Title: Crypto-currency and anarcho-crypto-capitalism: has technology made Anarchism a feasible political option (at last)?

Abstract: One major problem for ethicists and political philosophers is the cultivation of “hope” – expanding the horizons of what options seem possible, particularly in the midst of oppressive neo-liberal regimes. Too often liberal democracy is seen as a lesser evil, or greatest but nonetheless quite modest possible political good. Some of this deference to the “modestly effective good” comes in the wake of the many preferred (radical) alternatives which are simply (and justifiably) dismissed as “impossible”. Given the massive population of modern states in many instances, a persistent argument against more communitarian or anarchist political arrangements has been that of scale. Communitarians from Aristotle to Macintyre convey an awareness that the notion of radical democracy and the forms of consensus and inclusion which they imply simply do not scale past a certain critical mass of human participation. In this paper, I will explore the possibility which has been mooted by many techno-futurists that newly available digital technologies – particularly the federated blockchain which lies behind the recent innovation of bitcoins – may open up new and more participatory political horizons in the form of automated algorithmic contracts. The paper will include a brief introduction to the technology and a survey of some of the techno-futurist rhetoric which has begun to emerge in mainstream media outlets and then conclude with an assessment of blockchain as a political tool.

Keywords: political philosophy, technology, blockchain, contractarianism, anarchism

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