

Platform Neutrality and the Global Balance of Powers

Marcel S. Stolz

Department of Computer Science

(Cybersecurity Analytics)

University of Oxford

Oxford, United Kingdom

marcel.stolz@oriel.ox.ac.uk

Abstract—This paper defines *platform neutrality* as a concept for large technology companies, most notably, social media platform providers. It is deduced from the concept of state neutrality, and acknowledges societal and political functions as well as state-like structures these companies have put into place. The paper argues that recent developments demonstrate a convergence of social media towards platform neutrality. It explains the benefit of platform neutrality both for businesses as well as societies.

Index Terms—social media, facebook, twitter, youtube, neutrality, balance of powers

I. INTRODUCTION

Large technology companies have become significant global actors and have been found to revolutionise the conventional *Westphalian system of states* [7], which defined states as the single entity of sovereignty in an anarchic system of states. International Relations Theory traditionally considers states to be in a “constant state of competition” [10] and it is not clear what role large technology companies take in the cyber era. Some scholars have suggested that globally operating technology companies should be considered as entities similarly relevant to states for international relations and global cooperation. [7]. On the background of recent developments, particularly during the coronavirus pandemic and on social media platforms, this paper analyses the role of large technology companies and addresses some of the imminent problems encountered during the last months and years, such as the tension between freedom of information and censorship, the balance between regulation and self-responsibility, or the relation between social media providers and the state.

This paper focuses on examples from social media platform providers, as they yield the most prominent cases for analysis. In order to explore their role, this paper follows an approach of analysis, empirical examples (“*case studies*”) and reflection. It builds on and further develops the concept of *platform neutrality* [18], in order to conceptualise how the role between technology providers and the global community may be rationalised. It is deductive and exploratory. The concept is partially informed by past research based on case studies [18] and on research analysing the potential of *state neutrality* in the cyber era [16].

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows: Section II outlines the specific context of the discussion. It explains the concepts in International Relations Theory and Social Science, and how the emergence of cyberspace has influenced these concepts. Thereafter, Section III outlines the conventional principles of neutrality and explains how these have developed from conventional state neutrality towards state neutrality in the cyber era, and how the neutrality concept may be applied to global non-state actors by defining *platform neutrality*. This is done by deductive reasoning. A subsequent case study in Section IV explains how social media platforms indeed do converge towards a state of platform neutrality. Finally, Section V draws conclusions and outlines possible future work.

II. CONTEXT OF NEUTRALITY AND GLOBAL STABILITY

Since this paper addresses the role large technology companies may take in a global context and in relation to states, it is useful to consider the disciplinary context of the discussion. International Relations Theory conceptualises the inter-state relations and global power dynamics. The most common model for reasoning is referred to as the *Westphalian system of states*, as for example outlined by Nye [10]. It considers states to be the sole sovereign entities in an anarchic systems of states¹ and considers them to be in a state of constant competition. Kello claims that this system has been revolutionised by the emergence of cyberspace as a novel dimension of security, and that large technology companies have become actors with similar relevance as states in the global arena. The reflections in this paper rely on this approach.

Furthermore, a common concept of discussion in international relations is the idea of a Balance of Power between sovereign units of the global arena. As Nye outlines [10], a balance of power may support global stability in an anarchic system of states, since it distributes power between different actors and may ensure that one single actor cannot become (too) dominant over the others, or act as a hegemon. Furthermore, *Balance of Power Theory* outlines the idea that states will take actions to avoid any one state from becoming too powerful, in

¹In particular, this is the common conception in the *realist* perspective of International Relations Theory, see Nye [10].

order to balance power. The concept of neutrality emerged from balance of power considerations in the 19th century following the napoleonic wars and was defined at the *Concert of Europe* [10, 13, 16, 19]: the five major European powers (Russia, Prussia, Britain, Austria, and France) defined that the geostrategically important territory of Switzerland in the Alps should not be controlled by any of them. Instead, it should remain neutral.

As the focus of this paper lies on global technology companies, particularly social media platform providers, a further important concept of International Relations Theory is that of *transnational actors* and *complex interdependence* [10]. Large technology companies may be considered as transnational actors, as outlined by Nye, and in a world of complex interdependence, their global role and their relation to states is of interest, as they also influence the internal functioning of states. Dutton has outlined how social media platforms—or rather, their users—are a *fifth estate* [5] within (democratic) countries:

“The collectivity of individuals who use the Internet to hold institutions more accountable – the Fifth Estate - [...] opens new ways of making government, media and other institutions more socially accountable.”

The influence of social media platforms on societies, politics, and security has been demonstrated by numerous examples [18]. During the Coronavirus pandemic, social media has taken on an even more prominent role in interconnecting people.

The emergence of technology companies as transnational actors, therefore, yields an interesting example which combines the role of an actor relevant for national politics with the role of a globally relevant actor for international relations. The upcoming sections explain how the concept of neutrality has changed with the emergence of cyberspace and how it may be applied to large technology companies, and how, on this background, platform neutrality is being implemented by large technology companies, with particular relevance for social media companies.

III. FROM STATE NEUTRALITY TO PLATFORM NEUTRALITY

As outlined in the previous section, state neutrality is a concept introduced and explained on the background of balance and distribution of power theories. It contributes to global stability by means of declaring a strategically important asset—conventionally the territory and infrastructure of a state—as independent from large powers’ direct control.

A. State Neutrality

State neutrality has been conceptualised by the definition of specific functions it yields for the implementing state as well as the global community, most notably by means of the example of Switzerland. Switzerland is the longest lasting example of state neutrality, as it has been continuously implemented and evolved since 1815. A history of neutrality

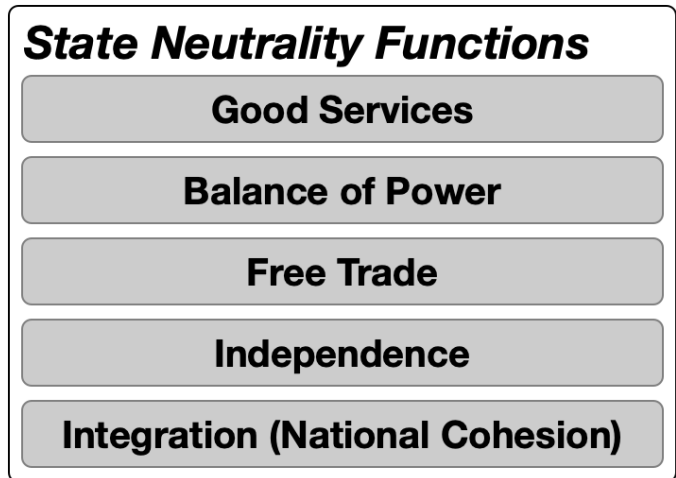


Fig. 1. Functions of State Neutrality [16, 19]

has been, for example, outlined by Suter [19] and its functions defined by Riklin [13]. A graphic outlining the functions is shown in Figure 1 (from Stolz [16]) and the functions shortly summarised in the following.

Integration denotes neutrality as a useful tool for (ethnically or culturally) diverse communities, e.g., in order to prevent a split in society, which could be caused by political tensions between neighbouring countries connected with the respective groups of a country. *Independence* denotes political independence from major political blocks and alliances in the international context. It reduces the risk to be drawn into a conflict connected to another member of an alliance system. *Free Trade* identifies a similar aspect, with a stronger focus on economy: In a world divided into economic blocks, it ensures that trade is possible with any and all of these blocks. *Balance of Power* denotes the geostrategic connotation of Swiss neutrality already outlined, where a neutral actor may contribute to a balance of power. *Good Services* are related. On the one hand, they include the provision of diplomatic or supervisory services for third parties (e.g., the US interests section located at the Swiss embassy in Teheran, or the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission at the intra-Korean armistice line). On the other hand it includes hosting of international organisations, such as the United Nations or International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), or the supervision of international treaties, such as the Geneva Conventions.

Stolz elaborates, how the concept of state neutrality may evolve in the cyber era: Neutral countries could provide good services, such as hosting a forensic laboratory for the analysis of the origin of cyberattacks, similar to the case for biological and chemical weapons. Furthermore, neutral actors may be important when facilitating cyber norms on use of cyberspace for conflict or propaganda. He further elaborates on the difficulty of responding to cyber incidents originating from state actors [17] and how current practice works de-escalative, counter-intuitively to Buchanan’s *Cybersecurity Dilemma* [4].

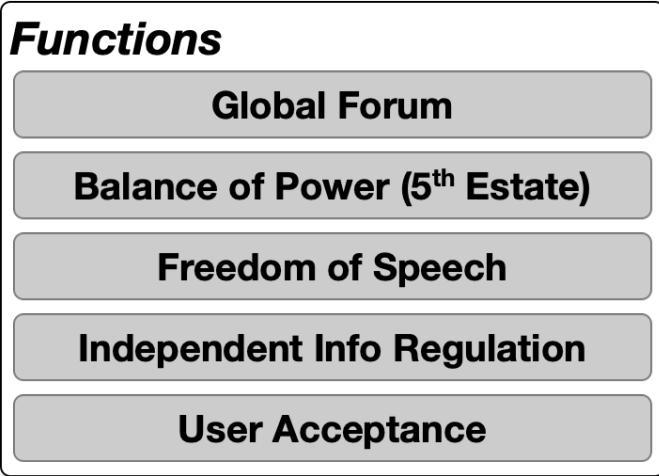


Fig. 2. Initial definition of *platform neutrality* [16]

B. Platform Neutrality

The concept of state neutrality evolves into the first inductive definition of *platform neutrality* [18]: the functions are transferred to social media platform providers, as shown in Figure 2. This definition relies on empirical evidence from three case studies for its justification:

- 1) The discussion around misinformation and censorship on social media, and appropriate countermeasures, following the first “lockdown” of the Coronavirus pandemic in 2020;
- 2) the discussion on hate speech and censorship on social media, and appropriate countermeasures, following the emergence of the *Black Lives Matter* protests in the United States and further countries in 2020;
- 3) The United States presidential election campaign in 2020 and the subsequent United States Capitol attack in January 2021, with a focus on political ads control and balance of power between technology companies and their host state.

The different functions of platform neutrality are derived from the respective functions of state neutrality: *User Acceptance* describes the requirement of neutrality for a broad user base. Users who feel that the platform they use supports a certain political view or narrative will not trust this platform and boycott its use by switching to a different social media provider. However, the value of social media platform is derived from their universality: only when they provide a space considered equally open to any political groups and individuals, the platforms may function as a *global forum*. Furthermore, the platforms themselves have an interest in appealing to the broadest possible user range due to economic incentives. Similarly, users will be inclined to use a platform that most of their friends use, since they aim to connect with all of their friends through the same platform. In this sense, user acceptance might be considered a similar principle to state neutrality’s integration function. *Independent Info Regulation* denotes the possibility to detach information

regulation from the control of a government or state. In order to avoid censorship or the control of media and information—as considered necessary for liberal democracies—the information should not be controlled directly by a state. Conventionally, the oversight over information control mechanism would lie with a judiciary system, following a state’s legislation. However, on a global platform, such as social media, such a mechanism has limited impact: While social media platform providers may be forced by national legislation to abide by local (information) legislation, in practice, users may easily circumvent such legislation if policies are only based on geo-blocking and not applied universally by a social media platform provider. It is therefore more reasonable, if platform providers define and implement rules and principles for the contents that may be shared on their platforms globally and in a self-regulated manner, relying on a broad consensus of countries. This also prevents that a single state may control online information and ensures freedom of information, while maintaining a basic set of principles, for example to avoid hate speech or misinformation. This function is, therefore, closely related to *Freedom of Speech* and the related considerations have already been outlined. The *Balance of Power* function relates both to its counterpart in state neutrality in terms of balancing power on a global level as well as within a state: On the one hand, neutral platforms may act in a balancing power between states, since they provide a forum and define the rules for contents that users (including state entities or members of government) may post. On the other hand, this also provides a balance within a state, between entities such as the *populus* and a government, which would traditionally have been regulated by means of national legislation. *Global Forum*, finally, is closely related to the balance of powers: neutrality enables platforms to provide a global forums for all on an inter- and intra-state level.

IV. SOCIAL MEDIA CONVERGENCE TOWARDS PLATFORM NEUTRALITY

Having outlined the concept of state neutrality in cyberspace as well as the derived concept of platform neutrality, this section outlines how the concept of platform neutrality should further be evolved and reflects on a convergence of developments towards platform neutrality, reflecting on recent developments on social media platforms.

A. Amended Definition of Platform Neutrality

Figure 3 outlines an updated version of the functions of platform neutrality, based on the original definition shown in Figure 2: *Universality* has been found to be a more fitting term, since it denotes that neutrality enables platforms to be perceived as universal, i.e., suitable for all user groups. A platform governed or influenced predominantly by one state could be perceived to be politically biased towards a specific user base. A platform that credibly upholds neutrality in the sense of independence, should yield an environment considered universal, i.e., suitable for all users, regardless of their political or any other background. *Self-regulation*

Platform Neutrality Functions

Global Forum

Balance of Power

Information Freedom

Self-Regulation

Universality

Fig. 3. Amended definition of Platform Neutrality

relates to the aspect that platforms should not necessarily rely on regulation by one single state or adopt its content rules depending on where users access the platform from. As has been outlined previously, geo-blocking is of limited use on the Internet: contents that are limited, altered, or blocked in one geographic location may easily be accessed by making use of tools, such as Virtual Private Networks (VPNs) [1, 2, 20], Secure Shell (SSH) tunnels [24], or TOR browsers [24]. Nevertheless, social media platform have an interest in defining and enforcing basic rules for user content and user behaviour, as has been outlined by Stolz [18], in order to avoid scandals and a negative reputation and in order to ensure universality of their platform, i.e., in order to appeal to a widest possible user base. While platform service providers might not be subject to a single state's legislation in most cases, they do nevertheless give way to pressure from some individual states and groups of states, such as in supranational organisations (e.g., the European Union). Therefore, while platforms do and should regulate themselves in terms of the concept of platform neutrality, they do this in the manner of a dialogue with societies, movements, and states, in order to achieve universality. *Information Freedom* denotes the function of neutral platforms enabling a space that might be more free than a nationally regulated information space. On the one hand, this may be useful for citizens and movements in countries where information is subject to state control. On the other hand, this does not mean that any information may be shared; misinformation, for example, may be limited by a platform, as may attempts of promotion of violence or hate speech. However, since this is done in a self-regulatory manner, platform neutrality ensures a wider level of information freedom and a level of control of what may or may not be said that may be deemed more independent from state-controlled information legislation. As such, neutral platforms may be considered important facilitators for critical debates within and across societies and countries. The notion of *Balance of Power* does not differ from its original definition.

It includes the idea of a facilitator of a *fifth estate* within a country as well as a balancing factor between states in the information space of cyberspace.

B. Deductive Reflection and Verification of the Concept of Platform Neutrality

Subsection III-B outlined the initial definition of the term *platform neutrality*. The research references followed an inductive approach for this purpose, as outlined by Lamont and Boduszynski [8]; i.e., the theoretical concept of platform neutrality has been generated from empirical observation. The current section aims at following a deductive approach; i.e., the theoretical (amended) proposition for the concept of platform neutrality is tested to see whether it holds true with respect to further empirical observation. The empirical observation should not substantially overlap with the previous observations used for the inductive approach, in order to avoid a logical loop. Therefore, empirical examples that have already been used in the initial platform neutrality paper are specifically marked.

C. Empirical Examples

This subsection outlines a number of empirical examples relevant to the theoretical concept of platform neutrality. While the list is not exhaustive, the examples have been selected according to their relevance for platform neutrality and aim to illustrate a continuity of developments on the basis of the tension between traditional state control and the emergence of large technology companies as a relevant global actor. The empirical examples are listed in the following. Examples that have already been referred to are highlighted and referenced to the initial paper defining platform neutrality.

- 1) 2011 Arab spring: promotion of peaceful and violent uprisings against governments in Arab countries through social media; [18]
- 2) 2020 debate on misinformation and censorship with respect to the coronavirus pandemic; [18]
- 3) 2020 debate on hate speech, encouragement of violence, and censorship on the background of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement; [18]
- 4) 2020 discussion and measures with respect to the US presidential election campaign and social media ad campaigns; [18]
- 5) implementation of a review body for content moderation on Facebook; [18]
- 6) 2021 United States Capitol attack and blocking of Donald Trump's accounts;
- 7) 2021 blocking of *Russia Today's* Youtube channel;
- 8) usage of Twitter by the Taliban during the 2021 fall of Kabul (Afghanistan).
- 9) effect of Twitter on international diplomacy, exemplified by deescalation of diplomatic tensions in Turkey after tweet by US Embassy.

The first five examples listed have already been thoroughly discussed and outlined by Stolz [18] and have informed the initial definition of platform neutrality. While social media

companies have taken different approaches to addressing the tension between freedom of expression and necessity for self-regulation in order to avoid unwanted consequences (e.g., violence or hate speech), they follow a tendency towards a principle that attempts to reduce the amount of blocked content as far as possible; many social media companies only block or delete content in very clear cases of abuse. In cases where content is questionable but does not have a clearly abusive connotation, the approach seems to follow a principled of “mature social media citizenship”: users are informed that information displayed or expressed by other users might be contentious and provided with resources, which they may consult in order to access factual background information about a topic. This tendency expresses the benefit of platform neutrality with respect to information and political discussions: the self-regulation tends to be aimed at the necessary minimum, while attempting to avoid unnecessary censorship. By this practice, information freedom is upheld as far as reasonably possible. The social media companies take on a clear role of balancing power between governmental information control and users’ interests in free and open discussion and access to information. This enables the platforms to function as global forums, either for national or transnational information exchange and debate; universality is embraced as a principle in that the platform providers do not specifically aim at discriminating against any particular political group as long as no proof of deliberate spread of false information or abusive, hateful, polemic, or violent language is identified.

List item 6 is a further example of how social media providers’ practice converges towards platform neutrality: After the 2021 US Capitol attacks, social media companies came to be at the centre of public attention [15]. It was claimed to have a direct connection with developments on social media and, more specifically, the engagement of former US President Donald Trump on social media. It is a particularly important example, demonstrating how activities on social media imminently led to real-world violence. Furthermore, it may be juxtaposed to list item 1 in order to underline the importance of platform neutrality: While the developments during the Arab spring were predominantly seen as positive in the Western world, since they were perceived as pro-democratic and supportive of Western ideals, they are comparable to the developments in January 2021. Also during the Arab spring, groups connected through social media emerging not only in peaceful protests but also violent action. On the other hand, the US Capitol attacks of January 2021 were seen as critical by the majority of Western media. Platform neutrality suggests that developments on social media should be treated equally with respect to their potential for violence, regardless of the political aims of or sympathy with a particular group. In this sense, platform neutrality is also closely comparable to the conventional state neutrality. Furthermore, the subsequent handling by social media illustrates the effectiveness and usefulness of *Self-Regulation* by social media providers: Social media accounts deemed responsible for the escalations were subsequently blocked or banned completely, including

the account of former US president Donald Trump [14]. While Twitter made its decision permanent without further possibility for review, Facebook redirected its decision to its independent Oversight Board for review. The decision was confirmed, although the Oversight Board decided that a mandatory review period for the decision had to be put into place, such that the decision could be further reviewed after two years [9, 12]. While Twitter has not implemented a body similar to Facebook’s Oversight Board, it launched and enhanced its *Birdwatch* service, a community-based approach for managing misinformation [3]. Both the Oversight Board and Birdwatch are examples of how technology companies approach Self-Regulation, in order to maintain their credibility and provide a foundation for unbiased decisions with respect to information control, while acting independently from direct state involvement. The examples underline the role of technology companies with respect to the function of Balance of Power.

List item 7 further illustrates that information control by social media also bears relevance outside the United States and English speaking countries: Russia Today’s (RT) German Youtube channel had been banned following repeated spreading of disinformation about the coronavirus pandemic [23]. The example amplifies the importance of independence of social media companies, as the banning was followed by tensions between Russia, Youtube and threats of banning German journalists from Russia in return. The example may illustrate how Youtube balances the power between states and their influence on societies abroad, while applying self-regulatory rules and principles to its users.

List item 8 illustrates how Twitter functioned as an important facilitator of information following the fall of Kabul and collapse of the Afghan government in August 2021. A Twitter channel named *Civilian Casualty Prevention and Complaints Commission of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan*, which had been set up earlier in the year, served the Taliban both in taking control in a state of chaos but also reducing chaos in an environment of power vacuum [6]. It underlines how social media platforms are not only an essential actor on the inter- and intra-state level but also when a state no longer exists. The functions of Global Forum and Balance of Power (between old and new government) as well as Universality (since Twitter was used by US / allied users as well as the Taliban) are the ones most imminent from this example.

List item 9 further illustrates how a tweet from the US Embassy in Turkey allegedly reduced diplomatic tensions between the Turkish government and the West [21]: Preceding the tweet, eight high-ranking Western diplomats had been accused of interference in internal affairs and threatened with expulsion by the Turkish government. Despite the ambiguity of the tweet, it was considered that it was a sign of “backing down” by the Turkish side. This example shows how social media functions as a Global Forum, not only for individuals but also for state affairs between nations. Would social media platforms experience stronger state control, their role as provider for such a forum would need to be questioned, as well as their

universality with respect to participation of a wide range of state-level actors in the respective social media platform.

D. Convergence towards Platform Neutrality

From the examples listed and analysed in the previous section, we derive a convergence towards the principle of platform neutrality. Furthermore, the examples illustrate the applicability of the theoretical concept as a tool for analysis and interpretation for the role of social media for societies and the international communities.

A further indicator for convergence towards a state of platform neutrality is the European Union's planned *Digital Services Act* (DSA) [23]: While it aims at improving collaboration between a state-backed body (the European Union) and social media platform providers, it also acknowledges the difficulty of regulating the contents of these platforms nationally. Contents should not be blocked in one single country, but regulated in collaboration with platform providers through a harmonised framework. Hence, an approach is followed that respects the specific characteristics of cyberspace where the actions of one single state have little weight. Furthermore, Věra Jourová, Vice President of the European Commission for Values and Transparency, has emphasised the importance of collaboration with service providers [11, 22]: The DSA, therefore, emphasises transparency and requires platform providers to report their principles and rules for approaching problems, such as misinformation, hate speech, encouragement of violence, etc. According to Jourová, such an approach should encourage technology companies to respond in a self-regulatory manner to emerging problems; while the state (or the EU) could attempt to regulate, such an approach avoids a splintering of social media platform contents, which would disrespect the specific characteristics of cyberspace.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE WORK

This paper has outlined how the concept of platform neutrality has evolved from conventional state neutrality. It further enhanced the theoretical definition of the concept of platform neutrality and analysed its applicability to current developments. While clear indicators exist that the evolution of Western social media companies converges towards platform neutrality, a more thorough analysis would be required that juxtaposes the concept to the development of "nationalised" social media platforms, such as those available in China. Furthermore, this paper focused on social media platforms as the most prominent example of globally acting technology companies, whose relation to the state deserves attention. However, platform neutrality has been defined as a concept applicable to large technology companies more generally; it remains to be analysed how this concept may be applied to such companies in a broader sense and such an analysis should be backed by further empirical evidence.

We conclude that the concept of platform neutrality is a useful tool for a better understanding of the power dynamics between users, societies, states, and social media platforms. Further work is required with respect to the general applicability of the

concept for large technology companies and a should consider how the concept incorporates nationalised (i.e., non-neutral) platforms, such as those common in China.

REFERENCES

- [1] 4 Ways To Access Sites in China If You're Already There in 2021, 9 2021.
- [2] Why VPNs Are Illegal in China and How to Get Around It, 10 2021.
- [3] Anthony Ha. Twitter's Birdwatch fights misinformation with community notes — TechCrunch, 1 2021.
- [4] Ben Buchanan. *The cybersecurity dilemma: Hacking, trust, and fear between nations*. Oxford University Press, 2017.
- [5] William H Dutton. The Fifth Estate: Canaries in the Institutions of Liberal Democracies. In Melanie Nagel, Patrick Kenis, Philip Leifeld, and Hans-Jörg Schmedes, editors, *Politische Komplexität, Governance von Innovationen und Policy-Netzwerke. Festschrift für Volker Schneider*, chapter 7, pages 59–65. Springer VS, Wiesbaden, 2020.
- [6] Erin Gallagher. Tweet: The current pinned tweet of the "Civilian Casualty Prevention and Complaints Commission of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan" contains WhatsApp numbers to contact various provincial directors. US social media platforms are being used as a Taliban , 2021.
- [7] Lucas Kello. *The Virtual Weapon and International Order*. Yale University Press, New Haven, 2017.
- [8] Christopher K. Lamont and Mieczyslaw M. Boduszynski. *Research Methods in Politics and International Relations*. SAGE PUBLICATIONS, Los Angeles, 2020.
- [9] Marie-Astrid Langer. Niederlage für Donald Trump: Facebook muss den früheren Präsidenten vorerst nicht wieder auf seine Plattform lassen — NZZ, 5 2021.
- [10] Joseph S Nye and David A Welch. *Understanding global conflict and cooperation : an introduction to theory and history*. Pearson, Boston, tenth edition, 2017.
- [11] NZZ.ch. EU-Kommissarin warnt Facebook-Führung vor negativen Auswirkungen — NZZ, 3 2018.
- [12] Philipp Gollmer. Trump-Sperre auf Facebook: Account bleibt vorerst gesperrt, 6 2021.
- [13] Alois Riklin. *Funktionen der schweizerischen Neutralität*. Institut für Politikwissenschaft, St. Gallen, 1991.
- [14] Salvador Rodriguez. Trump Twitter account locked following video addressing Capitol rioters, 1 2021.
- [15] Sheera Frenkel. How The Storming of Capitol Hill Was Organized on Social Media - The New York Times, 1 2021.
- [16] Marcel Stolz. On Neutrality and Cyber Defence. In Tiago Cruz and Paulo Simoes, editors, *18th European Conference on Cyber Warfare and Security*, pages 484–491, Coimbra, 2019. ACPI, UK.
- [17] Marcel Stolz. Competing Interests of Cyberintelligence and Cyberdefence Activities in Neutral Countries 3 . Conceptualisation of Operations in Cyberspace. In *16th*

International Conference on Cyber Warfare and Security, pages 345–353, Online, 2021. ACI, UK.

- [18] Marcel Stolz. Platform Neutrality – A Solution for the Social Media War? In *16th International Conference on Cyber Warfare and Security*, pages 336–344, Online, 2021. ACI, UK.
- [19] Andreas Suter. Neutralität. Prinzip, Praxis und Geschichtsbewußtsein. In *Eine kleine Geschichte der Schweiz*, pages 133–188. Suhrkamp, Frankfurt (Main), 1998.
- [20] SwitchVPN Team. Is It Legal To Use A VPN In China In 2021?, 6 2021.
- [21] sz/afp. Tweet entschärft Botschafter-Streit – Erdogan sieht sich als Sieger — Der Bund, 10 2021.
- [22] SZ.de. EU-Justizkommissarin Věra Jourová - "Ich habe ein großes Problem mit Anonymität" - Wirtschaft - SZ.de, 4 2018.
- [23] sz.de. Reaktion auf die Youtube-Sperre von RT DE - Medien - SZ.de, 9 2021.
- [24] TOR Project. How to circumvent the Great Firewall and connect to Tor from China? — Tor Project — Support.