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SOCIAL ECONOMY OR ELECTRONIC NEO-FEUDALISM?

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In the context of the rapid digital transformation of economic and social institutions, the term "electronic neo-feudalism" increasingly appears in academic and public discourse, describing the concentration of power and resources in the hands of digital platforms and technological corporations. This article is devoted to a critical analysis of this concept, its theoretical foundations, and its applicability to post-communist societies, particularly in the Baltic states. Alternative approaches to the digital economy are also examined, including models of social economy based on the principles of democratizing technologies and citizen participation. The paper offers a comparative analysis of digital development models and explores institutional, legal, and economic mechanisms capable of countering the trends of digital oligarchy. Special attention is given to the regional experience of the Baltic states in developing inclusive digital solutions and practices.

Keywords: feudalism, electronic neo-feudalism, digital economy, digital oligarchy, social economy.

Sociālā ekonomika vai elektroniskais neofeodālisms?
Straujas ekonomisko un sociālo institūciju digitālās transformācijas kontekstā akadēmiskajā un publiskajā diskursā arvien biežāk parādās termins "elektroniskais neofeodālisms", kas raksturo varas un resursu koncentrāciju digitālo platformu un tehnoloģisko korporāciju rokās. Šis raksts ir veltīts šī jēdziena kritiskai analīzei, tā teorētiskajiem pamatiem un piemērojamībai postkomunistiskajās sabiedrībās, īpaši Baltijas valstīs. Tiek aplūkotas arī alternatīvas pieejas digitālajai ekonomikai, tostarp sociālās ekonomikas modeļi, kas balstīti uz tehnoloģiju demokratizācijas un pilsoņu līdzdalības principiem. Rakstā tiek veikta digitālās attīstības modeļu salīdzinošā analīze un izpētīti institucionālie, tiesiskie un ekonomiskie mehānismi, kas spēj pretoties digitālās oligarhijas tendencēm. Īpaša uzmanība tiek pievērsta Baltijas valstu reģionālajai pieredzei iekļaujošu digitālo risinājumu un prakses attīstībā.

Atslēgvārdi: feodālisms, elektroniskais neofeodālisms, digitālā ekonomika, digitālā oligarhija, sociālā ekonomika.

Introduction

The digital transformation encompassing all spheres of social life – from economy and governance to culture and everyday practices – generates not only technological innovations but also new forms of social inequality, dependency, and power. The concentration of data, resources, and algorithmic control in the hands of major technology corporations has raised concerns among scholars, policymakers, and civil society activists worldwide. One of the concepts that has gained wide circulation in the critical reflection on these processes is that of "electronic neo-feudalism" – a metaphor denoting the shift from a model of market capitalism to a new order in which digital platforms function as private regulators, exploiting users' data, labor, and attention under conditions of limited institutional oversight.

This concept is perceived with particular urgency in post-communist countries, where processes of privatization, weak legal institutions, and rapid digitalization create fertile ground for new forms of digital subjugation. At the same time, an alternative agenda is gaining momentum in academic and political circles, linked to the development of the social (or solidarity) economy, digital cooperative movements, platform democracy, and open technologies oriented toward the collective good rather than mere profit extraction.

The relevance of this article lies in the need for a comprehensive analysis of digital transformation through the prism of the struggle between two competing logics: on the one hand, the logic of digital control, hierarchy, and monopolies; on the other, the logic of social inclusion, democratization of technology, and fair distribution of resources. Special attention is devoted to the Baltic states (Latvia,

Lithuania, and Estonia) as a unique region that combines a post-Soviet legacy, a high degree of digitalization, and a strong aspiration toward building more open digital institutions.

The aim of this article is to analyze the concept of electronic neo-feudalism in the context of digital transformation in post-communist societies and to identify the possibilities for developing alternative models of the digital economy, using the Baltic states as a case study. Research objectives:

- to determine the historical and institutional preconditions for the emergence of electronic neo-feudalism;
- to analyze the main theoretical approaches to the concept and critique of electronic neo-feudalism;
- to compare electronic neo-feudalism with alternative models of the digital economy, including the social economy;
- to examine legal, economic, and technological mechanisms for constraining digital oligarchy;
- to analyze the experience of the Baltic states in developing inclusive digital solutions as a potential alternative.

The methodological framework of this study is based on a comparative-analytical approach that combines elements of discourse analysis, critical theory of digital capitalism, and the case study method. The empirical base includes the analysis of digital development programs, legislative initiatives, and institutional reforms in the Baltic states, as well as the works of key theorists such as Srnicek (2017), Zuboff (2019), Fuchs (2022), among others.

The article consists of three main sections. The first part examines the historical and theoretical foundations of the concept of electronic neo-feudalism. The second part focuses on comparing this concept with alternative digital models and analyzing its critique. The third part explores practical strategies for countering digital oligarchy, including case studies from Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia. The conclusion presents a summary of findings and suggestions for further research.

Historical and institutional preconditions for the emergence of electronic neo-feudalism

The emergence of electronic neo-feudalism in the 21st century is rooted in a long historical evolution of power structures and institutional arrangements, beginning with classical feudal systems and extending through the transformation of post-communist societies and the rise of digital platforms. Feudalism in medieval Europe was characterized by hierarchical personal dependencies, private control over land, and decentralized political authority, where seigneurs determined access to vital resources and the conditions of social participation (Meinrath et al. 2011).

Although industrial capitalism and nation-state formation gradually replaced these structures with formal legal citizenship and market coordination, hierarchical and patrimonial relations proved capable of adapting to new institutional environments rather than disappearing entirely (Fraser 2019). This continuity became particularly visible in the post-Soviet transition. After the collapse of socialist regimes, many newly independent states faced institutional vacuums, weak rule of law, fragmentation of public authority, and the privatization of state functions. Studies of post-communist societies identified the re-establishment of clientelist power, patronage networks, and mechanisms of personal dependency as structural features resembling neo-feudal relationships (Shlapentokh, Woods 2007). In the Baltic region, rapid market reforms and constrained social protections fostered vertical social relations, where civic rights were often subordinated to corporate or bureaucratic hierarchies (Men'shikov 2002; Aidukaite 2011).

These historical legacies form an institutional foundation upon which new digital power structures are built. Digital transformation has introduced infrastructures that increasingly mediate access to economic and civic opportunities. Major technology corporations now control key communication channels, identification systems, and algorithmic governance mechanisms, gradually assuming

regulatory roles previously associated with the state (Castells 2010; van Dijck et al. 2018; Česnauskė 2019). This concentration of infrastructural power produces new dependencies where individuals and organizations are compelled to operate within privatized digital environments, often outside national jurisdiction (Selga 2022).

Control over data – the defining resource of digital society – strengthens asymmetries between those who extract and monetize behavioral information and those whose activity is governed by opaque algorithms (Pasquale 2015; Zuboff 2019). These dynamics reflect a transition from traditional capitalist property relations to a model where access itself becomes a commodity. Platform owners act as digital landlords, extracting rent from participation in infrastructures they monopolize (Srnicek 2017; Forest 2024). Such privatized regulation undermines universal legal guarantees and positions users as dependent subjects, echoing the logic of vassalage under modern technological conditions (Morozov 2022).

The specific vulnerability of post-communist states is further reinforced by their structural dependency on external technology providers. In countries like Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia, digital modernization advanced faster than institutional oversight, producing a paradoxical situation where public services are digitized yet regulated through platforms largely controlled by private or foreign actors (Troitino 2025). This mismatch between technological acceleration and institutional maturity creates favorable conditions for electronic neo-feudalization, where sovereignty over digital space becomes fragmented and redistributed beyond democratic accountability (Robinson 2020).

Thus, the rise of electronic neo-feudalism cannot be understood solely as a consequence of technological innovation. Its preconditions lie at the intersection of historical hierarchical structures, institutional transformations in the post-socialist world, and the contemporary dominance of private digital architectures. The resulting configuration suggests that digital dependence is not an entirely novel phenomenon but a technologically intensified continuation of long-standing patterns of privatized power and asymmetric access to societal resources (Fraser 2019; Robinson 2020; Fuchs 2022). Recognizing these underlying continuities is essential for developing strategies that safeguard digital citizenship, constrain platform-based domination, and reinforce democratic control in digital societies (Sprūds, Vargulis 2021; Troitino 2025).

Main theoretical approaches to the concept and critique of electronic neo-feudalism

Emergence of the concept of electronic neo-feudalism. The notion of "electronic neo-feudalism" has gained significant traction in recent academic and public discourse as a metaphor capturing the power transformations associated with digital platforms, algorithmic governance, and new forms of socio-economic dependency. Proponents argue that digitalization has not only driven technological innovation but also restructured power relations in ways reminiscent of pre-modern feudal hierarchies. In this view, platforms operate as private "digital seigneuries", data functions as a form of "digital rent", and users serve as vassals – effectively dependent on platform infrastructure for communication, services, and participation in the digital economy. This feudal analogy highlights how platform owners accrue quasi-monopolistic control (like lords over land) while users relinquish data and autonomy in exchange for access, suggesting a personalized form of digital subordination.

Importantly, the neo-feudalism metaphor has been influential in European debates on "digital sovereignty". Scholars such as Srnicek (2017), and Zuboff (2019) underscore the emergence of "new digital dependencies" that parallel feudal structures in today's platform-centric economy. Here, the term "electronic neo-feudalism" also draws attention to global asymmetries: major technology corporations (the "digital lords") dominate peripheral states, including small post-communist countries like those in the Baltic region, which often import digital infrastructure and services from these dominant transnational actors (Česnauskė 2019; Baltgailis, Menshikov 2025; Troitino 2025). This has

raised concerns that sovereign functions (identity management, communication networks, data governance) are increasingly privatized and concentrated in a few hands, echoing feudal patterns of power without public accountability. The concept's resonance in post-communist contexts is particularly strong given the historical memory of weak institutions and patron–client relations, which digital monopolies could potentially revive in a new form.

Comparative perspectives and alternative frameworks. While the neo-feudalism metaphor is powerful, it exists alongside several alternative theoretical frameworks for interpreting digital-age political economy. Comparing these perspectives helps situate the neo-feudalism thesis within broader debates and highlights what is analytically unique about it versus other approaches. Table 1 below provides a comparative overview of key conceptual approaches, summarizing their main proponents, core features, and how each framework has been critiqued or applied in the specific context of the Baltic states.

Table 1

Comparative overview of theoretical approaches to digital-era power

Concept	Key authors	Main features	Critique in Baltic context
Electronic neo-feudalism	Srnicek (2017), Zuboff (2019)	Platforms as private "seigneuries" where data is treated as "digital rent" and users as *vassals*, creating a hierarchical dependency (personalized subordination)	Feudal analogies do not align well with the institutional reality of advanced digital states (e.g. Estonia's e-governance model)
Digital capitalism	Fuchs (2022)	Expansion of capitalist logic into the digital sphere; exploitation of user labor and commodification of data/attention to generate profit via platforms	Primarily suited to analyzing global tech corporations (e.g. Google, Amazon) rather than state-run digital platforms
Platform feudalism	van Dijck et al. (2018)	Emphasizes corporate ownership of digital infrastructure and platform power over data and the public sphere (the "platform society" perspective)	Baltic countries depend on foreign tech giants (Google, Meta, Amazon), reflecting external control over local digital ecosystems
Algorithmic control	Pasquale (2015)	Focus on **opaque algorithms** that manipulate behavior and enable automated governance of users, raising issues of transparency and autonomy	In Baltic states, algorithmic governance is **mitigated by** strong state regulation and relatively high public trust in e-government, limiting unchecked algorithmic power
Progressive neoliberalism	Fraser (2019)	Describes an alliance of neoliberal economic policies with progressive cultural politics; digitalization is deployed to consolidate inequality despite egalitarian rhetoric	Illuminates the ideology behind digital reforms (e.g. framing privatization as innovation), but offers less insight into the concrete power structures of platform economies
Digital imperialism	Dixon (2024)	Portrays global platforms as exercising imperial-like power over peripheral economies; data and services flow outward, reinforcing dependence	Partially applicable to small states (e.g. Latvia, Lithuania) that import most digital services, though Estonia's local digital infrastructure somewhat bucks this trend

Source: elaborated by the author based on literature review.

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As Table 1 suggests, "electronic neo-feudalism" foregrounds historical analogies with medieval hierarchies, whereas other frameworks emphasize continuity with capitalism, algorithmic governance, or new forms of imperialism. Each framework thus illuminates different facets of the digital transformation. For instance, Fuchs's (2022) notion of "digital capitalism" insists that we are seeing an intensification of capitalist exploitation (through datafication and unpaid user labor), not a departure from it. Likewise, van Dijck et al. (2018) stress the loss of public control to corporate platforms ("platform society"), and Pasquale (2015) warns of algorithmic techniques that govern users' behavior opaquely. Fraser's (2019) concept of progressive neoliberalism places digital economy developments in the context of an alliance between market-driven policies and progressive cultural forces, explaining how even "inclusive-sounding" digital initiatives may entrench inequality. Finally, theorists like Dixon invokes terms such as "digital colonialism" or "digital imperialism" to capture the asymmetrical power relationship wherein peripheral regions rely on technology supplied by a few dominant (mostly US-based) firms. For the Baltic states – frequently lauded as digital pioneers – these lenses reveal overlapping concerns: economic dependency, inequality, and external control in the digital domain despite the region's innovative successes. In short, the neo-feudalism thesis is one of several competing interpretations, each offering a distinct warning about how digitalization might be concentrating power or perpetuating injustice in new guises.

Debates and criticisms of electronic neo-feudalism. Despite its popularity, the "electronic neo-feudalism" concept has sparked intense scholarly debate, and several lines of critique have emerged. Critics question its historical accuracy, its theoretical utility, and its ideological implications. Three main critiques can be distinguished:

(1) a historical-analytical critique argues that the feudal analogy is historically misleading or inexact. As Morozov (2022) points out, classical feudalism was defined by vassalage, seigneurial land tenure, and subsistence economics – conditions fundamentally incompatible with a globalized digital economy of markets and data flows. Simply put, the structural features of medieval feudalism do not map neatly onto 21st-century platform capitalism, and drawing direct analogies (e.g. equating data rent to land rent) risks obscuring the novel mechanisms of post-industrial, informational capitalism. This critique warns that overextending historical metaphors can produce theoretical confusion, distracting from the specific legal and economic dynamics of our era;

(2) a Marxist or political-economic critique contends that the neo-feudalism thesis might obscure ongoing capitalist exploitation. Dean (2012) and Srnicek (2017) argue that labeling Big Tech power as "feudal" overlooks core capitalist dynamics such as the pursuit of surplus value, class relations, and labor exploitation by capital. Srnicek, in particular, maintains that digital platforms should be analyzed as capitalist firms — their monopolistic tendencies, market strategies, and accumulation of profits are continuous with the logic of capitalism, not a regression to feudal order. Similarly, Novianto (2025) cautions that invoking "neo-feudalism" creates an illusion of a return to pre-capitalist forms, when in fact today's transformations (e.g. new property forms in data, gig labor relations) represent an internal evolution of capitalism rather than an external departure from it. From this perspective, the neo-feudal metaphor might inadvertently side-step critiques of capitalism by implying an entirely different system is at work, whereas critics insist the problem is late capitalism itself (albeit with novel digital dimensions);

(3) a conceptual critique targets the vagueness and populist appeal of the term "electronic neo-feudalism". Robinson (2020) observes that the concept often functions as a "container category" – a catch-all label grouping disparate phenomena (from algorithmic governance to digital surveillance, inequality, and precarious labor) under one metaphor. This over-broad usage can dilute analytical clarity: if "everything" problematic about the digital age is neo-

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feudal, the term risks explaining nothing specific. Robinson further notes that the popularity of the neo-feudalism trope in media and activist circles owes much to its emotive, mobilizing power rather than to precise scholarly definition (Robinson 2020). In other words, it's a provocative rallying cry that encapsulates anxiety about Big Tech, but it may lack rigor. In this context, various scholars propose more as better tools – for example, Forest's "digital rent" perspective (focusing on how platforms earn rent from proprietary assets), Zuboff's "surveillance capitalism" (detailing how user data is commodified and used for behavioral control), or terms like "platform capitalism" or "data colonialism". These alternatives aim to capture specific mechanisms of digital power without resorting to medieval analogies, thereby offering more precise analysis. Zuboff's work (2019), for instance, meticulously documents how tech corporations extract and profit from behavioral data, a process arguably better explained as a new phase of capitalism than as feudalism.

Summation – the status of neo-feudalism as a framework. In sum, "electronic neo-feudalism" is a highly influential yet contested concept in digital society studies. Its value lies in vividly metaphorizing emerging forms of digital dependence and loss of citizen autonomy under platform dominance. This metaphor has captured widespread anxieties about how digital platforms can erode public sovereignty and create stratified relationships resembling lord and serf. However, as critics rightly argue, the term suffers from historical and analytical limitations – it can overstate resemblances to feudalism and understate the continuities with capitalism's evolution. Consequently, most scholars urge caution: "electronic neo-feudalism" should not be treated as a standalone paradigm but rather as a sensitizing concept that must be grounded in rigorous analysis of contemporary capitalism. Indeed, even proponents use the term with qualifications. For example, Forest (2024) and Zuboff (2019) continue to employ neo-feudalist terminology (e.g. "techno-feudalism" or "surveillance capitalism" as a form of digital feudalism) to critique Big Tech, but they do so alongside careful specification of what exactly is "feudal" (e.g. rent-like data extraction, privatized governance) and what remains capitalist. Thus, the concept endures as a provocative *framework-of-concern* rather than a precise theory: it usefully directs attention to power imbalances, privatized sovereignty, and new forms of dependency in the digital age, while inviting scholars to further refine its meaning and limits. In a peer-reviewed context, the recommendation is to integrate the neo-feudalism metaphor with other critical frameworks – such as political economy, legal-institutional analysis, and global power structure research – to fully capture the complex reality of the digital economy. Ultimately, the debate around electronic neo-feudalism has enriched academic discourse by spurring a more nuanced examination of whether today's digital order represents a break from capitalist modernity or simply its latest, most concentrated form.

Comparing electronic neo-feudalism with alternative models of the digital economy, including the social economy

The contemporary digital economy can be viewed as a crossroads between two fundamentally different paradigms. On one side stands electronic neo-feudalism, a model characterized by extreme concentration of digital power and resources in the hands of a few platform "lords" (Novianto 2025). On the other side are emerging social economy models and other alternative digital frameworks that emphasize decentralization, collective ownership, and public benefit. Scholars note that today's digital transformation involves a struggle between two competing logics: **(1)** a logic of centralized control, hierarchy, and monopoly; and **(2)** a logic of social inclusion, technological democratization, and fair resource distribution. This section compares the neo-feudal model with its alternatives—conceptually and empirically—highlighting how centralized, profit-driven arrangements contrast with decentralized, solidarity-based approaches in the digital realm.

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Electronic neo-feudalism is a metaphor for the new order of digital oligarchy that has emerged as technology corporations assume quasi-sovereign power. In this model, major platforms function as "private regulators" of digital life, exploiting users' data, labor, and attention with minimal oversight. Platform owners essentially act as "digital landlords", extracting rent from all participation on infrastructures they monopolize. Users and smaller businesses are relegated to the status of dependent subjects or "digital vassals", bound by the platforms' terms and algorithms. This dynamic represents a shift from open market competition toward feudal-like hierarchies: platforms become digital seigneuries, exercising control over essential services (communication, e-commerce, information), while users relinquish data and autonomy in exchange for access. The neo-feudal logic is inherently profit-driven and extractive – data and user activities are enclosed as proprietary assets to be monetized, reinforcing asymmetries of power. Crucially, these privatized digital realms often operate outside traditional democratic oversight, raising concerns that basic rights and public interests are subjugated to corporate interests (a "digital oligarchy" or "digital aristocracy" of sorts). In smaller states, such as those in the Baltics, this model is exacerbated by dependency on foreign tech giants: rapid digitalization outpaces local regulatory capacity, so public services and communication channels end up mediated by external private platforms. In effect, sovereignty over digital space becomes fragmented, as global corporations (the "digital lords") dominate critical infrastructure in peripheral regions. Electronic neo-feudalism thus captures the worst-case scenario of the digital economy's evolution – a centralized, monopoly-dominated ecosystem where economic and civic life depends on the goodwill of a few tech powers.

In stark contrast, social economy approaches and other alternative digital models seek to invert the power structure of the digital realm. Broadly defined, the social (or solidarity) economy in the digital age comprises institutions and practices that prioritize collective interests, social values, and fair distribution of digital resources over profit maximization. These alternative models envision the digital economy not as a feudal hierarchy but as a commons or a cooperative space, emphasizing decentralized, community-oriented forms of interaction grounded in solidarity and participation. "Platform cooperativism", for example, calls for creating online platforms owned and governed by the workers and users themselves rather than by outside investors. Such cooperative platforms implement democratic governance and equitable profit distribution, ensuring that value generated by the network is shared among those who contribute. Another model, often termed "commons-based peer production", advocates for digital goods and services to be produced and maintained through open collaboration and collective ownership, with transparency and cooperation replacing proprietary algorithms and secrecy. This logic is evident in projects like open-source software communities and knowledge commons (e.g. Wikipedia), where participants co-create value without exclusive corporate ownership. Additionally, proponents like van Dijck et al. (2018) highlight the role of "municipal digital infrastructures" – public or city-run platforms and data ecosystems that serve citizens rather than corporations. For instance, Barcelona's DECODE project demonstrates how cities can build digital services that give individuals control over their data and prioritize social outcomes (a process sometimes described as the *"municipalization" of digital space). Across these approaches, the guiding principle is a solidarity-based, inclusive ethos: technology is harnessed for public good, cooperation, and empowerment of users, in direct opposition to the profit-driven, centralized exploitation of the neo-feudal paradigm. Crucially, these models show that digital networks can be reconfigured toward democratic and socially embedded ends – they illustrate that our digital future need not be dominated by a few gatekeepers, but can instead be shaped by participatory, community-led governance.

Table 2 below summarizes key differences between the electronic neo-feudal model and the social economy-based alternative models of the digital economy, highlighting their contrasting logics:

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Table 2

Key differences between electronic neo-feudalism and social / alternative digital models

Dimension	Electronic neo-feudalism (centralized corporate model)	Social / alternative digital economy (decentralized social economy model)
Ownership & control	Concentrated in large private tech corporations – a few platform "lords" hold authority over digital infrastructure. Users have no ownership of platforms or data (they operate on privately owned networks).	Cooperative or public ownership structures – e.g. platforms owned by users/workers or provided as public infrastructure. Control is distributed among stakeholders, communities, or local governments rather than a single corporation.
Governance model	Top-down governance: Platform operators impose rules unilaterally, with minimal transparency or user input. Algorithmic control and terms of service are decided by corporate interests.	Democratic governance: Participatory decision-making with users, workers, or community members having a voice in how platforms are run. Open governance mechanisms and transparency (e.g. open-source code, community councils) are emphasized.
Primary objective	Profit-driven and extractive: Maximization of data monetization, advertising revenue, and shareholder value. User data and attention are commodified as sources of rent and profit. Social or ethical goals are secondary, if considered at all.	Solidarity-driven and mission-oriented: Prioritizes social value, equity, and community benefit over profit. Goals include fair resource distribution, empowerment of users, and community development. Revenue is often reinvested for social purposes rather than extracted as private profit.
Data & resources	Treated as proprietary assets: Data is enclosed in corporate silos; platforms claim ownership over user-generated data and insights, leveraging them for competitive advantage. Access to digital resources (APIs, algorithms) is restricted, reinforcing dependence.	Treated as digital commons or public goods: Data is often shared (with privacy safeguards) to benefit all participants, as seen in open data platforms. Open-source and open-access resources are encouraged to allow broad reuse, innovation, and community oversight.
User role & status	Users as dependent subjects ("digital vassals"): Users rely on the platform's whims for access to services or audiences. They typically have little bargaining power or rights over how platforms operate or how their data is used. The relationship is characterized by dependency and inequality.	Users as empowered participants/citizens: Users are treated as partners or members of the platform ecosystem with defined rights and roles. They can be co-creators of content, co-owners of the platform, or active contributors in governance. This fosters a sense of agency and shared responsibility.
Illustrative examples	Global Big Tech platforms like Google, Facebook (Meta)**, Amazon** – which dominate markets and act as gatekeepers over information and commerce. These corporations unilaterally set standards (search algorithms, app store rules, etc.) and often crowd out local competitors.	Platform cooperatives (e.g. worker-owned ride-hailing or food delivery co-ops) and commons-based projects (e.g. Wikipedia, open-source software communities) that are owned and maintained by their participants. Also, municipal digital services such as city-run sharing platforms or data commons (e.g. Barcelona's DECODE project) which ensure digital infrastructure is managed as a public resource.

Source: elaborated by the author.

As Table 2 indicates, the electronic neo-feudal model and the social / solidarity economy model of the digital economy are diametric opposites in structure and values. Electronic neo-feudalism embodies a "centralized, hierarchical logic" focused on maximizing profit and control, even at the expense of user autonomy and social welfare. By contrast, the social economy approach embodies a "decentralized, egalitarian logic" that foregrounds cooperation, community well-being, and democratic participation. In practical terms, this means that under neo-feudalism a handful of firms set the rules of the game, whereas under social/alternative models a broader array of stakeholders collaboratively govern digital resources. The neo-feudal paradigm creates asymmetric dependencies – users depend on monopolistic platforms for basic digital functions – whereas the alternative paradigm seeks to empower users as co-creators and reduce one-sided dependency. In essence, the contrast is one of private power vs. social power in the digital economy: electronic neo-feudalism represents a privatization (or enclosure) of the digital commons by oligarchic entities, while the social economy perspective represents a "re-commoning" or democratization of digital spaces for collective benefit. Notably, these alternative models are not just theoretical—they are being actively explored through policy, activism, and pilot projects, signaling that the neo-feudal trajectory is **not inevitable**. Legal and institutional interventions (from antitrust laws to data rights) further complement these alternatives by trying to rein in platform monopolies and protect digital rights, though such measures are still evolving.

Legal, economic, and technological mechanisms for constraining digital oligarchy

The concentration of digital power in the hands of a few large technology corporations has raised global concerns about a potential "digital oligarchy", characterized by monopolistic control over data, markets, and essential platforms. Policymakers and scholars increasingly argue that countering this concentration requires a multifaceted strategy encompassing legal regulations, economic interventions, and technological reforms on an international scale. In particular, the European Union (EU) and other transnational bodies have begun implementing a mix of competition laws, data protection rules, transparency mandates, and infrastructure initiatives to curtail the dominance of big tech and foster a more equitable digital ecosystem.

Legal and regulatory measures. A central legal approach is the enforcement of competition law and antitrust measures to break or constrain monopolistic power. In 2022 the EU enacted the Digital Markets Act (DMA), imposing strict obligations on major online "gatekeepers" to prevent anti-competitive practices like self-preferencing of their own services, unfair bundling, and exploitation of dependent businesses. Competition authorities in the United States have pursued similar action, with antitrust investigations targeting companies like Google and Meta. These efforts seek to de-monopolize digital infrastructures and preserve fair market competition in the platform economy. Another cornerstone of the legal response is data protection regulation. The EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) of 2018 established rigorous standards for user consent, data processing, and storage, significantly bolstering individuals' control over personal data (GDPR-Info 2025). GDPR has since become a template for data protection laws worldwide (for example, California's Consumer Privacy Act), underscoring privacy rights as a check on corporate data accumulation. Protecting personal data is seen as crucial for limiting the exploitative surveillance-based business models of digital giants. Furthermore, the problem of opaque algorithms and AI-driven decision-making has prompted new transparency rules. The EU's Artificial Intelligence Act (adopted in 2024) introduces requirements for algorithmic transparency, auditing, and accountability, especially for "high-risk" AI systems, in order to prevent discriminatory outcomes and hidden manipulation of users (European Union 2024). In tandem, broad platform accountability requirements are emerging. Europe's Digital Services Act (DSA) (European Commision 2025a) exemplifies this trend by forcing

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major online platforms to be more transparent about content moderation and recommender algorithms and by holding them accountable for systemic risks their services pose to society (AlgorithmWatch 2022). Together, such regulatory frameworks not only constrain unilateral corporate power but also begin to set de facto international standards for platform governance (AlgorithmWatch 2022). Despite ongoing debates and refinements, these legal instruments demonstrate that vigorous public oversight can temper the excesses of digital oligarchy.

Economic mechanisms and incentives. Complementing legal rules, governments are deploying economic tools to rebalance the digital economy. A notable development is the push for digital taxation to address the outsized profits and tax avoidance of global tech firms. In 2021, a broad international consensus led by the OECD established a 15% global minimum corporate tax rate for multinational companies, aiming to curb the "race to the bottom" in tax jurisdictions (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) 2025). Even before that agreement, countries such as France, India, and the UK introduced digital services taxes targeting revenue earned by Big Tech within their borders. These tax measures seek to ensure tech monopolies contribute fairly to public coffers and to reduce the financial incentives for extreme market concentration. Another economic lever is direct antitrust action that can include breaking up companies or restricting mergers and acquisitions that reinforce oligopolies – steps under consideration in several jurisdictions to prevent single firms from controlling entire digital markets. Additionally, public authorities are examining requirements for interoperability and fair access, so that dominant platforms cannot abuse network effects to lock in users and squeeze out competitors. By mandating data portability and open standards (as the Digital Markets Act (DMA) (European Commission 2025b) and related policies do), regulators aim to lower barriers to entry and empower smaller firms and communities in the digital marketplace. In essence, these economic mechanisms seek to realign market incentives with the public interest, discouraging anti-competitive consolidation and fostering a diversity of digital services.

Technological and institutional interventions. There is growing recognition that purely legal or fiscal measures must be accompanied by technological and institutional innovations to democratize the digital space. One important strategy is the pursuit of digital sovereignty through investment in alternative infrastructures. Europe's GAIA-X project, for instance, is developing a federated cloud and data infrastructure that would reduce reliance on the handful of dominant U.S.-based cloud providers. Similarly, many EU member states now promote open-source software and open standards in public administrations, improving interoperability and reducing dependency on big tech vendors. Such initiatives not only introduce technical diversity but also embody a systemic approach to reclaiming public control over key digital resources. Protecting the "digital commons" has also become a priority in constraining oligarchy. This involves support for platforms and projects that are governed as public goods or cooperatives rather than profit-maximizing monopolies. The concept of platform cooperativism, for example, advocates for digital services that are owned and managed by their users or workers, ensuring more equitable decision-making and benefit sharing. In practice, cities like Barcelona and Amsterdam have experimented with municipally governed digital platforms and data commons to provide alternatives to corporate-owned services. These efforts illustrate how technology can be deployed in a decentralized and community-oriented fashion, countering the "feudal" dynamic of users depending on proprietary platforms. More broadly, civil society and open-technology movements push for transparency in software, algorithmic audits, and the creation of open data repositories (as seen in some national open data portals) to enhance public oversight of digital systems. By treating certain digital infrastructures and knowledge resources as commons, these approaches aim to dilute concentrated private power and preserve an open digital environment.

Global and systemic approach. Underpinning all these mechanisms is the understanding that digital oligarchy is a transnational challenge requiring coordination across borders and sectors. Many of the above measures have been spearheaded by the European Union, whose regulations – ranging

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from the DMA and DSA to GDPR and the AI Act – are increasingly viewed as global benchmarks influencing policy far beyond Europe (AlgorithmWatch 2022). International forums are likewise seeking common ground: the OECD's global tax accord is one example of a systemic solution, and the United Nations has initiated a Global Digital Compact to outline shared principles for an open and equitable digital future (United Nations 2024). The combined approach is inherently systemic and institutional, recognizing that no single reform can rein in digital monopolies by itself. Competition law, for instance, must work in concert with data rights, transparency obligations, and support for alternative business models. Recent research emphasizes that only a comprehensive mix of regulatory pressure, economic restructuring, and institutional support for new digital models can effectively contain the oligarchic tendencies of the digital economy. This mix entails not just reactive constraints on Big Tech, but also proactive building of inclusive digital institutions. While these interventions are still evolving, early evidence suggests they can mitigate the risks of an unchecked platform economy. Indeed, the emergence of robust legal-institutional frameworks (such as the DMA, GDPR, and AI Act) demonstrates that digital power can be subject to democratic governance. At the same time, observers caution that many of these measures remain partial and contested, requiring continuous refinement and enforcement to keep pace with technological change.

In summary, constraining digital oligarchy will depend on sustained legal action, innovative economic policies, and technological architectures that redistribute power. Antitrust enforcement and digital taxation are currently seen as especially potent tools, but they achieve lasting impact only if paired with data protection, algorithmic transparency, platform accountability, and the nurturing of digital commons. The challenge is inherently global: as digital platforms operate across jurisdictions, so too must the solutions – from EU regulations setting global norms to international agreements and alliances that prevent regulatory arbitrage. By reinforcing public-interest values through laws, economic incentives, and open technological design, the international community can begin to dilute the concentration of digital power and foster a more pluralistic and democratic digital ecosystem. Each mechanism, be it a new competition rule or a cooperative platform initiative, contributes to an emerging transnational framework aimed at ensuring that the digital realm evolves as a space of shared opportunity rather than one dominated by a new oligarchy of tech giants.

Experience of the Baltic states in developing inclusive digital solutions as a potential alternative

As concerns grow over electronic neo-feudalism – the concentration of digital power in a few dominant platforms – the Baltic states offer a contrasting approach. Scholars like Srnicek (2017) and Zuboff (2019) have warned that today's platform capitalism creates "digital lords" extracting data and value in ways reminiscent of feudal hierarchies, leaving users as dependent "vassals" under corporate control. In response, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania have pursued national digital strategies grounded in social economy principles to ensure technology serves the public interest rather than reinforcing oligarchic power. Each of these small post-communist countries, despite their high reliance on global digital services, has leveraged state-led digital governance to build inclusive platforms emphasizing transparency, participation, decentralization, and public benefit (Česnauskė 2019). The Baltic experience demonstrates how a region can digitally transform on its own terms – providing an alternative model that counters the privatized, profit-driven logic of Big Tech with democratic, citizen-centric innovations.

Estonia: E-residency and digital public infrastructure. Estonia is widely recognized as a global pioneer in e-government and digital society (Kalvet 2012; Kattel & Mergel 2019). Following independence in the 1990s, Estonia deliberately invested in an open, **interoperable digital infrastructure** – often termed "e-Estonia" – to modernize governance and spur economic growth. A flagship initiative of this strategy is the e-Residency program, launched in 2014 as the world's first

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transnational digital identity scheme. E-Residency provides foreign entrepreneurs and digital nomads with a government-issued digital ID to remotely access Estonian business and government services, including registering companies, signing documents, and conducting banking online within Estonia's legal framework (Kalvet 2012). This innovation extends Estonia's digital ecosystem beyond its borders, effectively treating government digital services as a global public good. By granting trusted digital identities to non-citizens, the state empowers a worldwide community of users under democratic oversight rather than private platform control. The approach illustrates how an open, state-run platform can expand participation in the digital economy while maintaining public accountability and transparency in its operations.

Another cornerstone of Estonia's digital governance model is X-Road, the secure data-exchange layer that interconnects government and private databases. X-Road enables seamless, encrypted information-sharing among institutions, allowing citizens and officials to access data across agencies with a single interface (Kattel, Mergel 2019). This integrated yet decentralized architecture greatly reduces bureaucratic delays and duplication – for example, personal records or certificates only need to be entered once and can be re-used by permission across departments. By design, no single entity monopolizes the data: information remains distributed across many nodes, but interoperability means services feel unified to the end-user. X-Road's emphasis on open standards and security (many components are open-source) ensures transparency in how data flows are managed and builds public trust in e-services. Coupled with the nation's universal electronic ID cards and digital signature system, these innovations allow 99% of Estonia's public services to be accessed online, from e-tax filing to e-voting. The Estonian case exemplifies how state-led digital platforms can be inclusive and empowering: citizens and e-residents alike benefit from user-centric design, and critical digital infrastructure remains under public control (Troitino 2025). In essence, Estonia's governance model embeds values of transparency, citizen sovereignty, and collective benefit into technology, providing a compelling alternative to the opaque, profit-driven platforms dominating elsewhere (Srnicek 2017; Zuboff 2019).

Latvia: Digital public services and civic platforms. Latvia has likewise made significant strides in harnessing technology for inclusive governance. Central to Latvia's strategy is the development of one-stop digital platforms for public services. The government's portal *Latvija.lv* offers a single unified interface through which citizens can access a broad spectrum of state services – from applying for passports or social benefits to checking medical records – using secure digital authentication. By centralizing hundreds of services on an accessible online platform, the state has simplified administrative processes and lowered barriers to citizen interaction with government. This approach enhances transparency (citizens can track applications and access information easily) and fosters civic participation by making day-to-day engagement with public institutions more convenient (Sprūds, Vargulis 2021). Importantly, Latvia has put special emphasis on developing a robust digital identification (eID) system for its people, providing each citizen with a secure digital signature and authentication tool. This eID infrastructure underpins advanced services like electronic voting pilots, e-prescriptions, and online business registration. By building trust in digital identities and signatures, Latvian authorities encourage citizens to adopt online channels as a normal part of civic life – from submitting e-petitions to voting in municipal elections – thereby strengthening digital citizenship. Indeed, Latvia's commitment to expanding digital inclusion and literacy has positioned it among the most prepared EU states for the challenges of the digital era (Selga 2022). National initiatives promote internet access even in rural regions and support training programs so that elderly and marginalized groups can also use e-services, reflecting a solidarity-based ethic in its digital policy. The overarching governance model in Latvia's digital transformation is collaborative: government agencies worked in concert with the private tech sector and civil society to develop standards and interfaces, ensuring that the resulting platforms serve public needs rather than commercial interests. The Latvian case shows

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how state-managed digital platforms, oriented toward efficiency and citizen-centric design rather than profit, can bring **the entire** population into the fold of the digital economy – including communities that might otherwise be left behind.

Lithuania: Open data and smart, collaborative innovation. Lithuania's digital strategy has focused on openness and co-creation, leveraging data and technology to drive innovation for public benefit. A keystone of this approach is the launch of a comprehensive Open Data platform by the Lithuanian government, which releases vast troves of non-personal public datasets (covering transportation, education, economic indicators, and more) for anyone to reuse and analyze. By treating government data as a shared resource, Lithuania empowers entrepreneurs, researchers, and civic hackers to develop new applications and services that build on these datasets (Aidukaite 2011). For instance, open transit data has enabled the creation of better route planning apps, and open budget or procurement data has spurred independent transparency tools that hold officials accountable. This open-data ethos reflects commons-based values: information generated with public funds is returned to the public domain to maximize its social and economic value. It decentralizes innovation by allowing many actors to participate – rather than data being locked in silos for the exclusive advantage of a few firms. Complementing its open data initiative, Lithuania has cultivated public-private innovation ecosystems such as tech hubs and startup incubators that utilize open government data, illustrating a collaborative governance model rather than a top-down one.

Another frontier of Lithuania's inclusive digital development is its experimentation with "smart city" frameworks. Several Lithuanian cities are integrating Internet of Things (IoT) sensors, big data analytics, and mobile applications into urban management in ways that invite citizen input. For example, sensor networks monitor traffic flows and energy usage to improve efficiency, while interactive platforms allow residents to report infrastructure issues or vote on local budget allocations. These efforts are guided by an ethos of sustainability, transparency, and citizen engagement. By insisting on open standards and avoiding proprietary "smart city" solutions that would give Big Tech companies control over urban data, Lithuanian municipalities aim to prevent vendor lock-in and ensure that the data collected in public spaces remains under public stewardship. The result is a model of urban digital infrastructure as a collaborative civic endeavor, not just a corporate service (Česnauskė 2019). This stands in stark contrast to scenarios where smart city platforms and data might be captured and monetized exclusively by private firms – a pattern that critics equate with digital feudalism. Lithuania's open-data portals and participatory smart city pilots underscore the country's commitment to decentralization (via open information ecosystems) and community empowerment through technology.

Embedding social economy principles in digital development. Taken together, the experiences of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania demonstrate that alternative digital models based on social economy principles are not only feasible, but can deliver tangible benefits at national scale. In each country, the digital transformation has been deliberately aligned with values of transparency, participation, decentralization, and public benefit – values that directly counter the private, hierarchical logic of electronic neo-feudalism (Forest 2024; Zuboff 2019). Transparency is enhanced through open data and open platforms, which make government processes and data flows visible and accountable to citizens. For instance, Estonia's choice to open-source key components of its digital infrastructure and Lithuania's publication of datasets exemplify an openness that invites scrutiny and reuse rather than black-box secrecy. Participation is a common thread: Baltic digital initiatives are designed to involve citizens as active users and contributors, not passive subjects. Whether it is Latvia encouraging widespread use of e-services and e-participation tools, or Lithuanian cities including residents in problem-solving via digital channels, these systems seek to empower users as partners in governance. This participatory ethos reflects a decentralized approach to power – decisions and innovations are not solely the domain of big corporations or top officials, but emerge from collaboration among

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stakeholders. Indeed, the Baltic states have fostered multi-sector cooperation (between government, local tech companies, universities, and communities) in shaping their digital agendas, ensuring that no single actor dominates. This decentralization of control and ownership – such as Estonia and Latvia maintaining sovereign digital identity systems rather than outsourcing to foreign tech giants – has increased each nation's resilience and digital sovereignty. By retaining public control over critical platforms like digital IDs, data exchanges, and service portals, these countries reduce dependence on external corporate providers and thus mitigate the "neo-feudal" risk of core societal functions being governed by entities beyond democratic oversight. Finally, the overarching objective driving these efforts is public benefit over profit. In contrast to Big Tech platforms that primarily monetize user data and attention, the Baltic digital solutions are mission-oriented: they aim to improve access to services, enhance trust in institutions, and spur equitable economic growth. Resources and any financial gains are reinvested in better services or shared infrastructure (as seen with open data spurring startups), creating a virtuous cycle for the common good rather than extracting rents for private shareholders. In summary, the Baltic model of digital development aligns with the ideals of the social (solidarity) economy, wherein technology is harnessed for collective empowerment, equity, and community welfare (Česnauskė 2019; Baltgailis, Menshikov 2025). It offers a practical illustration that the internet age need not culminate in centralized corporate rule (Srnicek 2017) but can instead be steered toward democratic and inclusive ends.

Challenges and ongoing considerations. While the Baltic states' inclusive digital strategies are laudable and often held up as exemplars, they are not without challenges. Data protection and privacy have emerged as critical concerns in these highly digital societies. As more citizen data is digitized and services move online, the responsibility to secure that information grows. Estonia learned this after a 2007 cyber-attack on its infrastructure, and all three countries continually invest in cybersecurity measures to defend against hacking, fraud, and other cyber threats (Selga 2022). Ensuring compliance with robust data protection frameworks like the EU's GDPR is essential to maintain public trust in e-government, and Baltic policymakers have largely embraced such regulations (GDPR-Info 2025). Even so, new threats – ranging from AI-driven misinformation to cross-border cyber espionage – require constant vigilance and updated safeguards. Another persistent issue is digital inequality. Despite high internet penetration rates, not all segments of society benefit equally from digital advancements. Rural communities, the elderly, and those with limited digital skills may still face barriers in accessing e-services. The Baltic governments have addressed this by offering digital literacy programs, improving broadband coverage in remote areas, and designing user-friendly interfaces (often multilingual) to accommodate diverse populations. These inclusion efforts are ongoing; for example, libraries and one-stop service centers in Latvia and Lithuania provide in-person assistance for those less comfortable online, ensuring no citizen is left behind by the digital rollout. Finally, the Baltic model's reliance on technology brings a need for resilience and adaptability. As technology evolves, systems like Estonia's X-Road or Lithuania's open data platform must be continually updated to stay secure and useful. There is also the challenge of sustaining political and public support for open, transparent digital governance in the face of external pressures. Big Tech companies regularly lobby governments worldwide to adopt their solutions – the Baltics must resist complacency and maintain their commitment to digital sovereignty and openness. In short, the struggle against electronic neo-feudalism is an ongoing process: it requires not just initial innovation, but continuous governance attention, legal reinforcement, and community engagement to address emerging privacy risks, security vulnerabilities, and social disparities (Novianto 2025).

Thus, the Baltic states' experience underscores that the trajectory of digital development can be **democratized** and made inclusive through purposeful policy and innovation. Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania have built digital institutions that embed social economy values into their design – from cooperative data infrastructures to citizen-centric services – offering a potent counter-narrative to the

idea that digitalization inevitably leads to privatized control or "technofeudal" outcomes (Morozov 2022; Fuchs 2022). Their achievements demonstrate that with informed leadership and societal buy-in, it is possible to reclaim the digital realm for public good. At the same time, the Baltic case is a reminder that such an alternative path requires constant guarding of the principles that define it. Transparency, participation, decentralization, and social benefit must be actively upheld through evolving laws and institutions. The Baltic model of inclusive digital solutions stands as a hopeful example that the future of the digital economy can belong not to a handful of platform overlords, but to the people and communities whom technology is meant to serve.

Conclusions and recommendations

Platform capitalism, when left unchecked, engenders what some describe as *electronic neo-feudalism* – characterized by data monopolies, erosion of digital sovereignty, and concentration of power in a few platform companies. Scholars caution that dominant digital platforms now act as "digital lords," extracting user data and value in quasi-feudal fashion and reducing users to dependent subjects (Srnicek 2017; Zuboff 2019). This privatization of digital governance undermines democratic oversight: key functions like online identity, communication networks, and data management increasingly fall under corporate control (Robinson 2020). In such conditions, platforms serve as de facto regulators of online life, and public authorities struggle to maintain sovereignty and accountability in the digital realm.

A social (solidarity) economy model offers an opposing vision grounded in principles of transparency, democratic participation, decentralization, and orientation to public benefit. In contrast to Big Tech's opaque, profit-driven rule, this approach seeks to democratize technology, giving users and communities a stake in digital services. Social economy initiatives – from open data commons to platform cooperatives – emphasize shared ownership and accountability mechanisms that curb corporate power and build trust. By embedding values of openness and collective benefit into digital architectures, this model can re-balance the digital economy toward a more equitable structure (Česnauskė 2019). In essence, whereas neo-feudalism entails private power without oversight, the social economy model treats digital infrastructure as a public good.

The Baltic states (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania) illustrate this counter-model in practice. Each country's inclusive digital strategy has aimed to empower citizens rather than cede control to tech monopolies. For example, Estonia built a comprehensive e-government system – with a national e-ID, secure data exchange (X-Road), and e-Residency program – that keeps critical data infrastructure under public control (Kalvet 2012; Kattel, Mergel 2019). Latvia created a unified e-governance portal and invested in digital literacy to bring services online transparently and encourage broad citizen use (Selga 2022). Lithuania implemented an open-data initiative, treating government data as a common resource to spur civic innovation (Česnauskė 2019). By prioritizing interoperability, security, and user-centric design, these states have avoided the extremes of platform capitalism. They show that digital technology can be harnessed as a public good – reinforcing inclusion and accountability instead of private oligarchy.

In conclusion, the Baltic experience provides a hopeful blueprint for resisting electronic neo-feudalism (Morozov 2022; Fuchs 2022). It demonstrates that digital transformation need not produce a new oligarchy of platform overlords; with proactive governance and solidarity-economy principles, the digital realm can remain under democratic checks and balances. However, preserving this alternative path demands ongoing vigilance. Transparency, participation, decentralization, and social benefit must be continuously safeguarded through adaptive laws and institutions. As technology evolves, societies must reinforce these values to ensure the digital future belongs to the communities and citizens it serves, not to a concentrated elite.

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Recommendations for policymakers include strengthening digital sovereignty and regulation by enacting robust antitrust and data-protection policies to curb platform monopolies and keep critical digital infrastructure under public oversight. Policymakers should also invest in inclusive public digital infrastructure by developing open, interoperable e-government platforms such as national digital IDs and secure data exchanges, while promoting universal digital literacy and access so that no community is excluded from digital transformation. In addition, supporting alternative digital models is essential; this involves encouraging platform cooperatives, open-source projects, and civic tech initiatives through funding, regulation, and partnerships to ensure that innovation serves social value rather than solely commercial interests.

For practitioners in digital governance and public administration, it is important to embed transparency and participation within digital services. This can be done by integrating open standards, transparent algorithms, and citizen feedback into digital service design to maintain accountability and user-centricity in e-government platforms. Practitioners should adopt interoperable and decentralized systems, prioritizing open-source solutions that prevent vendor lock-in and reduce the risk of a single actor monopolizing data or services. Furthermore, continuous capacity-building and collaboration are vital; public sector staff must be trained in emerging technologies and ethics, while cooperation with civil society should be strengthened to ensure digital tools remain inclusive, secure, and aligned with public needs.

Academic researchers are encouraged to refine critical frameworks related to digital power, undertaking deeper analysis of concepts such as electronic neo-feudalism in relation to surveillance capitalism and other theoretical paradigms in order to improve conceptual clarity. Expanding comparative studies is another important direction, particularly in examining how different countries, including and beyond the Baltic region, navigate tensions between platform capitalism and social economy alternatives. Such research should identify conditions that foster resilience against digital oligarchy and assess the long-term societal implications of inclusive digital policies. Finally, scholars should evaluate governance innovations, including data trusts, cooperative platforms, and AI regulations, to determine how effectively these mechanisms redistribute power and support democratic oversight in an increasingly digital ecosystem.

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