The Future of Governance and the Open Web
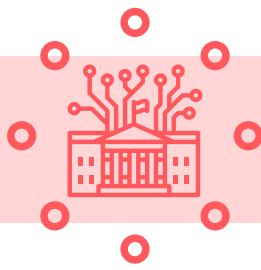## A Brief Overview

Blockchain technology has recently emerged as a critical 21st century general-purpose-technology with countless applications in the fields of finance, business, and politics. Because blockchain allows individuals to engage with institutions in very different ways, the need to re-think our relationship with institutions and the State becomes an important point of discussion. This includes not only the role of the State at a time of technical innovation and geopolitical fragmentation, but also a focus on how blockchain as a technology can improve the way we engage in politics, and help us build a better society.

Two contrasting views on the role of blockchain have already emerged:

One advocates for maintaining the current State authority structure while using blockchain to make citizens less dependent on institutions. This pathway would focus

on the public development and implementation of smart contracts, digital ownership, DAOs, etc. but beneath the central authority.

Another view, instead, promotes the adoption of blockchain technology as a preliminary approach to overcome the idea of centralised political institutions. This approach focuses on the value proposition of algorithm-based distributed consensus and how it might create the conditions for a society of equals outside existing state hierarchies (Marcella Aztori, *Blockchain technology and decentralised governance: Is the State still necessary?*, 2017, University College of London).

The Fundamental Principles of Blockchain Governance

Traditionally, the State has been in charge of coordinating and facilitating social and commercial engagements among groups of people. The structures put in place by the State have often been in response to historical necessities. Nevertheless, this model has two main points of failure: It lacks the necessary flexibility to provide timely responses to challenges and societal demands; and its power is based on coercion. As we progress as a society, these inefficiencies become ever more clear and unacceptable. The difference today is that we now have the means to potentially fix these problems through blockchain, by re-imagining the role of the State and the many different institutions involved in social and global governance.

The Dismantling of Hierarchical Structures

The existing governance adopted by the State, primarily relies on coercion and a hierarchical structure that people freely subjugate themselves to in return for the benefits that this structure can guarantee (i.e. things such as protection, stability, and wealth).

However, as blockchain provides the means to engage into transactions of various kinds more efficiently, and without requiring the need for third parties it challenges state primacy on a variety of domains.

Individual empowerment

Smart contracts and Decentralized Autonomous Corporations (DACs) have the potential to remove excessive political representatives and ensure a direct flow of communication between the citizens and the State. Firstly, these blockchain solutions allow for an unprecedented diffusion of authority into a more horizontal and democratic process that accounts for citizen engagement in the political procedures.

Futarchy

Betting through cryptocurrencies and tokens on prediction markets makes it easier to determine which policies will have the most effect on national well-being. By relying on a betting market, an open-source protocol is able to estimate which proposal brings the maximum value for the nation to consequently legalize it.

Direct Democracy

New models of citizen political participation will appear. For instance, Liquid Democracy, where individuals can assign their vote to someone else, and random-sample elections that promote well-informed and motivated political choices.

Borderless, Globalised Governmental Services

Blockchain has the potential to be used to overcome geographical limits by turning national jurisdictions into a global cloud, accessible by mobile citizens.

Topics to Discuss

How is the relationship between citizens and States going to change? Will the power shift completely from institutions to individuals?

How can blockchain governance be envisioned? Which new institutions are going to emerge?

What are the social benefits of bottom-up politics? What are possible dangers of the complex political government being reduced to a number of mechanical algorithms?

What are the caveats of an absolutely Stateless political structure?

The Dangers of Blockchain based State Surveillance.

NEAR

NEAR Protocol is a 3rd Generation Blockchain Platform built with scalability and usability in mind. The NEAR Ecosystem is home to a number of cutting edge projects in the crypto space that hold the promise of building the Open Web. Geographically diversified, NEAR features headquarters across 3 continents (USA, San Francisco; China, Shanghai; Switzerland, Zug). The NEAR Community, NEAR Guilds, and the NEAR Team are growing the NEAR Ecosystem to be a home for native crypto, enterprise blockchain, and emerging technology solutions around the world. Learn more about NEAR at NEAR.org or join the discussion on Telegram.