

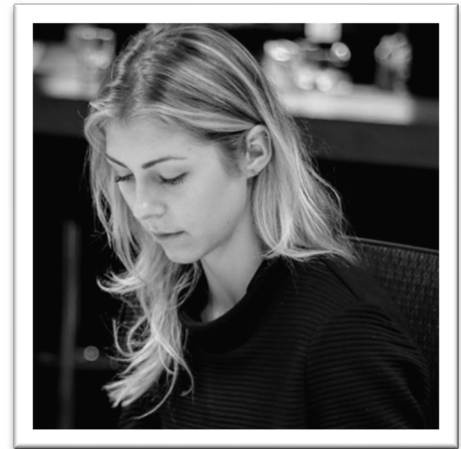
Social Change Symposium

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Title: Resilience in Decentralised Technologies as 'Self Infrastructuring'



Abstract: This thesis investigates if decentralised technologies are resilient as not just a technical but a social infrastructure. Decentralised technologies are the focus of much scholarly enquiry across the disciplines of software engineering, economics, law, and sociology. Scholarship on decentralized technologies often focuses on the technical attributes of resilience in terms of cybersecurity. Yet, decentralized technologies, such as blockchains, have also been acknowledged as an enabling institutional infrastructure for social coordination, but little is known about the capabilities of these technologies to afford resilience for people in practice. By employing ethnographic methods and a case studies approach, I observe and analyse the processes and practices of how people construct and use the unique attributes of these tools to adapt and transform in response to threats, crises, or opportunities, in relation to shared purposes concerning organisation, hardware, and data management. I find that decentralised technologies in practice are about 'self-infrastructuring'. Self-infrastructuring is when people have the ability to participate in designing, owning, operating, governing, and/or maintaining their own infrastructure in a specific context, which can both produce and limit resilience.