Ruling through Technology: The Contestation of Crypto Systems

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Résumé

Over the last decade, the development of digital technologies have transformed the global economy in many unprecedented ways. More than simply allowing the development of new products and services, as it is too often assumed, the digitization of the economy gave new actors the ability to increasingly challenge pre-established market players and structures. The emergence of tech giants, like Google, Amazon, Facebook and Apple (i.e. the GAFA), as world's top companies by market value, exemplifies this. They however represent the less disruptive side of this trend as they actually do not aim to replace current market structures. At the opposite, crypto services, like Bitcoin and Ethereum, precisely aim to do this and thus represent a more fundamental challenge to our modern economic systems. In this paper, we start from this observation to argue that, through their respective technology, big tech and crypto companies try to regulate the economy differently. Using a neo-gramscian framework of analysis, we more precisely show how political values can be integrated into new technologies to build lasting economic structures. We do this through a careful comparative analysis of Ethereum and Amazon Web Services.

Mots-Clés: Technology, Regulation, Cryptocurrencies, Neo, Gramscian, Market structures

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