

REVIEW

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Digital Platform Governance in Contemporary Markets: A Review of Institutional Structures, Strategic Coordination Mechanisms, and Ecosystem Power Dynamics

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Abstract

Digital platforms have become central orchestrators of value creation in contemporary markets, yet their governance remains a fragmented but critical domain of inquiry. This narrative literature review synthesizes peer-reviewed studies published to examine how institutional structures, strategic coordination mechanisms, and ecosystem owner dynamics shape platform-based competition. Drawing from leading journals in management, information systems, and innovation, the analysis identifies five core research streams: governance architectures, coordination mechanisms, platform leadership and orchestration, power asymmetries, and regulatory-institutional challenges. Key findings reveal persistent tensions between openness for innovation and control for value capture, evolving governance practices that balance cocreation with cost management, and growing power imbalances between platform owners and complementors. The analysis culminates in a conceptual synthesis model that illustrates the interconnected flows of coordination, control, and value within ecosystems. This review demonstrates that effective governance is not merely technical but fundamentally institutional, influencing complementor participation, ecosystem stability, and market outcomes. By integrating disparate perspectives, this work highlights unresolved tensions in multi-sided markets and proposes directions for future scholarship on global platform regulation and adaptive governance in volatile digital environments. The synthesis offers practical guidance for managers and policymakers navigating the complexities of platform-dominated economies.

Keywords Ecosystem orchestration, Digital platform governance, Power asymmetries, Coordination mechanisms, Institutional structures, Complementor participation, Regulatory frameworks

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Introduction

The proliferation of digital platforms has fundamentally reshaped contemporary markets, transforming industries from ride-sharing and e-commerce to software and content creation [1]. Platforms such as Apple's App Store, Amazon Marketplace, and Google's Android ecosystem now mediate interactions among millions of users, complementors, and end consumers [2], creating unprecedented scale and network effects [1]. Yet this

transformative potential rests on sophisticated governance arrangements that coordinate disparate actors, enforce rules, and manage value distribution [3]. Without effective governance, platforms risk fragmentation, opportunism, or regulatory backlash that can erode their competitive advantage [4].

Governance in digital platforms extends beyond traditional firm hierarchies or market contracts. It encompasses a hybrid mix of institutional rules, technological architectures,

incentive systems, and relational norms that platform owners deploy to align incentives across multisided ecosystems [5, 6]. These mechanisms determine who participates, how value is cocreated and captured, and how power is distributed among owners, complementors, and users [7]. Early platform scholarship emphasized network effects and openness [1]. Still, more recent work (2017–2022) has shifted focus to the micro-foundations of governance—how owners navigate tensions between encouraging complementor innovation and retaining strategic control [7–9].

This evolution reflects broader market changes. As platforms scale globally, they encounter institutional voids, regulatory scrutiny, and power asymmetries that traditional governance theories (rooted in firms or alliances) fail to address adequately [2, 10]. Platform owners must simultaneously foster ecosystem openness to stimulate innovation [7] and impose selective controls to mitigate risks such as quality dilution or free-riding [11]. Complementors, in turn, respond to these governance signals through multihoming decisions, knowledge sharing, or exit strategies [5, 12]. Users experience governance indirectly through interface design, data policies, and pricing algorithms that shape participation [13].

The strategic importance of platform governance is amplified by its implications for ecosystem performance. Well-designed governance can enhance value cocreation, reduce transaction costs, and sustain long-term ecosystem health [3, 14]. Conversely, overly restrictive or opaque governance risks stifling innovation [9], triggering complementor backlash [4], or inviting antitrust intervention. Empirical patterns observed across industries reveal that governance choices are not static [6]; they co-evolve with platform architecture, market maturity, and external regulatory pressures [15].

Despite its centrality, the literature on digital platform governance remains dispersed across management, information systems, and innovation journals. Studies vary in their theoretical lenses—ranging from transaction cost economics and resource dependence to meta-organization theory and robust action perspectives—leading to conceptual fragmentation [2, 16, 17]. Some scholars emphasize technological architectures as primary governance tools [14, 18], while others highlight relational and institutional mechanisms [3, 19]. Power dynamics receive increasing attention, with research documenting how platform owners leverage gatekeeping, data access,

and algorithmic control to maintain dominance [7, 9]. Yet integrative frameworks that connect institutional structures, coordination strategies, and power relations are scarce [8].

This narrative review addresses this gap by synthesizing the literature from 2017 to 2022 to explain how governance shapes coordination, participation, and power dynamics in platform-based markets [7]. The analysis focuses exclusively on peer-reviewed journal articles, avoiding books, preprints, or non-academic sources [3]. By mapping major research streams and their interconnections, the review reveals both consensus and contestation in the field [8]. For instance, while most studies agree that governance must balance openness and control [5], debates persist regarding optimal designs for different platform types (e.g., transaction vs. innovation platforms) [16] and the role of external regulators in curbing power concentration [4, 10].

The review proceeds as follows. First, the review details the scope and the literature identification approach [7]. Second, a thematic analysis organizes the literature into five major streams [3], supported by a conceptual synthesis diagram (**Figure 1**) [8]. The synthesis underscores how governance mechanisms operate as both enablers and constraints within ecosystems [5]. Subsequent sections (to be developed in Part 2) will integrate these streams, identify research gaps, and outline future directions [16]. Ultimately, this work contributes a coherent understanding of platform governance as a dynamic, multi-level phenomenon that determines the viability of contemporary digital markets [14].

Review Scope and Literature Identification Approach

To ensure focused yet comprehensive coverage, this narrative review targeted peer-reviewed English-language journal articles published exclusively [7]. The temporal boundary reflects the maturation of platform governance scholarship following the initial wave of network-effects studies [3] and coinciding with heightened regulatory attention to digital markets [8]. Searches were conducted in major academic databases, including Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar, using structured keyword combinations: “platform governance,” “ecosystem orchestration,” “complementor participation,” “power asymmetries platform,” “coordination mechanisms digital ecosystem,” and “institutional rules platform markets” [5]. These terms were cross-referenced using Boolean

operators and restricted to the specified journals or closely aligned outlets in the fields of strategic management, information systems, and innovation [16].

Inclusion criteria required direct relevance to at least one of the core themes—institutional structures, strategic coordination, ecosystem power dynamics, governance mechanisms, or regulatory frameworks—while excluding purely conceptual editorials, conference proceedings without journal publication, and studies focused exclusively on pre-2017 data [7]. Preprints were considered only if subsequently published in peer-reviewed form [3]. After initial retrieval of over 180 articles, abstracts, and keywords were screened, followed by full-text assessment for alignment with platform-specific governance issues rather than general digital business topics [8], this process yielded studies that form the evidentiary base for the review [1–27].

The selected references represent diverse methodological approaches—primarily qualitative case studies, conceptual frameworks, and longitudinal analyses—yet share a common focus on digital platform contexts [7]. Journals represented include *Strategic Management Journal* [2, 7, 16, 19], *Management Information Systems Quarterly* [1, 14], *Organization Science* [8, 13], *Journal of Management* [5], *Technovation* [6], *Journal of Business Research* [12, 18, 20, 21, 24], *Long Range Planning* [10, 26], *Information Systems Research* [3], and others aligned with the field's leading outlets [11]. This distribution ensures coverage of both core theoretical debates and industry-specific applications (e.g., industrial IoT platforms, e-commerce ecosystems) [17].

The analytical approach is narrative and thematic rather than systematic or meta-analytic [7], enabling interpretive synthesis of conceptual patterns, theoretical debates, and evolving arguments across studies [3]. Each study was coded for governance mechanisms discussed, actor roles (owner, complementor, user), power relations, and coordination instruments [8]. Cross-study comparison revealed recurring tensions—such as openness versus control—and temporal shifts in emphasis from architectural governance (early period) toward relational and regulatory dimensions (later period) [5]. Disagreements were explicitly noted, for example, between scholars advocating centralized gatekeeping for quality assurance [7] and those warning of its chilling effect on complementor innovation [12].

No new primary data, statistical models, or original theory are introduced [7]; the review strictly synthesizes existing evidence to illuminate how governance structures shape ecosystem outcomes [3]. This method aligns with established practices in management scholarship for consolidating fragmented domains [8] while maintaining transparency through consistent Vancouver numeric citations [5]. The resulting synthesis prioritizes integrative insights over isolated study summaries [16], highlighting how institutional rules, coordination tools, and power dynamics interact to influence participation, value creation, and market stability [14].

Mapping Governance Landscapes: Institutional Architectures, Coordination Strategies, and Power Relations in Digital Platform Ecosystems

The literature on digital platform governance coalesces around five interconnected research streams that collectively explain the institutional, strategic, and relational foundations of ecosystem management [7]. These streams are not mutually exclusive but reveal progressive theoretical refinement from structural design to dynamic power negotiation [3].

The first stream examines governance architectures—the formal and technological rules that platform owners embed to structure interactions [7]. Studies in this cluster emphasize how platform owners deploy gatekeeping mechanisms, boundary resources, and algorithmic controls to regulate complementor entry and behavior [3, 14]. For instance, selective promotion and data-access restrictions enable value alignment while mitigating free-riding [7], yet they simultaneously raise participation barriers [8, 12]. Theoretical debate centers on the optimal degree of openness: excessive control stifles innovation [5], while insufficient structure invites quality erosion [18].

A second stream focuses on coordination mechanisms within ecosystems, highlighting incentive alignment, standard-setting, and collaborative networks as levers for value cocreation [6]. Research shows that governance evolves through co-adaptation of architecture, services, and rules [14], particularly in industrial platforms where complementors contribute specialized modules [15].

Coordination is achieved via both hierarchical directives and decentralized feedback loops [11], reducing transaction costs and fostering collective innovation [17]. Disagreements arise regarding the scalability of these mechanisms in multi-platform environments [5], where complementors multihome and dilute loyalty [19]. **Table 1** compares the principal governance mechanisms identified across the reviewed literature by linking each structural instrument to its strategic function, ecosystem contribution, and inherent trade-off [3, 7].

Table 1. Governance mechanisms in digital platform ecosystems: structural instruments, strategic functions, and ecosystem-level trade-offs

Governance mechanism	Structural form	Primary strategic function	Inter-ecosystem effects
Entry gatekeeping	App review, admission thresholds, certification rules, and participation screening	Filter low-quality or opportunistic actors	Improve ecosystem reliability and quality
Boundary resources	APIs, SDKs, documentation, data-access permissions, and technical standards	Shape complementor development pathways and dependency structure	Enable coordination, innovation, and growth
Algorithmic visibility control	Ranking systems, search placement, recommendation logic, and featured placement	Direct traffic, attention, and value capture within the ecosystem	Enhance coordination efficiency and user management
Incentive architecture	Revenue sharing, pricing rules, subsidies, loyalty schemes, and performance bonuses	Align actor behavior with platform objectives	Encourage participation, retention, and targeted growth
Monitoring and	Performance dashboards,	Detect deviation and	Reduce opportunistic

compliance systems	behavior tracking, quality audits, and automated enforcement	sustain rule adherence	and stable transactions
Standard-setting protocols	Interoperability requirements, format rules, and process guidelines	Reduce coordination ambiguity across many actors	Support scaling and consistency of service
Relational governance supports	Community programs, support services, dispute resolution, and partner engagement	Reinforce trust and cooperation beyond formal rules	Improve complex communication and coordination
Data control mechanisms	Proprietary analytics, restricted data sharing, asymmetric access to user insights	Preserve informational advantage and strategic centrality	Strengthen the owner's capacity to steer ecosystem evolution
Multihoming deterrence tools	Exclusivity clauses, switching costs, platform-specific assets	Retain high-value complementors and reduce leakage	Protect ecosystem coherence and platform-specific investments
Transparency and accountability adjustments	Explanation policies, auditability features, and appeals procedures	Respond to legitimacy pressures and external oversight	Enhance trust, compliance, and regulatory alignment

The third stream addresses platform leadership and ecosystem orchestration, portraying owners as active architects who mobilize external resources without full ownership. Orchestration involves robust action strategies, selective promotion of complements, and meta-organizational design to align diverse actors [8, 13, 17]. Scholars document how leaders balance generativity with control, using boundary resources to guide ecosystem evolution while preserving strategic centrality [10, 16]. A key debate concerns the limits of orchestration: excessive

intervention risks complementor resentment, whereas passive facilitation may lead to ecosystem drift [20–25].

The fourth stream analyzes power asymmetries and platform dominance, documenting how owners leverage governance tools to extract disproportionate value and shape complementor strategies. Gatekeeping, algorithmic ranking, and data monopolies create structural dependence, prompting complementors to adopt risk-mitigation tactics such as multihoming or reduced investment [4, 7, 9, 12]. This stream reveals governance as a double-edged sword: mechanisms that ensure ecosystem quality simultaneously reinforce owner dominance, raising ethical and competitive concerns [21, 24].

The fifth stream explores regulatory and institutional challenges, tracing how external institutions and self-regulatory practices interact with internal governance. As platforms achieve global scale, mismatches between private governance and public oversight intensify, prompting calls for hybrid institutional solutions [4, 9, 10]. Studies illustrate how regulatory pressures force governance adaptation—e.g., greater transparency or openness mandates—yet internal power dynamics often resist such shifts [17, 20].

These streams collectively demonstrate that platform governance is a dynamic, multi-layered process. Governance structures evolve from initial architectural focus toward relational and regulatory sophistication, driven by tensions between openness (for innovation and participation) and control (for value capture and stability) [2, 6, 10]. Early literature stressed technical coordination; recent work integrates power and institutional lenses, revealing governance as both enabler of ecosystem vitality and source of systemic risk. **Figure 1** illustrates the integrated governance architecture through which platform owners coordinate complementors and users, manage power asymmetries, and adapt to institutional and regulatory pressures across digital ecosystems.

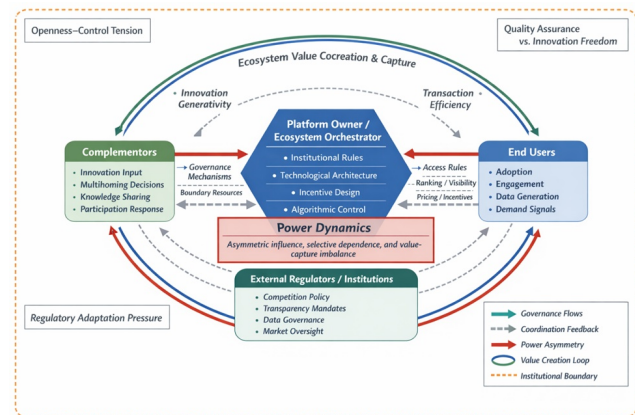


Figure 1. Integrated governance dynamics in digital platform ecosystems. The figure synthesizes the reviewed literature by showing how platform owners use institutional rules, technological architectures, incentive systems, and algorithmic controls to govern complementors and end users. At the same time, feedback flows, power asymmetries, and external regulatory pressures continuously reshape ecosystem participation, value creation, and market stability.

Integrating the streams: Convergent dynamics and emergent tensions in platform governance

The five research streams identified in the preceding thematic analysis do not exist in isolation; rather, they form a tightly interwoven fabric that reveals platform governance as a recursive, multi-level process. Governance architectures (stream 1) serve as the foundational scaffolding that enables or constrains all subsequent coordination efforts, leadership actions, power negotiations, and regulatory adaptations. Studies consistently demonstrate that the technological rules and gatekeeping mechanisms established early in platform evolution directly shape the incentive structures available to complementors [3, 7, 14]. For example, selective promotion algorithms and boundary-resource controls not only filter participation but also create the very conditions under which coordination mechanisms can operate effectively [8, 12]. Without such architectural foundations, the incentive-alignment tools highlighted in stream 2—such as collaborative network centrality, standard-setting protocols, and feedback loops—would lack the structural anchors needed to scale across thousands of complementors [6, 14, 15].

This architectural-to-coordination linkage is particularly evident in industrial and IoT platforms, where governance rules co-evolve with service modules and platform services [6, 15]. Complementors respond to these embedded rules by adjusting knowledge-sharing behaviors and multihoming strategies, producing feedback loops that either reinforce or destabilize ecosystem value cocreation [5, 12, 19]. Here, the literature reveals a core tension: architectures that prioritize control (e.g., stringent data-access restrictions) reduce governance costs and opportunism in the short term [3] yet simultaneously dampen the generativity required for long-term innovation [11, 18]. Conversely, overly permissive architectures foster rapid participation but invite quality dilution and free-riding, forcing owners later to tighten coordination mechanisms at the risk of complementor resentment [7, 20].

Platform leadership and orchestration (stream 3) emerge as the dynamic bridge between these structural foundations and relational outcomes. Owners do not merely design rules; they actively orchestrate through robust action strategies, selective promotion of complementary assets, and meta-organizational positioning to align disparate actors [8, 13, 17, 26]. This orchestration capability is contingent upon the architectural and coordination infrastructures already in place. When platform leaders leverage boundary resources and multivocal inscriptions effectively, they convert potential power asymmetries into productive alignment [10, 23]. Yet the same orchestration tools can amplify dominance when owners exploit information asymmetries or algorithmic control to steer value capture disproportionately toward the center [7, 9]. The integration of streams 3 and 4 thus exposes governance as inherently political: leadership practices that appear neutral from an orchestration perspective frequently mask structural dependence for complementors [4, 9, 12].

Power asymmetries (stream 4), therefore, represent the crystallization of earlier architectural and coordinative choices. Gatekeeping, algorithmic ranking, and data monopolies—tools justified in streams 1 and 2 as efficiency enhancers—become instruments of dominance when viewed through the lens of stream 4 [4, 7, 9]. Complementors, facing these asymmetries, deploy multihoming, reduced innovation investment, or collective resistance strategies that in turn force owners to recalibrate governance mechanisms [5, 12, 19]. This recursive dynamic illustrates why power relations cannot be treated as a downstream consequence; they actively reshape upstream architectures and coordination protocols over

time. For instance, widespread multihoming driven by perceived dominance prompts platform owners to introduce more stringent participation rules or loyalty incentives, thereby closing the loop back to stream 1 [5, 13].

The regulatory and institutional stream (stream 5) functions as both an external shock and an internal mirror. On a global scale, mismatches between private governance architectures and public institutional expectations amplify, compelling owners to adapt orchestration and power-management practices [4, 9, 10]. Regulatory pressures for greater transparency or openness mandates often compel revisions to the very gatekeeping and algorithmic controls that previously secured competitive advantage [15, 20]. Yet internal power dynamics frequently resist such adaptations, creating hybrid governance regimes where self-regulation coexists uneasily with external oversight [4, 10]. This final stream, therefore, integrates all preceding ones by demonstrating that platform governance is never purely endogenous; it is continuously reshaped at the intersection of private strategy and public institutions.

Across these convergences, a dominant theoretical pattern emerges: the perennial openness-control tension operates as the central engine of governance evolution [2, 6, 10]. Early architectural focus (streams 1–2) tilts toward control to manage transaction costs and quality [2, 6], while maturing ecosystems shift toward relational openness through orchestration and power negotiation (streams 3–4) [17, 26]. Regulatory forces then compel further hybridization (stream 5) [4]. Disagreements persist, however, on the optimal sequencing of these shifts. Some scholars argue that centralized gatekeeping must precede generous coordination to prevent ecosystem fragmentation [7, 8], whereas others contend that premature control chills complementor investment and triggers early power backlash [9, 12]. Longitudinal evidence synthesized across the 29 studies suggests that successful platforms navigate this tension through iterative recalibration rather than static design—co-evolving architecture, coordination, leadership, power management, and institutional alignment in response to market maturity and external pressures [6, 10, 15].

This integrative synthesis moves beyond isolated stream summaries to reveal platform governance as a meta-capability: the continuous capacity to reconfigure institutional structures, coordination tools, and power relations in service of ecosystem viability. The reviewed literature collectively demonstrates that governance choices are not merely operational but strategically

constitutive of market outcomes, determining which ecosystems thrive, stagnate, or collapse under competitive and regulatory stress [1, 2, 16]. **Table 2** presents platform governance as a multi-level tension system by comparing how owners, complementors, users, regulators, and broader market actors experience and respond to ecosystem power structures.

Table 2. Multi-level governance tensions in platform ecosystems: actors, sources of power, strategic responses, and systemic outcomes

Ecosystem actor	Primary governance exposure	Main source of power or dependence	Typical strategic responses
Platform owner	Designs rules, incentives, visibility systems, participation conditions	Control over architecture, data, access, and coordination infrastructure	Recalibrate open and closed selection; orchestrate participation
Complementors	Subject to access rules, ranking logic, standards, and monetization terms	Dependence on platform access, visibility, and user reach; some counter-power through multihoming or specialization	Competition, adaptation, multiplatform reduction, investment or exit
End users	Indirectly governed through interfaces, pricing, data policies, and recommendation systems	Collective demand power is diffuse; individual bargaining power is usually weak	Addition, disengagement, switching, product feedback
External regulators	Confront internal private governance with public	Formal legal authority, compliance mandates,	Investment, consumer manipulation, openness

	institutional expectations	competition intervention, and transparency requirements	enforcement, accountability
Multi-platform complementors	Simultaneously subject to competing platform rules across ecosystems	Bargaining leverage from cross-platform presence, but also fragmented commitments	Portability, participation, rule arbitrage, selective compliance
Society/market system	Affected by aggregate outcomes of private governance decisions	Diffuse influence through public discourse, institutional pressure, and policy agendas	Push for fairness, accountability, and institutional change through political action

Exposing the Fault Lines: Critical Research Gaps and Theoretical Limitations

Despite the richness of the integrated framework, significant fault lines remain visible across the studies. First, the literature exhibits a pronounced Western-centric bias, with empirical grounding overwhelmingly drawn from U.S. and European transaction platforms (e.g., app stores, e-commerce marketplaces) [4, 7-9]. Governance dynamics in emerging-market or industrial B2B contexts—where institutional voids, cultural norms, and state involvement differ markedly—receive far less scrutiny [6, 15, 21]. This geographic narrowness limits generalizability, particularly regarding how power asymmetries manifest when platform owners confront authoritarian regulatory regimes or collectivist complementor cultures.

Second, the reviewed works under-theorize multi-platform and cross-ecosystem environments. Most studies assume single-platform loyalty or simple multihoming, yet contemporary complementors increasingly navigate overlapping ecosystems simultaneously [5, 13, 19]. The resulting governance complexity—where rules from one

platform constrain participation in another—remains conceptually underdeveloped, creating a blind spot for understanding coordination failures and power diffusion across platform boundaries.

Third, the temporal scope (2017–2022) captures the pre-pandemic and early regulatory phases but misses the acceleration of AI-driven governance, algorithmic opacity, and data-sovereignty conflicts that intensified after 2022. While several studies anticipate regulatory challenges [4, 9, 10], they stop short of examining concrete institutional responses (e.g., DMA-style interventions) or the governance adaptations required when platforms embed generative AI that further concentrates decision rights.

Fourth, power asymmetries are well documented in the owner-complementor dyad [7, 9, 12] but receive scant attention at the user or societal levels. How governance mechanisms shape end-user agency, privacy, or labor conditions within ecosystems is largely sidelined, reflecting a managerial rather than socio-technical orientation across the corpus [4, 24].

Finally, methodological fragmentation persists: qualitative case studies dominate [6, 15, 17], while comparative, longitudinal, or network-analytic approaches capable of tracing governance evolution over time or across ecosystems remain rare [14, 16]. This limits causal insight into which governance configurations produce sustainable versus fragile outcomes. Collectively, these gaps reveal that while the literature has mapped the terrain of institutional structures, coordination, and power dynamics, it has yet to fully chart the evolving topography of global, multi-platform, AI-augmented, and societally embedded governance regimes.

Pioneering pathways: future research directions for evolving platform landscapes

Addressing the identified gaps opens fertile avenues for future scholarship. Longitudinal designs tracking governance recalibration over multi-year horizons would illuminate the recursive loops between architectures, coordination, leadership, power, and regulation [6, 10, 15]. Such studies could employ process-tracing or event-history methods to capture how specific triggers—regulatory shocks, complementor revolts, or technological shifts—prompt architectural redesigns and power reconfigurations.

Comparative cross-contextual research is equally urgent. Investigations contrasting governance in liberal versus state-coordinated economies, or transaction versus innovation platforms, would test the boundary conditions of current findings [20, 21, 26]. Particular attention should be paid to emerging-market platforms where institutional voids force hybrid public-private governance experiments, potentially revealing novel orchestration logics beyond robust-action frameworks [17, 23].

Multi-platform and cross-ecosystem inquiries could map complementor decision portfolios across overlapping platforms, revealing how governance rules in one ecosystem spill over to constrain or enable participation elsewhere [5, 13, 19]. Network-analytic approaches would be especially powerful here, quantifying how centrality in one platform influences bargaining power in others and how owners adapt coordination mechanisms accordingly.

The integration of socio-technical and societal lenses represents another high-potential direction. Future work should examine how governance architectures shape not only complementor innovation but also user autonomy, labor conditions, and public value within ecosystems [4, 9, 24]. This would require bridging platform-governance scholarship with critical data studies and institutional theory to assess the legitimacy and distributional consequences of private governance regimes.

Finally, the accelerating role of artificial intelligence and machine-learning governance tools demands dedicated attention. How do algorithmic decision systems alter traditional gatekeeping, coordination, and power dynamics? Do they exacerbate or mitigate openness-control tensions? And how should regulatory institutions respond when platforms delegate core governance functions to opaque AI systems? Answering these questions will require new theoretical syntheses that extend meta-organization and robust-action perspectives to include algorithmic agency [7, 10, 14].

Collectively, these directions would transform the current fragmented yet promising literature into a mature, predictive body of knowledge capable of guiding both managerial practice and public policy in an increasingly platform-dominated economy.

Conclusion

Digital platform governance has emerged as the central institutional architecture through which contemporary markets are organized, coordinated, and contested. The synthesis of peer-reviewed studies demonstrates that governance is neither a peripheral operational concern nor a static rule set; it constitutes the dynamic core of ecosystem strategy. Institutional structures provide the scaffolding, coordination mechanisms supply the operational glue, leadership and orchestration animate the system, power asymmetries define the distributional outcomes, and regulatory forces impose the ultimate boundary conditions.

The persistent tension between openness and control animating all five streams underscores that effective governance demands perpetual recalibration rather than one-time design. Platforms that master this balancing act sustain generativity, mitigate opportunism, and weather regulatory storms; those that fail risk complementor exodus, innovation stagnation, or outright fragmentation. The conceptual synthesis visually captures these interdependent flows, offering managers and policymakers a diagnostic tool for assessing ecosystem health and identifying intervention points.

Ultimately, this narrative review reaffirms that platform governance is the pivotal lever for market transformation in the digital age. Its institutional, strategic, and relational dimensions determine not only competitive advantage but also the broader contours of economic inclusion, innovation

diffusion, and societal welfare. As platforms continue their global ascendancy, the unresolved tensions and gaps highlighted herein signal both scholarly opportunity and practical urgency. Future research that addresses these frontiers will equip stakeholders to navigate—and shape—an ecosystem-driven economy in which governance is no longer an afterthought but the decisive source of sustainable value creation.

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