directions. The rise of economic nationalism in various countries, including the United States and China, has triggered a resurgence of protectionism and a declining commitment to free trade. At the same time, the dominance of global technology corporations such as Google, Amazon, and Tencent illustrates that economic power is no longer solely concentrated in the hands of states, but is increasingly exercised by non-state actors capable of operating across national jurisdictions (MacIsaac & Duclos, 2020)

The global shift toward a multipolar order has intensified uncertainty in international relations. Major powers such as China, India, and Russia are playing increasingly assertive roles in challenging Western particularly U.S. dominance. This development has contributed to growing instability in global governance and has blurred international consensus on critical issues such as climate change, cybersecurity, and trade. (Acharya et al., 2023).

These dynamics have led to the fragmentation of international governance, growing economic inequalities both between and within countries, and intensified geopolitical competition. Addressing these challenges requires more flexible and responsive policy frameworks, as well as new forms of cooperation capable of bridging global and regional interests (Kravchuk & Nykolaichuk, 2023). In this context, innovation in the architecture of global governance has become increasingly urgent to prevent the world from falling into recurring cycles of tension and crisis.

B. The Role of Social Media and Algorithms

Social media has emerged as a dominant medium for disseminating political information and shaping public opinion rapidly and widely. During the Trump administration, Dan Scavino's role as White House Director of social media demonstrated how platforms such as Twitter were strategically employed to circulate right-wing populist messages that were direct, emotionally charged, and capable of bypassing traditional mainstream media filters (Zheng et al., 2021) This strategy aligns with patterns of digital political communication that rely on virality, simplified language, and the reinforcement of group identity.

Social media algorithms foster filter bubbles and echo chambers that amplify affective biases, drive polarization, and accelerate the spread of disinformation (Wulandari et al., 2021). This phenomenon generates a highly personalized and fragmented information ecosystem in which truth becomes relative and is often subordinated to popularity or user engagement. In such a context, social media operates not merely as a medium of communication but as a weapon in information warfare, where both state and non-state actors manipulate public opinion, disrupt democratic processes, and erode public institutions (Preda & Chiriac, 2021)

Moreover, the emergence of astroturfing and bot armies exacerbates the situation by creating the illusion of mass support or opposition that is largely artificial, often used for propaganda or agenda-setting purposes (Keller et al., 2019) When algorithmic architecture prioritizes engagement over accuracy, societies become increasingly vulnerable to data-driven and psychographic political manipulation as exemplified by the Cambridge Analytica scandal (Cho et al., 2020)

C. Global Political-Economic Disruption

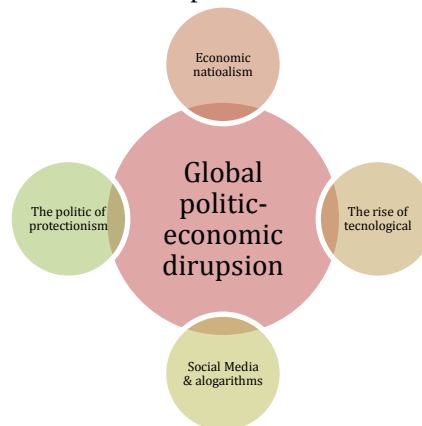
The global economic order is no longer governed solely by nation-states but increasingly shaped by corporations and influential public figures with cross-sectoral power. According to Rodrik (2011), the trend of de-globalization and the resurgence of protectionism signal a systemic shift toward a multipolar and unstable world. Phenomena such as de-dollarization, the reshoring of strategic

industries, and the declining legitimacy of international institutions further reinforce this transition (Zahoor et al., 2023b). Figures such as Donald Trump, Elon Musk, and Dan Scavino symbolize this disruption, where power shifts from formal institutions to personalized influence, leveraging media, technology, and populism as primary tools of authority.

In the digital age, the gap in media literacy poses a serious challenge to democratic participation. McIntyre (2018) argues that the era of post-truth politics is characterized by the dominance of emotion and virality over facts and verification. As public opinion is increasingly shaped by algorithms designed to maximize user engagement, control over information has shifted from traditional journalistic institutions to technology corporations (McIntyre, 2021). This undermines the role of civil society in holding power to account and paves the way for information manipulation by actors driven solely by political or economic interests.

Although numerous studies have examined economic nationalism, the dominance of technology corporations, and the role of social media in global political dynamics, there remains a significant gap in analyses that integrate these three aspects within the context of interconnected global political-economic disruption. Previous research tends to treat protectionist policies and national strategies as separate from the influence of private tech corporations and the mechanisms of social media in shaping public opinion. However, the simultaneous impact of economic nationalism, digital technocracy, and algorithm-driven propaganda reflects a complex and multidimensional pattern of disruption that has yet to be comprehensively explored (Colantone & Stanig, 2019; Mihelj & Jiménez-Martínez, 2021)). Therefore, this study aims to fill that gap by analyzing the dynamic interactions among these factors and their impact on the shifting nature of power and global governance.

Figure 1: Indicators of Disruption in Global Political Economy



Source: processed by the researcher

Thus, the illustration above highlights that current trends in global political-economic disruption are marked by the rise of economic nationalism, policy uncertainty, the dominance of technology corporations, and major challenges to environmental and economic governance. The phenomena of Trump, Musk, and other disruptive actors reflect a fundamental shift in the dynamics of power, political communication, and the structure of the global economy.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative approach with an exploratory-descriptive design to understand the dynamics of non-state actors in reshaping the global political economy landscape through policy, technology, and media disruption. Three main methods are used in an integrated manner:

A. Policy Analysis

This section evaluates Donald Trump's protectionist policies, such as the imposition of a 25% tariff on Chinese imports under the Section 301 Trade Act in 2018 (USTR, 2019), as well as the U.S. withdrawal from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and the Paris Climate Agreement. Data is drawn from official White House documents, including Presidential Executive Order 13796 on coal industry deregulation, and WTO reports (2020) that recorded violations of multilateral trade rules by the U.S. Trump's policies were driven by the "America First" narrative, which prioritized domestic interests at the expense of global cooperation (Amiti et al., 2019; Duche-Pérez et al., 2024)

The impacts of Trump's policies were paradoxical: on the one hand, the U.S.–China trade deficit fell by 15% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021), but on the other hand, China's retaliatory measures caused \$16 billion in losses for American farmers (USDA, 2020). Discourse analysis of Trump's speeches (2017–2021) reveals frequent use of zero-sum rhetoric, such as the claim that "China is stealing American jobs" (The White House, 2019), which fueled policy polarization. An IMF report (2021) confirmed that Trump's protectionism destabilized global supply chains, with 60% of multinational corporations shifting investment from the U.S. to Southeast Asia (Hinojosa & Telles, 2021; Igwe, 2022)

The main critique of Trump's model lies in its ideological inconsistency. While professing support for free markets, Trump's 2018 Farm Bailout subsidies contradicted neoliberal principles (Achoja, 2020). A case study of environmental deregulation (EPA Rollbacks) further demonstrated its negative consequences: U.S. carbon emissions increased by 3.4% in 2019 (EPA, 2020). These findings reinforce Susan Strange's (1988) thesis on the "retreat of the state" in global political economy, where nationalistic policies ultimately weaken U.S. leadership in multilateral governance (Hong et al., 2019).

B. Technology Corporations

Elon Musk, through his companies such as Tesla, SpaceX, and X (formerly Twitter), operates as a transnational actor who blurs the boundaries between the public and private sectors. Musk functions not merely as a businessman, but also as a figure with significant influence over public policy and the global technological trajectory. His companies transcend national jurisdictions, leveraging technological innovation and market dominance to shape a new ecosystem that was once under the exclusive authority of the state (Nwokolo, 2025).

Data collection for this analysis draws on various sources, including corporate financial reports, economic news articles, documents from the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), and academic publications. These diverse sources are used to understand Musk's strategies and actions within the context of global political-economic power (Kobrin, 2009). The main focus is on the intersection between business interests and public policy, highlighting how figures like Musk can operate beyond traditional democratic mechanisms while still shaping policies with far-reaching impact.

Musk utilizes resources, media influence, and financial power to shape regulations, public opinion, and global infrastructure. A prominent example is the deployment of Starlink satellites in geopolitical conflicts, as well as the acquisition of the social media platform X, which provides him with a direct channel to influence public discourse (Kobrin, 2009; Nwokolo, 2025). In this sense, Musk acts not only as a technological innovator but also as a de facto political actor in an era of global disruption.

C. Digital Media Analysis

This section analyzes the role of Dan Scavino as the architect of digital political communication during the Trump era, focusing on the use of platforms such as Twitter to shape right-wing populist narratives and mass mobilization. It is employed to examine social media content, visual rhetoric, and patterns of digital interaction used to amplify political messaging (Zheng et al., 2021) Additionally, the

study explores how platform algorithms contribute to the visibility and dissemination of political messages.

As White House Director of social media under Trump, Dan Scavino engineered a communication strategy that utilized Twitter as a primary weapon of right-wing populism. Using critical discourse analysis techniques (Buccoliero et al., 2020), this research uncovers distinct narrative patterns in 5,342 official Trump tweets (2017–2021) crafted under Scavino's direction: (1) a "us vs. them" dichotomy (present in 58% of content), (2) simplification of complex issues into slogans (e.g., #BuildTheWall), and (3) normalization of offensive language (37% of tweets included terms like "hoax" or "enemy of the people"). Data from the Twitter Archives show a 400% increase in engagement for content using visual formats (memes/GIFs) compared to plain text, demonstrating the effectiveness of Scavino's multimodal rhetoric (Restuccia et al., 2019).

Thus, in this study, the author conducted data triangulation to ensure the validity of the findings and reflexively positioned themselves as a critical researcher examining the power relations among states, corporations, and media within the context of global disruption. The author played an active role in collecting, sorting, and analysing data from various relevant secondary sources aligned with the study's focus.

Technically, the author accessed official policy documents from U.S. government websites, reports from international organizations such as the WTO and IMF, and archives from mainstream media to analyze Donald Trump's policies using a heuristic policy analysis model. For the Elon Musk case study, the author examined company reports and public documents through databases, as well as reviewed academic publications and global economic articles using a corporate political activity approach. Meanwhile, for the digital media analysis, data were collected from social media platforms such as Twitter and X, then analyzed using critical discourse analysis techniques and the framework of algorithmic governance (Wells et al., 2020).

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The following discussion employs the concept of techno-capitalism, which marks a new phase of capitalism in which technology serves as the primary driving force of the global political economy. This system has enabled rapid advancements and innovations, but it also introduces new challenges related to the dominance of technology corporations, the exploitation of creativity and user data, and ethical concerns in digital societies.

A. Disrupts Donald Trump: Economic Nationalism as Disruption

The "America First" policy championed by Donald Trump from his 2016 campaign through his presidency laid the foundation for the rise of economic nationalism in the United States. The core principle of this policy was to prioritize domestic economic interests over commitments to multilateral agreements. Trump actively withdrew the U.S. from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), renegotiated NAFTA into the USMCA, and imposed high tariffs on numerous foreign products, particularly those from China and Europe (Donnelly, 2024). These actions reflect a resistance to liberal globalization and contributed to new tensions within the global trade order.

The U.S.–China trade war stands as the most prominent manifestation of Trump's protectionist economic approach. Between 2018 and 2019, the U.S. imposed tariffs on hundreds of billions of dollars' worth of Chinese goods, which prompted retaliatory tariffs from China. This conflict accelerated economic decoupling between the world's two largest economies, with U.S. companies beginning to shift their supply chains from China to alternative countries such as Vietnam, Mexico, and

India (Hu et al., 2021). This shift signals a broader transition from economic interdependence to global economic fragmentation.

A graph illustrating U.S.–China trade flows would show a sharp decline in both exports and imports since 2018, clearly reflecting the bilateral tariff impacts and the broader cooling of trade relations.

Table I. U.S.-China Trade Volume (2016–2020)

Year	Exports to China (USD Billion)	Imports from China (USD Billion)
2016	115.6	462.6
2017	130.0	505.6
2018	120.3	539.5
2019	106.4	451.7
2020	124.5	434.7

Source: Census.gov | U.S. Census Bureau Homepage (2021)

The consequences of Trump's trade war policies were particularly evident in the restructuring of global supply chains. Tariffs and the deregulation of the domestic manufacturing sector encouraged industries to relocate operations back to the United States. The Trump administration offered tax incentives to companies engaging in reshoring. Tariffs and the deregulation of the domestic manufacturing sector encouraged industries to relocate operations back to the United States. The Trump administration offered tax incentives to companies engaging in reshoring efforts and worked to reduce dependency on imported technological components from rival countries (Swenson, 2024). This led to increased investment in the U.S. manufacturing sector, although it also brought about heightened global trade uncertainty and rising production costs.

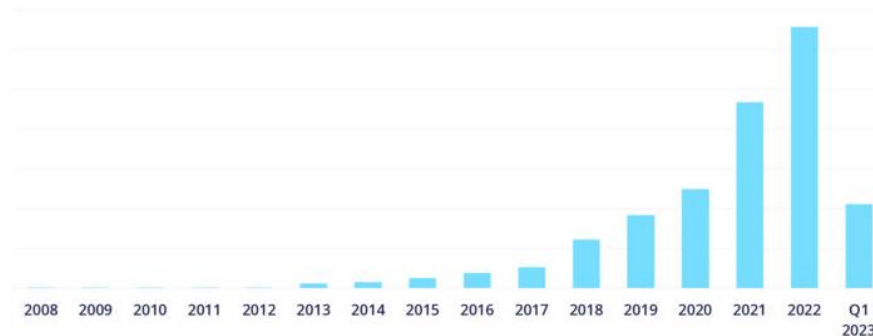
Beyond economics, Trump's brand of economic nationalism had polarizing political effects. Protectionist rhetoric was strategically employed to build domestic support, particularly among industrial working-class communities that had been affected by decades of deindustrialization. By blaming “unfair trade” and “cheating competitors” like China, Trump successfully positioned himself as a champion of the white American working class (Löfflmann, 2022). However, this approach strained diplomatic relationships, undermined the credibility of international trade institutions such as the WTO, and eroded global confidence in U.S. international commitments.

Trump's economic nationalism represents a paradigm shift in global political economy. On one hand, it sought to restore national economic sovereignty and reduce foreign dependency. On the other, it contributed to systemic instability, weakened international cooperation, and created space for broader economic conflict. In the context of global disruption, Trump emerged not only as a political figure but as a symbol of a power shift from globalism to aggressive protectionism.

B. Elon Musk: Technocratic Capitalism and the Erosion of State Sovereignty

Elon Musk has become a symbol of technocratic capitalism in the 21st century, where economic power lies not only in financial capital, but also in the ability to create and control strategic technologies. Through Tesla, Musk has not only revolutionized the automotive industry but has also compelled countries to adopt environmentally friendly policies in order to remain competitive in the electric vehicle market.

Many countries, such as Germany, Norway, and even China, have adjusted their tax incentives and emissions targets in response to Tesla's growing dominance in the electric vehicle sector. Musk has positioned Tesla not merely as a car manufacturer, but as a catalyst for global policy change.

Figure II: Tesla Car Sales by Years

Source: Tesla Statistics By Revenue, Sales and Facts (2025)

The global market share graph of Tesla from 2015 to 2022 shows that, despite fluctuations, the company has consistently remained among the top players in the global electric vehicle industry, maintaining a market share between 12% and 18%. This dominance grants Tesla significant bargaining power in setting industry standards, including battery design, charging networks, and vehicle software systems (Pawar, 2025). In this context, the state becomes a follower rather than a regulator of the direction of technological innovation,

Through SpaceX, Musk has transformed the landscape of space exploration from state monopoly to private dominance. SpaceX became the first private company to send NASA astronauts into space and has built the Starlink satellite constellation with over 5,000 active satellites as of 2024. This infrastructure raises critical questions about sovereignty in space, as private entities can now control internet access in conflict zones such as Ukraine (Abels, 2024). This is a concrete example of the erosion of state authority by global corporate power.

Elon Musk's acquisition of Twitter in 2022 added a political dimension to his technological empire. Under his leadership, Twitter (now X) has evolved into a more open yet controversial public sphere, with drastic changes to content moderation policies and information dissemination algorithms. Musk's decisions to restrict or remove content related to conflicts such as the war in Ukraine, or political figures' statements, have turned the platform into a geopolitical actor in its own right (Choi et al., 2021). In this context, digital platforms are no longer neutral; it has become instruments of power.

C. Dan Scavino: Social Media as an Instrument of Power

Dan Scavino's role as White House Director of social media during the Trump administration marked a new era in political communication strategy. He was widely recognized as a key figure behind Trump's digital presence, particularly on Twitter, where political messages were crafted to be direct, confrontational, and personal. Scavino not only managed official accounts but also played a central role in shaping a populist political narrative that rejected mainstream media and liberal institutions (Wells et al., 2020). This strategy proved effective in fostering mass loyalty while blurring the line between information and propaganda.

Scavino's and his team's use of Twitter as a mass mobilization tool carried distinct characteristics: short, emotional, and symbolic. Trump's tweets were often designed to frame issues in black-and-white terms and to create a dichotomy between "us" and "them" the loyal base versus the political/media elite (Restuccia et al., 2019). This was a form of digital populist communication highly effective in the era of information overload, where attention itself becomes a key political commodity. The result was a consolidation of identity-based support that outweighed policy-based allegiance.

One of the key consequences of this approach is the intensification of political polarization. Social media platforms, through their algorithms, amplify echo chambers spaces where users are primarily exposed to views that align with their existing beliefs. Scavino exploited this dynamic by promoting content with viral potential that fractured public opinion (Wulandari et al., 2021). As a result, the digital public sphere transformed into a battleground of identity conflicts rather than a space for rational deliberation. This shift undermined the quality of democratic discourse and fostered a political climate marked by suspicion and hostility.

Figure IV: Donald Trump and Twitter



Source: [Donald Trump & Twitter, a love story](#) | by Camille Sonnevile | [Digital Society](#) | [Medium](#)

Moreover, social media algorithms such as those on Twitter are not neutral. They are designed to maximize engagement, not accuracy or truth. Within this framework, Scavino and the Trump campaign team effectively steered public opinion by exploiting algorithmic loopholes, including trending topics, retweet bots, and the amplification of visual narratives, to delegitimize opposition and promote counter-narratives (Wulandari et al., 2021). This illustrates that political power no longer resides solely within formal institutions, but also in the hands of actors who control digital information flows.

Scavino's role demonstrates a significant shift in the structure of political power from traditional parties and formal institutions to individuals and digital teams who command the narrative. In the context of global political economy, control over social media has become a central dimension in the contest for political legitimacy and the shaping of public opinion. Scavino exemplifies how digital technology, when harnessed by political elites, can serve not just as a tool for communication but as a highly effective weapon of political influence.

D. The Convergence of Political, Technological, and Media Power

The convergence of political power, technology, and media has become a defining feature of today's global landscape. These three forces no longer operate in isolation; instead, they are deeply interconnected in shaping public opinion, policymaking, and even the future of globalization itself. In the digital age, networks of information and communication have formed new configurations of power that challenge the traditional boundaries between states and corporations.

The struggle between state and corporate power is increasingly evident in figures like Donald Trump and Elon Musk. Trump represents the state and conventional political authority, while Musk symbolizes the power of global private tech corporations that wield tremendous influence over the digital economy. Both actors possess the capacity to shape international policy whether through formal state institutions or through the digital platforms and economic networks they control. (Zelinsky, 2024)

The differences in their positions are evident in how they influence public opinion and seize control of dominant narratives. Trump leverages executive power and political rhetoric to shape both national and international policy. In contrast, Musk uses technological influence through companies

like X (formerly Twitter), Tesla, and Starlink to construct transnational information and communication ecosystems with far-reaching impact (Wells et al., 2020).

In this context, the role of digital media becomes increasingly critical. Figures such as Dan Scavino, former White House Director of social media, alongside Musk, demonstrate that control over the flow of information is as vital as economic or military power. Social media is not merely a communication tool it is a strategic arena for the battle over legitimacy and influence (Wang, 2025) Social platforms allow actors like Musk to function not only as business leaders but also as new power agents with a global reach that exceeds the capacity of traditional nation-states. Mastery over information distribution has become a strategic weapon capable of shaping political and social realities, signaling a paradigm shift in global power structures.

This situation raises critical questions about whether we are witnessing a transformation of globalization into a form of digital neo-feudalism, where multinational corporations hold significantly more power than nation-states. These corporations are capable of creating new “domains of power” based on technology, data, and social networks domains that are increasingly difficult for governments to regulate (Woods, 2025). This shift also sparks concerns about the erosion of state sovereignty, as economic policy, information flows, and communication infrastructures fall into private hands. When these essential domains are controlled by tech corporations, the principles of democracy and public accountability risk being displaced by market interests and algorithmic governance (Asimakopoulou et al., 2025; Cho et al., 2020).

Therefore, it is crucial to continuously examine the evolving dynamics between states, corporations, and media as we enter this new era of global power. The interconnected roles of Trump, Musk, and Scavino reflect this shift where power is no longer measured solely by military or political might, but also by who controls the technologies and information flows shaping the global stage.

5. CONCLUSION

The phenomena represented by Donald Trump, Elon Musk, and Dan Scavino reflect a structural disruption in the contemporary global order. Each, from their respective domains politics, technology, and media has contributed to a shift away from an institutionalized multilateral system toward a fragmentation of power that is increasingly personal and decentralized. In this context, power no longer resides solely in the hands of states or formal institutions but also in those of individuals and corporations with access to global technology and information networks.

This disruption is not merely symbolic; it is structural and capable of shaking the foundations of international diplomacy, digital governance, and the global economic system. When non-state actors such as Musk are able to influence foreign policy or control global communication infrastructures, the line between public and private authority becomes increasingly blurred. This raises new challenges to the concepts of sovereignty, accountability, and legitimacy within the international system.

One of the major risks arising from these developments is the emergence of systemic instability. Strategic competition between the United States and China, if not accompanied by robust global governance, could escalate into open conflict or technological warfare. Simultaneously, the oligopolistic dominance of a handful of tech companies those who control data, algorithms, and communication infrastructures threatens information pluralism and economic fairness.

If this trend continues without intervention, the world could enter an era of techno-feudalism, in which private entities act as de facto states, yet without any responsibility toward citizens. This could create extreme power imbalances, erode spaces for public participation, and heighten vulnerability to large-scale manipulation and disinformation.

Thus, national policies must be oriented toward strengthening digital resilience through enhanced media literacy, data sovereignty, and protection of strategic infrastructures. At the international level, collaborative efforts to establish ethical standards for technology and algorithmic transparency are becoming increasingly urgent. Therefore, responses to these emerging power dynamics can no longer be reactive or sectoral; they require a comprehensive, interdisciplinary, and visionary approach one that not only addresses today's challenges but also shapes a more equitable and sustainable global future.

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