

León Vollerigh

Blockchain Governance

Challenges and New Paths for
Modern Statehood in the Digital Sphere



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With a Foreword by Prof. Dr. Gary S. Schaal

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***“And covenants, without the sword, are but words
and of no strength to secure a man at all.”***

Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan, 1651

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Foreword

The fact that democracies are changing during the process of digitalization is undisputed today. The political handling of these changes will be decisive for the (our) future. Minor challenges arise in those (few) areas in which current trends can simply be extrapolated. However, major political and social challenges arise from (disruptive) technological developments that divide the course of time into a "before" and an "after". Blockchain, or more general distributed ledger technologies, pose such a major political challenge.

During his time in Hamburg, León Vollerigh and I have often debated about digitalization and blockchain. Our discussions at the time – especially legitimacy issues of on-chain governance – marked the starting point of a long line of dialogues he had with cutting-edge experts in the US, among others at the University of Berkeley. His fruitful insights and innovative findings are documented in this monograph. I am glad that his thoughts are now accessible for a broader audience.

León Vollerigh addresses the question, “to what extent can Blockchain and distributed ledger technologies enable digital and decentralized forms of governance systems that are non-reliant on centralized state authority?” Or very brief: Can non-state actors provide state-like services?

León Vollerigh addresses these questions in a rigorous and very thoughtful manner. His insights are important for decision makers as well as citizens: While at present, all forms of on-chain governance are prone to legitimacy deficits, this may and will change soon, according to Vollerigh. But we are on the brink of a new historic phase, in which the state will no longer be the same. The functions of the state will change dramatically during the process of implementing legitimate on-chain governance, since non-state actors **will** provide state-like services. So, it's high time to talk about the political and social effects

of on-chain governance. This book is a timely and thoughtful offer to start this crucial endeavor.

Gary S. Schaal