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Dream about Decentralization

Bitcoin. What is Bitcoin? Bitcoin, invented by a mysterious person or group of people, is a peer-to-peer electronic cash system, a Ponzi scheme that started from 0\$ to 43000\$, and a novel approach to solve issues about trust and centralization to reach consensus by distributing the system.

Like most people, I initially thought that Bitcoin was just a tulip scam that would collapse within a few years, but when I actually came into contact with cryptocurrencies like Bitcoin, I read the Nobel Prize winner Nathan Schneider's evaluation of cryptocurrencies. To experience some of its functions and practical problems. I will understand the connotation of Bitcoin, a thing born in different cultural circles, just like Zadie Smith's attitude towards Joni Mitchell has changed after awaring of the lack of knowledge and the mentality of facing things squarely (Smith). Bitcoin carries not only illusory value, but economics, cryptography, politics, and most importantly pursuit of decentralization. It is not like any sovereign currency backed by the federal government, but it is built on a distributed system all around the global bridging by the Internet. That means Bitcoin will not be controlled by any entity and that is decentralization. Throughout the history of humanization, from the Roman Empire, 1776, to Bitcoin, we are always in the loop of seeking decentralization and failing to seek it.

Centralization, according to the dictionary, is the concentration of activity and organization under a single authority. It can be good in some ways but can also be terrible. A

great example to reveal it may be Covid. China did a great job at diminishing the spread and death brought by Covid. It is awesome that we won't have family members dying from Covid, but what the government does is sometimes too obsessive and centralized. There are some extreme incidents happening because of the overly tough policy. At some companies, the percentage of employees getting vaccinated becomes a political mission. Although it is rare, some people are dragged and controlled to take the vaccine just to fulfill the requirements from the government. Some affected patients' whereabouts are exposed by the government and media for the purpose of helping identify potential other affected cases. Based on the outcome, those mandatory policies worked perfectly, but the process itself is painful and may be inappropriate. This can be a positive example of how centralization can solve the global epidemic. However, in contrast to the good outcome, what if we get the bad outcome under the control of a bad centralized government? Xi Jinping, as the chairman of China, had always been an ambitious and powerful leader, but abolished the constitutional law of the term limit. It means theoretically he can be forever the chairman of China. In some contexts, Xi is a "dictator," just like Vladimir Putin or Saddam Hussein. As a Chinese citizen, I won't say Xi is a bad dictator, but in this system of centralization, we cannot make sure if the next lifetime chairman won't be another Saddam Hussein or Hitler.

In the United States, decentralization is more active and present in political areas. No president can be on the top chair for more than eight years, and no Party takes all the charge of the government. In the name of the United States, decentralization can be found. It is a united nation with multiple states. Compared to a real-life case, it is a Zoom class with students from all over the world. That means we need to care about everyone's time zone to set the schedule. With a centralized system, the schedule will be brutally set to 3 am in someone's morning. However,

throughout 100 years of history, the United States government's decentralization is moving towards centralization mildly (Kincaid). Another Example of decentralization in the U.S. is the presence of the Senate and Congress. They represent not only the people of all classes but also the rights and interests of the states in a reasonable way. The Constituent Assembly, which lasted for more than half a year, finally agreed that the original intention of the bicameral Congress was to avoid the establishment of a monster-like powerful centralized government. The Senate can be further traced back to the Rome Senatus, which is another failed attempt to achieve decentralization.

The Roman Senate adopted hundreds of different participants to collectively make decisions, internally mediate free and internal contradictions, externally assess the situation, formulate and implement a series of correct external expansion strategies, and maximize national interests. However, since the emperor's control over the Senate is absolute, the Senate is a tool for the emperor to exercise his dictatorship (Benner). Later, because of the excessive power of the Senate elders, the term fascism was even derived. But his role is to pass such a failed attempt to provide a reference for subsequent regimes and give birth to decentralized government mechanisms such as the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives. After those failed attempts on decentralization, we can take a closer look at Bitcoin, maybe a potential winner.

The current cross-border transfers are controlled by SWIFT, and there is no way to transfer money around the world without going through it. But it is terrifying for such a single entity to control the economic activities of the entire world. If one day it has to be instructed to sanction a country for political reasons, that country will be isolated by the entire world because it cannot receive international remittances. Bitcoin wants to solve such a problem. No one really controls Bitcoin, and even its unknown founder never showed up. Decentralized nodes ensure

the continuous operation of this decentralized transfer system, every transaction can be viewed by everyone, and no node can forge wrong data (Craig). Although it has extremely high hype and speculation elements, it is still a bold attempt to decentralize. But Bitcoin is still priced based on the U.S. dollar. The U.S. dollar, as a worldwide centralized currency, has contributed a huge amount of fiscal revenue to the United States. If the United States wants to suppress Bitcoin, a decentralized product that attempts to challenge the hegemony of the U.S. dollar, it will not be difficult.

Everything seems so perfect, but back to the question that we asked in the beginning. What is Bitcoin? Why is our answer always related to scams? Isn't it wrong to be completely decentralized? Without regulation and monopoly, wouldn't it be an ideal world? But in fact, there was a time with absolutely no law and no monopoly. The primitive age. It was decentralized, there was no restriction and supervision, everything was so accessible, and any competition and crime were allowed by nature. But after that, a group of people appeared and said: "Why don't we set up an authoritative central organization to manage these activities?" From this time on, human society has unknowingly embarked on the direction of centralization. Until there is no road ahead, people realize that they may be too far on the road to centralization. In fact, this may also indicate why when we first heard about Bitcoin and decentralization, we realized that it might be a scam and unconsciously became vigilant. This is just like Zadie Smith's initial attitude towards Joni Mitchell. As two people in different cultural circles, Zadie Smith certainly cannot be attracted at once. Due to cultural and ideological differences, people's DNA seems to have inscribed likes and dislikes. We are accustomed to centralized government, banks, and courts in our genes. Just as Zadie Smith feels heterogeneous among people of different cultures, it is difficult for us to actively accept these distinct things.

The most important lesson people learn from history is that people cannot learn anything from history. The failure of decentralization in Rome may be because the decentralization itself was to better serve the centralized Roman emperor. The slow decline of decentralization in the United States may be due to efficiency, and centralization is more convenient and effective. China's extreme centralization and almost dictatorial political rule have completely abandoned decentralization. The sad thing is Bitcoin will eventually fail because no large centralized country will be willing to replace its sovereign currency with a decentralized currency. But this is still a footprint of people on the road to decentralization. This is worth trying.

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