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Presentation Title: The Politics of Cyber-Physical Commons

The presentation aims to highlight the current emergence of cyber-physical commons that seek to scale the commons by bridging local and global (digital) commons via Blockchain-based tokens engineering design. Blockchain technology comes with a number of tools that may foster transparency and accountability as well as facilitate democratic governance and provide funding for the commons.


The presentation points to limitations of the arguments, bringing to the fore the contradictions of the commons: commerciality vs non-commerciality, competition vs cooperation, private vs common property, exchange vs use value, centralisation vs decentralisation, exclusion vs inclusion, individuality vs communality, localism vs globalism, fragmentation vs scale. The above contradictions prevent the commons from scaling into a sustainable socio-economic paradigm capable of challenging neoliberalism.

The presentation moves on then to examining Blockchain technology, narrowing down the analysis to the basic division between cryptolibertarians and cryptocommoners. Crypto-commoners employ Blockchain-based tools to address the problem of scaling the commons. The presentation brings up some potential contradictions in this attempt and offers some potential solutions.

For the commons to resolve their contradictions and progress into an organic, self-sustaining model capable of challenging neoliberalism, they need to evolve into a federation of open cooperatives that provide their user communities a sustainable livelihood along the lines of
transparency, accountability and democracy. Blockchain technology has the potential to scale the commons by providing novel tools of governance and funding. However, technology alone cannot address the contradictions of the commons. For the commons to establish a dominant socio-economic model vis-à-vis neoliberalism, a post-hegemonic transformation of society is sine qua non. Post-hegemony is the transformative political strategy that seeks to integrate the different types of commons (digital, rural, urban) into a synergetic network of global commons, supported by reticular market and institutional mechanisms aligned around the commons. Proper incentive schemes, well-designed policies, financial mechanisms, law reforms, affordable housing, education, sustainability science, are all part and parcel of a post-hegemonic strategy aiming to transform neoliberalism into the post-capitalism of the commons, supported by a partner state that represents the interests of the people rather than elites.

REFERENCES


