

Tending the Infinite Garden: Organizational Culture in the Ethereum Ecosystem

Academic Paper

Dr. Paul Dylan-Ennis & Ann Brody



polar @post_polar_ · Oct 28

i am so jealous of these pro Helldivers who do a podcast about it *as their job* 😓

TO EXIT FULL SCREEN, PRESS ESC

LIBERTY DAY HIGHLIGHTS

- 0000 Strohmann News 24-hour Livestream [Live from the Wall of Martyrs]
- 0600 Reciting of the Super Earth Anthem [Citizens rise]
- 0700 Dissident Executions [Brought to you by Eagle Sweat!]
- 0900 Liberty Day Parade* [Best. President of Super Earth's speech & Gen. Brasch inflatable]
- 1300 Orbital Bombardment of the Moon [Over 15,000 megatons of ordnance]
- 1600 Synchronized Salute & Oath of Citizenship [MANDATORY]
- 1900 Super Earth's Next Top Helldiver Finale [It could be you!]
- 2000 Surprise Dissident Executions [It could be you!]
- 2500 General Brasch Film Premiere [Automatons Now]
- 2600 Reciting of the Super E...

*Class B Officers and above are granted 1 hour off work to watch in [Citizens must reimburse employer for the loss of production].

26 OCT

FOR YOUR KIDS!
 🗨️ Liberty Day Pure
 🗨️ Whack-A-Terminator
 🗨️ Meet a Helldiver
 🗨️ Enlistment

EXPERIENCE PODCAST



Who we are

Dr. Paul Dylan-Ennis - Professor at University College Dublin

- Culture/Social layer of Ethereum and the Blockchain Ecosystem
- Author of "Absolute Essentials of Ethereum"

Ann Brody - Doctoral Candidate at McGill University

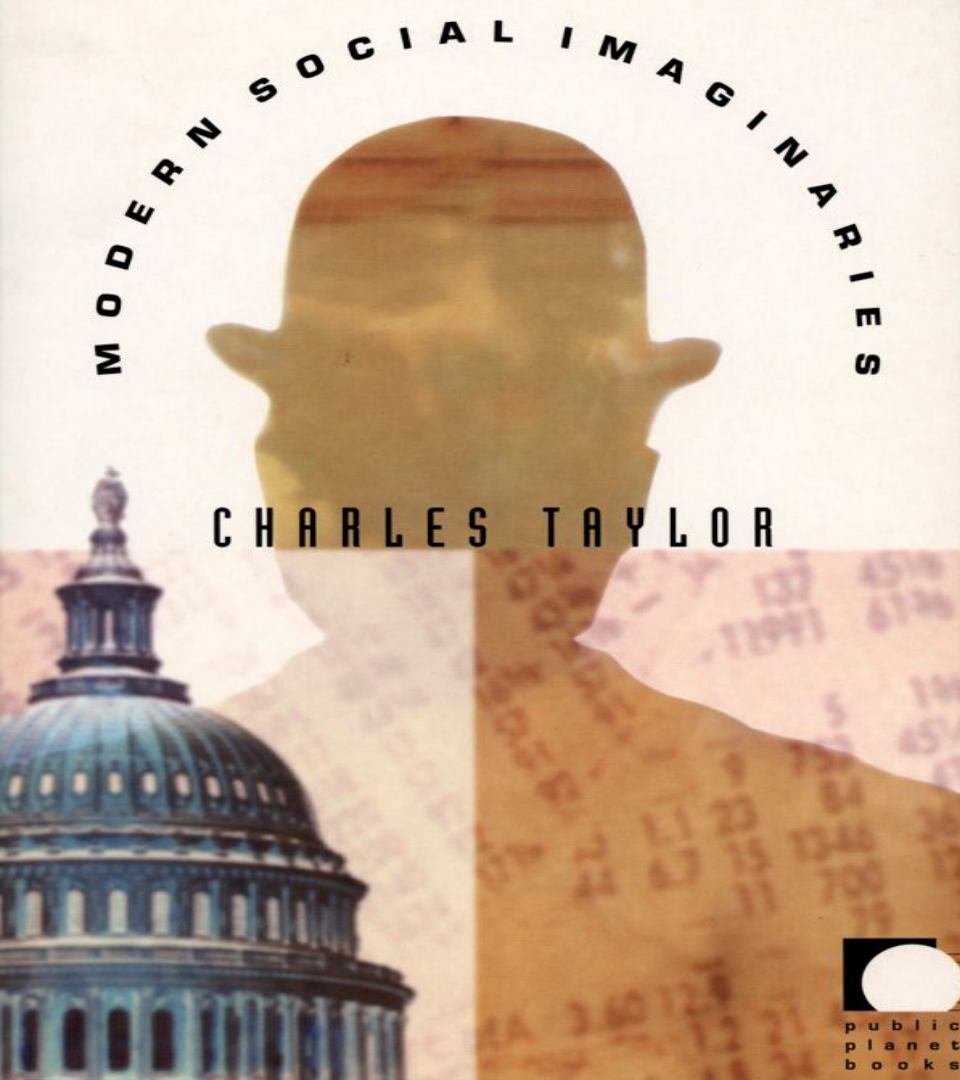
- Anthropology, Science and Tech Studies, Communication Studies

Paper Abstract

Role of culture in Ethereum's organization and Ethereum Core dev imaginaries

Core Argument:

when there is an absence of centralized hierarchy, social imaginaries come into play and set boundaries on the legitimacy of decision-making in Ethereum protocol governance.



Social Imaginary

“The ways people imagine their social existence, how they fit together with others, how things go on between them and their fellows” – **Charles Taylor**

“Collectively held, institutionally stabilized, and publicly performed visions of desirable futures, animated by shared understandings of forms of social life and social order attainable through, and supportive of, advances in science and technology” – **Jasanoff and Kim**



Social Imaginaries in the works

Infrastructural Mutualism & Digital Metalism (Swartz, 2018)

World Computer (Brody & Couture, 2021)

Hacker-Engineer (Brekke, 2021)

Productive Money (Dylan-Ennis et al., 2023)

New Imaginary:

- **Infinite Garden:** Ethereum's continuous evolution, alluding to an eventual Endgame or state of ossification.



Research Approach

Interviewees

Vitalik Buterin, Researcher, co-founder of Ethereum

Danny Ryan, Former Researcher, Ethereum Foundation

Pooja Ranjan, Herder-in-Chief, Ethereum Cat Herders

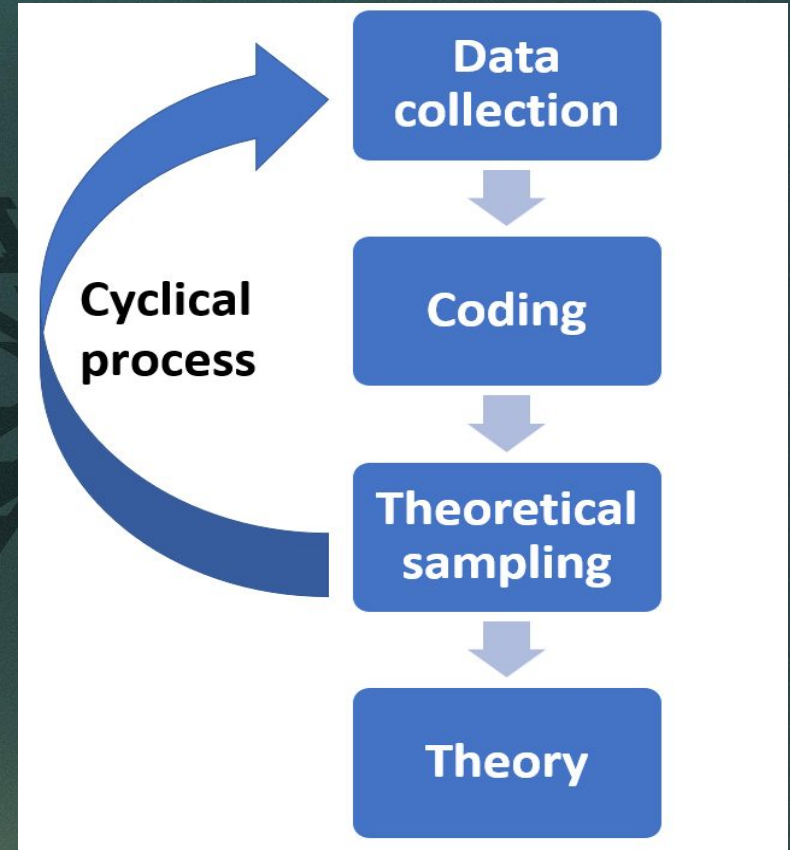
Tim Beiko, Protocol Support, Ethereum Foundation

Alex Stokes (Researcher, Ethereum Foundation)

Ben Edington, Teku consensus client Product Lead

Trent Van Epps, Protocol Support, Ethereum Foundation/Protocol Guild

Grounded Theory



Ethereum's Governance

Core Devs: Ethereum protocol maintenance and upgrades.

Full nodes: power users running the complete Ethereum software.

Stakers: participants in the staking consensus mechanism.

Media: Ethereum influencers, podcasters and content creators.

dApp builders: create dApps in the Ethereum ecosystem.

End User: an Ethereum wallet user.



Key Themes

Cypherpunk Values

“We are for decentralization, we are against political control’ and ‘we are for credible neutrality and making Ethereum robust against capture in all its aspects.” – **Ben Edington**

“There’s obviously this substrate of crypto around self-sovereignty, freedom, censorship-resistance.” – **Tim Beiko**

Conflict Resolution

“Sometimes there are disputes and people generally try to, you know, keep talking until some kind of a fairly reasonable solution can be decided on. I feel like it just almost always ends up resolved in some way before it kind of bubbles over into some really serious, horrible conflict” – **Vitalik Buterin**

Conflict Resolution

“Basically, we talk it out. If people disagree, they are listened to, but if the feeling of the meeting is of a different direction, then that’s where we will go.” - **Ben Edington**

“Sometimes there are disputes and people generally try to, you know, keep talking until some kind of a fairly reasonable solution can be decided on. I feel like it just almost always ends up resolved in some way before it kind of bubbles over into some really serious, horrible conflict.” - **Vitalik Buterin**

Market Pressures

“I feel like there weren't really any social challenges for Shapella, because this is one of those examples of something that's purely technical, which is just that people want to withdraw. It was promised that people are going to withdraw. And so the biggest challenge is just implementing the withdrawal.”

– Vitalik Buterin

Market Pressures

“If the price of this token (ETH) becomes really high, and it’s really valuable, that’s great. Sure. But there’s almost something more important to me. Which is what this technology enables, which I know is a strong statement for a lot of people, but it’s just what’s happening.” –

Alex Stokes

“Mercifully we’ve been free of commercial pressures...Core Devs are pretty resistant to being told what to do and we will make our own minds up.” – **Ben Edington**



New Imaginary



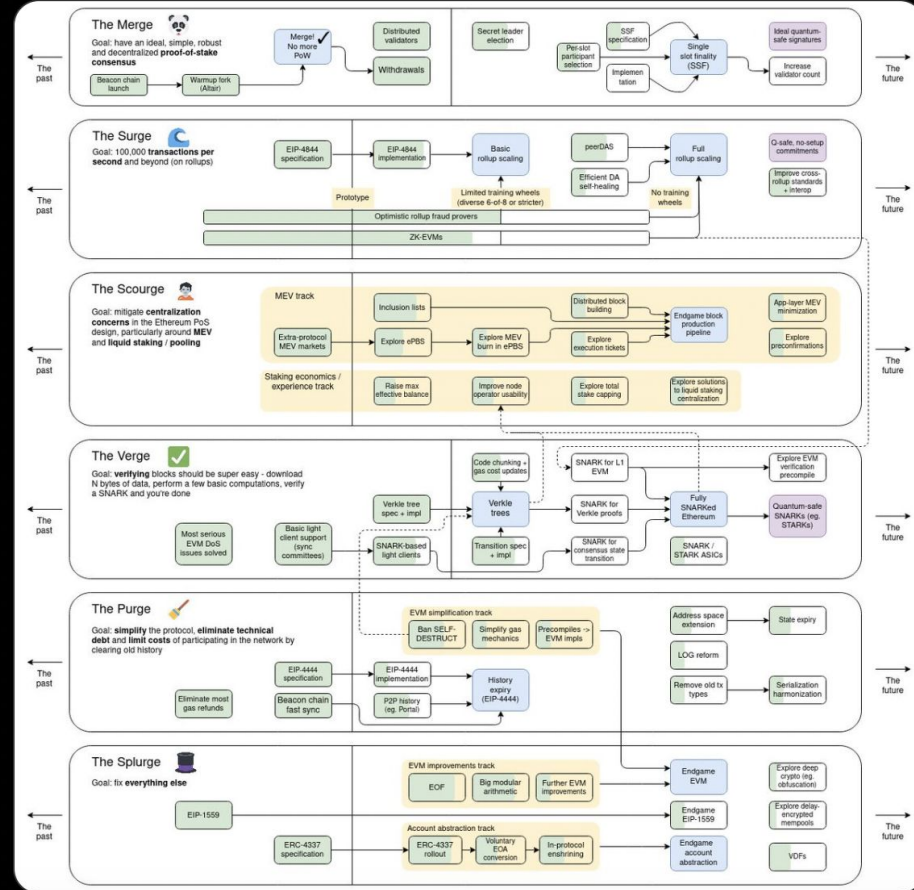
vitalik.eth
@VitalikButerin

By popular demand, an updated roadmap diagram for 2023!

Infinite Garden

“Ethereum is a protocol for human coordination. Coordination is a game, but not one that is played to win. Coordination is more like tending a garden, where one works only that the garden continues to thrive”

- Aya Miyaguchi



Key findings

Social Imaginaries as polycentric governance

Imaginaries set informal boundaries on acceptable behavior and decision-making within Ethereum's decentralized structure.

***Culture* is the condition that enables stability**

Growing the Garden

“You’ll get less alignment as the community grows...it seems like things have gotten bigger, and I expect they’ll keep getting bigger, in some form, or fashion. And as it happens it’s harder to maintain alignment.” - **Alex**

Stokes

“How do we incorporate the interest of these stakeholders into protocol development without compromising our cypherpunk values? I don’t think it will be easy...” - **Ben Edington**

Searching for a light at the end of the tunnel?

The Cypherpunks are actively engaged in making the networks safer for privacy. Let us proceed together apace.

Onward.

Women in web3 Privacy
womeninweb3privacy.com

Web3privacy Now
web3privacy.info



NO PRIVACY,
NO FREEDOM!



Thank you!

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