



Digital Currencies and Public Law: History, Constitutionalism and the Revolutionary Nature of Money

A Book Exploring the Digital World

Dr. Andrew Mazen Dahdal
Acting Associate Dean for Academic Affairs,
College of Law – Qatar University

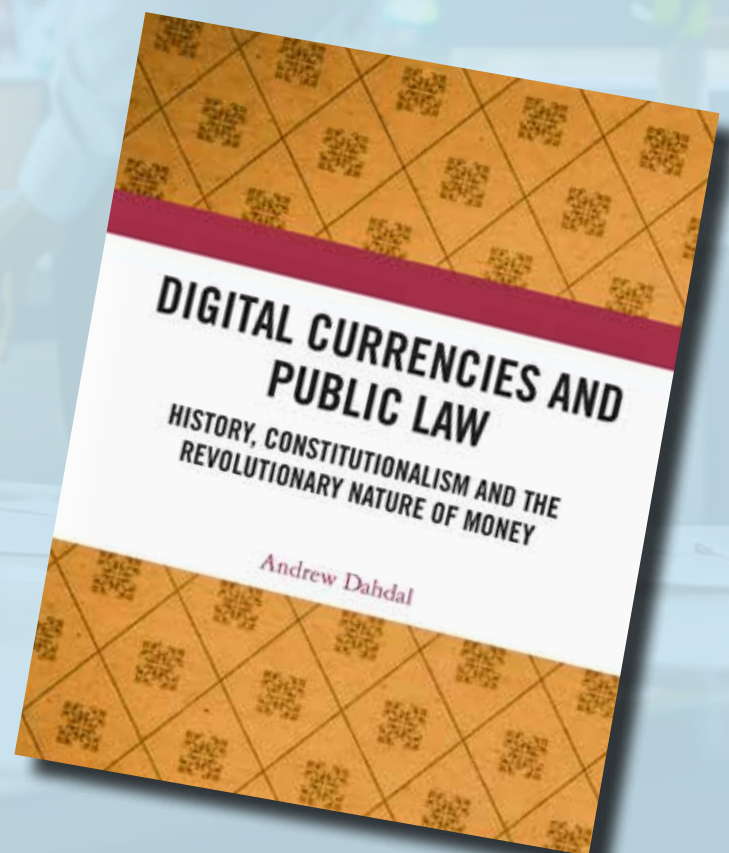


Money is sometimes described as a ‘social technology’. Yet, it is so much more than a tool for trade and transactions. Across history, money has defined the relationship between governments and the societies they govern. The lesson from history is that changing the nature of money can also change the constitutional balance in society. In order to understand what and how those changes are, the idea of money must be examined, and the new forms of digital currencies must also be explored.

Many policymakers around the world have already introduced (or are intending to introduce) a variety of laws to deal with digital currencies and digital assets. What is specifically being regulated, and what are the ultimate goals of such regulations, are important preliminary questions.

There are different kinds of digital currencies, from the well-known ‘bitcoin’, to the so-called ‘stablecoins’, all the way to digital currencies that can only be described as ‘scams’. There are many words used to describe this phenomenon, including ‘digitized money’, ‘digital assets’, ‘digital tokens’, ‘crypto currencies’, and more. This confusion sometimes intimidates people from asking or engaging in discussions about what digital currencies actually are—let alone what they mean for broader society. There are also many motivations for banning, allowing, or regulating these activities. Some may argue that the ultimate goal is to protect individuals or the economy from scams and other illegal conduct. In contrast, others may argue that promoting economic and technological innovation is the real goal. Whatever the motivation, not many people have considered the broader consequences of changing the nature of money on how governments and societies function. This book argues that the broader consequences of changing the nature of money are more than economic. They are social, political, and even philosophical. By exploring the history

of monetary change across civilizations, this book outlines the tensions and forces that will shape the future of societies and governments in the digital age. Over the last decade, digital currencies have featured heavily in nearly all discussions around economic digitization. Digital currencies are testing and challenging legal categories. For instance, laws related to property, contracts, crimes, and taxation have all had to adapt in order to meet the unique challenges of digital currencies and digital assets. One area of law that has not been sufficiently examined in light of the digital currency developments is constitutional law—or the legal relationship between societies and the state. While ‘private law’ is the domain of business and commerce, digital currencies must also be seen through a ‘public law’ lens. This book provides a framework for constitutional scholars to understand and engage with digital currency debates. This book is also an entry point for other scholars from across all disciplines seeking to better



understand digital currencies and the significance of their growth.

Money is not merely an object; it is a web of relationships. It shapes and defines interactions among individuals, between individuals and the state, and among states themselves. The use of money for charity can also define the relationships between people and their religious beliefs. This book draws on historical sources and literature relating to currency changes and reforms to argue that the introduction of digital currencies (in all their forms) risks unbalancing society in many potentially unforeseen ways.

For centuries, the origin and control of money have been central concerns for political leaders and empires, from Alexander the Great to Rome and the Islamic Caliphate. These historical experiences reveal enduring patterns and insights that continue to shape the constitutional dynamics of monetary reform. Only an epistemology grounded in history can fully capture the breadth and implications of this debate; abstract reasoning alone is insufficient to grasp the real-world consequences of monetary change. Building on this historical foundation, the book introduces a “Money Matrix” as an analytical framework for interpreting digital monetary reforms, focusing on who issues money, who controls it, and the degree of control exercised.

Through this framework, those engaging in digital

money debates can address political, social, philosophical, and even religious perspectives rather than focusing on law, technology, and economics. Given the significance of digital currency developments and associated legal reforms, it is important that everyone understands and is engaged in this shift.

This book is an open invitation to scholars from all disciplines across the Qatar University community and beyond to participate in this transformative discussion.

The book is available in the Qatar University Library as an e-book here:

<https://mylibrary.qu.edu.qa/record=b1756139>



For purchase here:

<https://www.routledge.com/Digital-Currencies-and-Public-Law-History-Constitutionalism-and-the-Revolutionary-Nature-of-Money/Dahdal/p/book/9781032614564>



The book was supported by the Academia-Industry Cooperation project AICC05-0619-230007 from the Qatar National Research Fund (a member of the Qatar Foundation) and TÜBİTAK.

<https://www.routledge.com/Digital-Currencies-and-Public-Law-History-Constitutionalism-and-the-Revolutionary-Nature-of-Money/Dahdal/p/book/9781032614564>

<https://mylibrary.qu.edu.qa/record=b1756139>

